

**Biased Policing, Martyrdom, White Gratitude & Brown Pain: Media
Narratives Surrounding the Bruce McArthur Case**

by

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An oral defense of this thesis took place on July 26th, 2021 in front of the following examining committee:

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The above committee determined that the thesis is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by the thesis was demonstrated by the candidate during an oral examination. A signed copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Abstract

Between 2010 - 2017, eight men from Toronto's Gay Village went missing and later discovered murdered by Bruce McArthur, a 67-year-old gay, white man from Toronto. Upon McArthur's 2018 arrest, allegations of racial bias and homophobia against Toronto Police resurfaced, questioning the safety and protection of Toronto's LGBTQ2SIA+ community. Existing research on news media framing of crime victims lacks to understand how the news media frames queer victims of crime. This research sought to explore the emergent media narratives framing the McArthur case through a critical discourse analysis of 212 news items from the *Toronto Sun*, *Toronto Star*, and *Xtra*. Findings suggest that local media coverage of the McArthur case centered around three major narratives: (i) biased policing by Toronto Police, (ii) different portrayals of white victims and families versus brown victims and families, and (iii) the complexity of intersecting victim characteristics. The implications of these narratives are discussed.

Keywords: LGBTQ2SIA+; Bruce McArthur; media framing; homicide narratives; critical discourse analysis

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis consists of original work of which I have authored. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Statement of Contributions

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, or other materials that belong to others. Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and/or inventive knowledge described in this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

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Chapter I. Introduction

Between 2010 and 2017, eight men from Toronto's Gay Village – colloquially referred to simply as 'the Village' - went missing and were later found to have died at the hands of Bruce McArthur, a 67-year-old gay, white man from Toronto who frequented the Village (see Appendix A for a list and short descriptions of the lives that were lost). While the majority of the victims were reported missing to police by either family or friends, two of the men went missing without ever being reported to Toronto Police (Gillis, 2018b; Mallick, 2018). The Toronto Police Service (TPS) estimates that many more men may have gone missing and murdered due to McArthur's actions, as well as claims from four other men that McArthur attacked them (Humphreys, 2019). Despite this, McArthur has only been connected to, charged with, and convicted of the aforementioned eight murders (The Canadian Press, 2019). Of McArthur's eight victims, six were gay, Middle Eastern or South Asian men, two were white gay men, and all frequented the Village (The Canadian Press, 2019; Moon, 2018).

Toronto's Gay Village is home to the city's queer communities. Having emerged onto the city scene in the 1970s, the Village is known to be the hub of gay social, economic, and political life within the city with a variety of restaurants, clubs, bars, clothing stores, convenience and specialty stores, art galleries and theatres, along with professional and health services all within the area (Nash, 2013; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). At the heart of the Village is The 519, a community centre (also established in the early 1970s) that provides support services and programs that tend to the needs of LGBTQ2SIA+¹ individuals in the city (The 519, n.d.).

¹ LGBTQ2SIA+ is one of the many acronyms used to represent the vast and varying sexual orientations and gender identities that exist within the greater LGBTQ2SIA+ community. It is difficult to encapsulate the wide variety of orientations and identities within a handful of letters while the rest are left to be represented by a plus sign however, it is absolutely imperative to acknowledge their importance and validity. Within this thesis, the broader LGBTQ2SIA+ community will be referred to by two terms: LGBTQ2SIA+ or queer. The word *queer* has

Located within the Village is the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, a repository that holds historical records of Canadian gay and lesbian politics within Canada (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). The Village makes itself known to be queer-friendly, business windowfronts and street pole banners are adorned with queer imagery, ranging from the iconic rainbow flag to various flags of sexual orientations (e.g., the bisexual flag, trans flag, pansexual flag, etc.) (Nash, 2015; The Village Church-Wellesley). In addition, there is the annual Toronto Pride Parade, originating as a protest against institutionalized homophobia but has evolved to also be viewed as a celebration of queer life, takes place in June within the vicinity of the Village and surrounding area (Hoxsey, 2012). As depicted in Figure 1 below, the boundaries of the Village range from Bloor Street East to the North, Gerrard Street East to the South, Yonge Street to the West and Jarvis Street to the East.

implications of its own. Once used as a slur against the LGBTQ2SIA+ community, the word has now been reclaimed by the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.

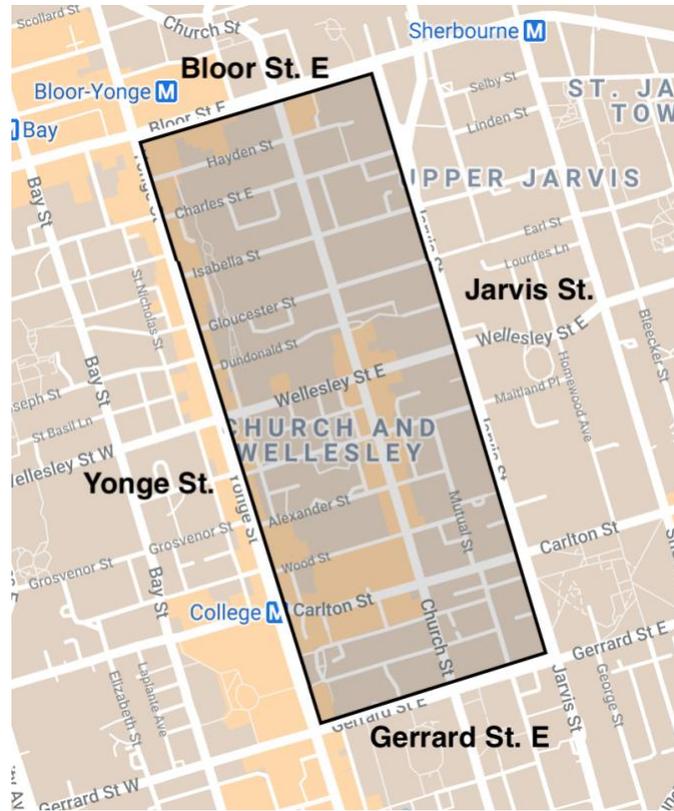


Figure 1. Geographical location of the Village in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Background of the Bruce McArthur Case

On January 18th, 2018, TPS arrested then 66-year-old Bruce McArthur at his Thorncliffe Park (a Toronto neighbourhood) apartment after finding a man tied up and bound in McArthur's bedroom and charged him with two counts of first-degree murder (Gillis, 2018b). McArthur had been under constant police surveillance since September 2017, after becoming a suspect lead within the TPS' 'Project Prism' investigation, an inquiry into the two disappearances of two gay men, Andrew Kinsman and Selim Esen, from Toronto's Village (Brockbank, 2018). Prior to McArthur's arrest, TPS officers had been in his apartment two times in December 2017 to gather evidence to make an arrest. McArthur had become a strong suspect within the investigation since November of that year (Brockbank, 2018; Powers, 2018). On their second visit to McArthur's apartment, TPS officers cloned McArthur's computer hard drive, which was filled with pictures

of a deceased (from strangulation) males, naked and posed in various positions with various props around or on their body (Brockbank, 2018; Gollom, 2019).

Throughout the early months of 2018, McArthur was charged with an additional eight counts of first-degree murder of other victims that McArthur knew or came into contact with (Brockbank, 2018). Three of these additional eight victims, Abdulbasir Faizi, Majeed Kayhan, and Skandaraj Navaratnam, were missing person cases from a previous TPS investigation called “Project Houston” (Brockbank, 2018; Syed & Gibson, 2018). TPS faced criticism and accusations of racial discrimination as to Project Prism, involving a white victim, ended in an arrest while Project Houston, an investigation with three victims of colour, result in no arrests and was evidently shut down (Moon, 2013).

On January 29th, 2019, in downtown Toronto at the Ontario Superior Court, Bruce McArthur pleaded guilty to all eight counts of first-degree murder (McGillivray, 2019; Gillis, 2019a). The Crown revealed evidence against McArthur, found within his own apartment, ranging from duct tape, rope and zip ties, a bungee cord, and items belonging to the eight victims that McArthur kept as a “souvenir” (McGillivray, 2019). In addition, the Crown made the distinction that six out of the eight murders were sexual in nature (McGillivray, 2019). One month later, on February 8th, 2019, McArthur was sentenced to life for the eight murders he had committed (Brockbank, 2018; Powers, 2019). Ontario Superior Court Justice John McMahon told the court that McArthur will have a chance at parole in 25 years, but it is most likely that McArthur will not be able to due to the overall gruesome nature of his crimes (Brockbank, 2018; Powers, 2019).

Relationship Between Toronto Police and Toronto's Queer Community

Much has been written about the troubled relationship between Toronto's LGBTQIA2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two – Spirit and other sexual and gender orientations) community and the TPS, both historically and currently (Hooper, 2014; Humphreys & Edmiston, 2019; Lamble, 2019; Nash, 2006; Nash, 2014; Semaan, 2020). When it was identified within the Village community that some men had gone missing and that suspicions of a serial killer operating within the Village had arisen, the city's queer community pleaded with Toronto Police to take their concerns seriously (Moon, 2018); however, these pleas appeared to have been dismissed, given a statement from former TPS Chief Mark Saunders that there was no proof of a serial killer acting within the Village (CBC News, 2017; Moon, 2018). Between 2012 to 2017, TPS led two investigations on the disappearance of gay men from the Village. The first investigation, Project Houston, was launched in 2012 to investigate the disappearances of three gay men of colour, all were of South Asian or Middle Eastern descent (Powers, 2018; Syed & Gibson, 2018; The Canadian Press, 2019). In 2014, Project Houston was closed due to a lack of credible evidence found, such as Project Houston investigators discounting evidence of foul play (Syed & Gibson, 2018). Former TPS Superintendent, Gary Ellis explained that limited resources may have been a contributing factor to the Project being closed, stating that creating task forces for major cases that occur in the city boils down to "competing resources" as officers are not eager to join a taskforce (Syed & Gibson, 2018). In the summer of 2017, Toronto Police initiated Project Prism to search for two missing gay men – one white, and one of Middle Eastern descent from the Village (Brockbank, 2018; Brockbank, 2019b; Powers, 2018). The result of Project Prism, an investigation that took approximately one year, was the arrest of 66-year-old Bruce McArthur on January 18th, 2018

(Brockbank, 2018). Almost a year later to the date, on January 19th, 2019, McArthur pled guilty to eight counts of first-degree murder (Brockbank, 2018). It is interesting to note that it was Project Prism that involved a white homicide victim which led to McArthur's arrest in a comparably quick manner (one year), while Project Houston had three brown homicide victims lasted approximately two years and was closed due to lack of credible evidence and suffered from limited resources. The Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, with support from Toronto Mayor John Tory, had called for the TPS to internally and externally review if the sexual orientation or race of the victims affected the amount of police resources or effort put into Project Houston (Nasser, 2018). In 2018, TPS Spokesperson Meaghan Gray denied any claims of racial bias between both investigations and asserted that sufficient resources were used in the Project Houston case (Moon, 2018).

Much media, police, and public conversation around the Bruce McArthur case and the police (mis)handling of the Village community's concerns has focused on the role that the ethnicity and/or race of the missing men played in the attention, or lack thereof, that the disappearances garnered from the police and the subsequent lack of mainstream media attention. Criminological literature demonstrates that some victims of crime generate greater police attention than others (Bouchard et al., 2020; Gilchrist, 2010; Jiwani, 2014). Moon (2018) highlighted similar concerns from Toronto's queer community in relation to the policing and investigation of these disappearances and subsequent murders.

In addition to a victim's race and sexual orientation, one's occupation, socially accepted or not, and social class should not deter them from getting help from the police when they are a victim of a crime. One out of the two white victims was a homeless sex worker, yet his disappearance was not reported to the police. All of these victim characteristics – race, sexual

orientation, occupation, and social class – should not impede their ability to get the police to investigate their crime accordingly, how the police conduct and treat these cases influences how and if the media creates and discusses narratives of the victims (Gilchrist, 2010; Valcore & Buckler, 2020).

Statement of Research Inquiry and Importance

Grappling with these important questions of intersectionality and the impacts of victim identity and positioning, this thesis seeks to answer the main research question: What were the dominant media narratives that emerged and framed media discussion of the Bruce McArthur case? Given the various intersecting identities of McArthur (a white, middle class, gay, male), his victims (the majority were brown, middle to low class, gay, males - one was a homeless sex worker) and the tension between the city's LGBTQ2SIA+ community and the TPS, it is imperative to identify and consider what narratives have emerged and been presented to the greater public by the news media reporting of the Bruce McArthur case. Such narratives should inform community policing practices and make them more equitable.

In order to answer the research question, discourse analysis of news articles related to the Bruce McArthur case was conducted. For the purpose of this research, only news articles from Facebook pages of the *Toronto Sun*, *Toronto Star*, and *Xtra* were included. The *Toronto Star* and *Toronto Sun* were selected due to their political stances, left and right, respectively (Austen, 2020). Research suggests news media outlets' political standing may have an impact on how and the type of narratives about the McArthur case presented. *Xtra* is a news media outlet that holds historical roots within Toronto's queer community and covers news events from a queer perspective and "highlights voices from within our communities to provide analysis and bring perspective to issues affecting LGBTQ2 audiences" (Xtra, n.d.). In conjunction with the

discourse analysis, framing theory was utilized to highlight the specific manners in which the disappearances and deaths of the eight victims and McArthur's part in these disappearances and deaths were presented to news audiences by the aforementioned news media outlets. Framing theory guides the discourse analysis in helping determine how the Bruce McArthur case and McArthur's victims were portrayed and framed. In addition, framing theory is used to attempt to understand why McArthur and his victims are being portrayed in such a manner.

The main goal of the analysis was to uncover and understand the narratives emerging from the media coverage of McArthur and his victims, particularly as they relate to sexual orientation and race, among those that emerge from the data. The analysis also compares and contrasts how the media outlets covered and framed McArthur's victims. To unpack the main research question which seeks to uncover and detail media narratives that framed news reporting of the Bruce McArthur case, this research also asks: Does a victim's race impact how the media discussed their death in comparison to other victims of McArthur? Does a victim's sexuality impact the way the media discussed their death in comparison to other victims of McArthur? Is there a difference between how each media outlet discussed the Bruce McArthur case?

Thesis Overview

This chapter provided a general overview of the research question and the context surrounding the policing and media framing of the murders committed by Bruce McArthur. Chapter II, the literature review, will provide a broad look at research on violence and crimes against queer people and the community, police and the queer community, and media coverage of queer people and the community. Chapter III, the theoretical framework, will explore the three theories that will be used to guide this thesis throughout its research process. Such theories are missing white woman syndrome, homonationalism and intersectional masculinities. These

theories' relevance to the overall thesis research will also be discussed within this chapter.

Chapter IV, the methodological framework, will explain what discourse analysis is and how this qualitative research method will be utilized in this thesis. In Chapters V and VI, the framing of the case and the framing of the offender and victims, respectively, the findings of the discourse analysis will be discussed. Chapter VII, the conclusion, will bring together the main findings, and make connections to how framing impacts a news audience's perception of a crime event. It also outlines study limitations as well as avenues for future research.

Chapter II. Literature Review

What currently exists is an important yet continually growing body of literature on victimization, criminalization, and access (or lack thereof) to justice as perceived by the queer community. In order to provide the background required to contextualize and situate this research project, this chapter focuses on three main areas: violence and crimes against queer people and the community, police and the queer community, and media coverage of queer people and the community. Following this review of the literature, this chapter then turns to research on how the media has covered queer people and their communities, with specific attention to crime coverage when victims are from this population. This is done prior to articulating existing gaps in the literature and positioning this proposed research as an important contribution.

Violence and Crimes Against Queer People and the Community

According to the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces conducted by Statistics Canada, sexual minority Canadians (those that identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or any sexual orientation other than heterosexual) were more likely than heterosexual Canadians to have experienced physical or sexual assault (59% vs 37%) (Jaffray, 2020). Injuries resulting from violence against sexual minority Canadians were more common than violence against heterosexual Canadians (Jaffray, 2020). Transgender Canadians are more likely than cisgender Canadians to experience violence (Jaffray, 2020). Much of the existing literature supports Statistics Canada's survey results, as many LGBTQ2SIA+ people are victims of hate crime, sexual and physical assault (Arlee et al., 2019; Brown, 2008; Edwards et al., 2015; Gruber & Fineran, 2008; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016; Porter & Williams, 2011; Walters et al., 2017).

As previously stated, queer individuals face physical and sexual assault at greater rates than their heterosexual peers (Jaffray, 2020). This can occur for a variety of reasons, two reasons being homophobia and biphobia. Mortimer et al. (2019) note that homophobic and biphobic² myths surrounding lesbian, bisexual, and queer women have led to some women being victims of sexual assault and violence (p. 342). Homophobic myths and stereotypes (e.g. short stature, being a “bottom” or a “sissy”, having a very active sex life, being “up for anything”) about gay males can attribute to sexual assault and violence gay males may experience (Mortimer et al., 2019, p. 343). LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals in same-sex relationships also experience intimate partner violence (Arlee et al., 2019; Brown, 2008; Edwards et al., 2015; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016; Porter & Williams, 2011; Ristock et al., 2017). In general, women are more likely to experience higher rates of physical violence as a result of intimate partner violence (Edwards et al., 2015) while transgender people are more likely than cisgender people to experience intimate partner violence (Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016). LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals in same-sex relationships that experience intimate partner violence are perceived differently than heterosexuals in heterosexual relationships. Brown (2008) attributes this difference to socialized gender roles that assume since both people in the relationship are of the same gender, their physicality and power are equal and matched (p. 459). This concept trivializes the serious nature and danger of intimate partner violence within a same-sex relationship, as abuse can be downplayed or be unacknowledged, victim-blaming can ensue, and perpetuate myths about gender (Brown, 2008). However, this is not to say that violence in a same-sex relationship is not unidirectional, there is the potential for violence bidirectional where both partners perpetrate and receive acts of violence (Arlee et al., 2019).

² Homophobic and/or biphobic myths include beliefs such as lesbians can be “turned” straight with sex from a straight man, or that bisexual women are “promiscuous” and “unfaithful” (Mortimer et al., 2019).

LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals are also victims of hate crimes or hate-motivated violence. Hate crimes or hate-motivated violence are seen as acts that are driven by bias or prejudice against an individual based on an aspect of their identity like their sexual orientation, gender orientation, religion, race, etc. (Brown et al., 2015; Herek et al., 2002; Meyer, 2010). Perry (2001) further notes that perpetrators of hate crime carry out such acts to preserve the hegemony of their group while maintaining the subordination of their victim and their group; ensuring a clearly defined difference between the two groups (as cited in Perry and Dyck, 2014). Hate crimes that LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals have faced occur in public and private spaces (e.g., in the workplace, at home), as well as in the online world via the internet (Brown et al., 2015; Herek et al., 2002). Forms of hate crimes vary on a spectrum from verbal harassment, physical assault, vandalism, and physical assault with deadly weapons (Brown et al., 2015; Herek et al., 2002; Meyer, 2010; Perry & Dyck, 2014).

In comparison to cisgender individuals, existing literature has demonstrated that transgender individuals have a higher risk of victimization, discrimination, mistreatment, and experiencing violence (Arlee et al., 2019, Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016; Perry & Dyck, 2014). Transgender individuals experience a life filled with violence that varies on a spectrum from verbal harassment to extreme violence (Perry & Dyck, 2014). Violence is a constant risk for transgender individuals and assault is a constant risk they face that leads them to live a hyper-vigilant life to ensure their safety (Perry & Dyck, 2014). Langenderfer-Magruder et al. (2016) contend that transgender individuals lack cisgender privilege that would allow them to be comfortable to report any type of victimization they have endured to law enforcement and their peers (p. 864). However, it is not just a lack of cisgender privilege that keeps transgender individuals from reporting their victimization to the police, as will be highlighted in the next

section. Transgender individuals are also more precarious to and frequently experience hate crimes or hate-motivated violence differently than cisgender LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals. Walters et al. (2017) have found that transgender individuals are significantly more likely to be direct and indirect victims of a hate crime than cisgender LGBT+ individuals, as well are two times more likely to experience physical assault than cisgender LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals (pp. 4594-4595).

LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals that are not white experience crime and violence in a different manner as well. An LGBTQ2SIA+ individual's social position within society can influence how they experience and perceive their experience of violence and crime towards them (Meyer, 2010). For example, Meyer (2010) found that white, middle-class LGBTQ2SIA+ crime victims were more likely than low-income people of colour LGBTQ2SIA+ crime victims to perceive acts of violence against them as severe yet the latter group experienced physical violence more frequently than the former (p. 993).

Police and the Queer Community

The long-standing and troubled relationship between the queer community and the police has been noted in both academic and queer literature. The first-ever Pride Parade in 1969, created by transgender women of colour in New York City, was an anti-police riot as a response to the violence against queer people by police officers from the New York Police Department at the Stonewall Inn raid of the same year (Semaan, 2020). Looking specifically at Toronto, the Toronto Police Service carried a raid of a similar nature at multiple bathhouses across the city that gay men would frequent and engage in sexual activity, one of the most notable raids include the 1981 Bathhouse raids, also known as Operation Soap (Hooper, 2014; Nash, 2006; Nash, 2014; Semaan, 2020). More recently, a lesbian bathhouse was raided by Toronto Police in 2000 (Lamble, 2009). These raids were said to be an attack on all gays and lesbians within Toronto, a

way for the State to get rid of gay businesses to make the gay community disappear (Nash, 2006). These attempts by the police to erase Toronto's LGBTQ2SIA+ community were unsuccessful however, the relationship between Toronto's LGBTQ2SIA+ community and Toronto Police is marked with animosity.

In the 2016 Toronto Pride Parade, activist group Black Lives Matter – Toronto held a sit-in protest mid-parade to bring attention to the police brutality of visible minorities, which include Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals of colour, by Toronto Police officers within the city (Semaan, 2020). Past and current events that demonstrate the tension between the LGBTQ2SIA+ community and police can explain a lack of confidence and trust LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals have in the police; in other words, being over-policed and under-protected (DeGagne, 2020, p. 262). The literature points out that LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals have faced discrimination and lack of support from the police (Perry & Dyck, 2014; Ristock et al., 2017). LGBTQ2SIA+ people are not as likely to report their victimization to the police due to the potential for police to engage in victim-blaming, for police to not take their victimization seriously, and fear of stigmas related to reporting their victimization (Herek et al., 2002; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2020; Mortimer et al., 2019) Existing literature shows that marginalized LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals (e.g. of colour, poor, mentally ill) do not have the same relationship with police as their white, middle and upper class, neurotypical counterparts do (Angeles & Robertson, 2020; DeGagne, 2020). Marginalized LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals, in comparison to their white counterparts, do not receive the same protection from police and are found to be surveilled, carded, and assumed to be deviant and/or criminal by police (DeGagne, 2020). Transgender individuals have reported that they fear police and feel that the police do not effectively police hate crime against them (Perry & Dyck, 2014; Walters et al., 2017).

Media Coverage of Queer People and the Community

Queer representation by the media is imperative to understand, as the media has the ability to influence the audience's perception of queer individuals. Gross (2001) states that "representation in the media is in itself a kind of power, and thus media invisibility helps maintain the powerlessness of groups at the bottom of the social heap" (p. 4). Chang and Ren (2017) note that representation produces and shapes a world of meaning (p. 319). It is imperative to be mindful of who within the media world is giving people power through representation. What conditions are attached to this power distribution? How is the representation beneficial or detrimental to those being represented? What meaning is being made? How will this meaning be utilized amongst others? Interestingly, Gross (2001) goes on to further explain that being represented in commercial advertising is monumental for underrepresented groups as advertising "does not claim to depict life as it is but as it should be – life and lives worth emulating" (as cited in Tsai, 2010, para. 6). However, this might not be true on a global scale. Chang and Ren (2017) found that in Chinese newspapers, representation of gay people (gay men and lesbian women) fell into four discourses: gay people as crime victims due to their inherent weakness, gays as violent people, gays as enemies of traditional values, and gays as sources of social instability. Similarly, Billard (2016) found that delegitimizing practices (e.g., slurs, name-calling, sexualization, and defamation) of transgender individuals found within news stories has the potential to impact public perception about transgender individuals, including transgender self-perceptions (p. 4211).

Despite the news media having the potential to negatively represent queer people and the greater queer community, other forms of media have represented queer individuals in a positive light, even normalized being queer. In television, queer representation is seen in the shows such

as *Ellen*, *Will and Grace*, *Friends*, *The L Word*, *Queer as Folk*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Modern Family*, *Degrassi*, *Pretty Little Liars*, *Glee*, *Euphoria*, *Orange is the New Black*, *Sex Education*, *Grace & Frankie*, *Riverdale*, *One Day at a Time*, *The Fosters*, *The Bold Type* and *Schitt's Creek*. The list of television shows is extensive and includes many more examples than the ones listed. All of these television shows have a queer character or characters within their cast and have touched upon the struggles of a queer person and/or presented how a life of a queer individual is similar to that of a non-queer person. For example, *Modern Family* portrays a gay male couple with an adopted child, learning how to parent and become fathers to their new child. Similarly, *The Fosters* centres around the lives of a family headed by two lesbians and one of their adopted sons comes out as gay. *Orange is the New Black* is most known for its lesbian and trans representation, similar to *Glee* and *Euphoria*. Cook (2018) notes that media representation is beneficial to viewers watching themselves being represented on screen, especially young people. Ayoub and Garretson (2017) have found that young people in countries that allow for freedom of the press and do not censor a lot of media (and media types) within the country are more likely to accept and be positive towards homosexuality. Ayoub and Garretson (2017) found that this occurs because “media is a conduit for information concerning LGBT people that cross borders, and that it exposes younger cohorts to more multifaceted information with which to develop positions on homosexuality during their formative years” (p. 1074). Thus, having queer representation on television is essential towards others viewing queer individuals and the queer community positively.

News journalism is still the main source of information about the public sphere for a majority of people, it also focuses on specific issues for political debate and action (Kelly, 2011). McKinnon et al. (2017) argue that a lack of queer representation in the news media can result in

the greater public not aware of the needs of queer individuals or communities or may perceive LGBTQ2SIA+ communities as an “other” that does not deserve to be considered in public policy development. Kelly (2011) argues that news media’s influence on the public’s sense of self and others is concerning, especially for groups that do not participate equally in the production and distribution of dominant culture and are hardly seen as legitimate news sources, even when the story is about them (p. 185). McKinnon et al. (2017) further argue that LGBTQ2SIA+ representation in the news is crucial as there is the potential for social equality and political power to be enabled by increasing visibility. The relationship between media (and its various forms) and the LGBTQ2SIA+ community is crucial to how media audiences will view queer individuals and the queer community. The media has the potential to influence the attitude and mindset of its audience of whatever topic or subject it covers.

Media Reporting on Queer Victims of Crime

The amount of media coverage a crime victim receives is dependent on media hierarchies. With a specific focus on homicide victims, a hierarchy of newsworthiness exists (Bouchard et al., 2020). Homicide victims at the top of this hierarchy are seen as sympathetic victims; their characteristics are as follows: female, white, a child or elderly, employed, not known to authorities, have a high school education and higher, not associated with gangs, drugs or the sex trade, are identified by their name, and news articles about them have a victim impact statement from the family (Bouchard et al., 2020). It is believed that these sympathetic victim characteristics elicit emotional sympathetic responses from news audiences (Bouchard et al., 2020). In their study, Bouchard et al. (2020) found that homicide victims that possessed the majority of the sympathetic victim characteristics were more likely to be featured on the front page of a newspaper, have a photo of them included in the article about them, and have an article

with a higher word count than homicide victims that possessed less of the sympathetic victim characteristics (pp. 322-323). Homicide victims – usually marginalized individuals – that do not possess characteristics of a sympathetic victim are not featured within the news as often and prominently as sympathetic victims, which ultimately leads to an underreporting of these victims by the news media thus they are deemed unworthy (Bouchard et al., 2020, p. 324). In support of this notion, Jiwani (2014) contests that the continual perpetuation of marginalized individuals as unworthy impacts how their victimization will be treated by news media and the police (p. 2).

Similarly, Gilchrist's (2010) study on media coverage of missing and murdered Indigenous women claim that a hierarchy of female victims exists where white, attractive young women are on top and Indigenous women are at the bottom, regardless of their age, occupation, circumstances (p. 385). This hierarchy concept illustrates the phenomenon that has been termed *Missing White Woman Syndrome* (MWWS) (Conlin & Davie, 2015; Liebler, 2010; Slakoff & Fradella, 2019; Stillman, 2007). MWWS refers to the “excessive”, “sensationalized”, and “round the clock” news media coverage of missing persons, that are usually innocent, young, white, female, conventionally attractive, are middle or upper class (Conlin & Davie, 2015; Slakoff & Fradella, 2019; Stillman, 2007). Excluded from - and commonly underrepresented in general - this phenomenon are individuals that fall into racial and class minorities (Conlin & Davie, 2015; Slakoff & Fradella, 2019). Missing White Woman Syndrome will be discussed at further length in Chapter III.

Media portrayals of LGBTQ2SIA+ crime victims dehumanize said victims as there is an absence of photos of the victim, as well the descriptive and illustrative reporting of the victim's crime against them places more focus on the crime rather than the victim (Bouchard et al., 2020). LGBTQ2SIA+ victims are portrayed differently throughout the media. In Bouchard et al.'s

(2020) study, transgender crime victims were portrayed positively in comparison to cisgender gay men as media outlets used language to question the male's sexuality while reports of the transgender victim discussed trans-specific struggles (p. 11). Lesbian victims of crime are rarely discussed in media as they go against the patriarchal norm of what a woman is to be (Kharchilava & Javakhishvili, 2010). When they are discussed, their sexuality is hidden or not mentioned, which erases the label of their crime as being seen as a hate crime (Grozelle, 2014). Little to no research was found on how bisexual victims of crime are portrayed or discussed within the news media.

Perhaps one of the most well-known homicide cases with a queer victim in North America, before the Bruce McArthur case, is the Matthew Shepard homicide case. On October 7th, 1998 in Wyoming, U.S, 21-year-old Matthew Sheppard was brutally tortured and left for dead by two men in an empty, open field (Matthew Shepard Foundation, n.d.; Ott & Aoki, 2002). Shepard was brought to a hospital in an attempt to save his life, however, he died five days after his attack (Ott & Aoki, 2002). While Shepard was in the hospital, his attack and its details become known nation-wide throughout the U.S. Shepard's death incited a media frenzy that claimed his attack to be an act of anti-gay violence and defined as an anti-gay hate crime (Ott & Aoki, 2002; Petersen, 2006). Moreover, Shepard came to be known as a victim of an unfortunate but isolated act of violence (Dunn, 2010). Ott and Aoki (2002) found that Shepard's death was portrayed through a tragic frame. This tragic frame was achieved due to Shepard's perceived innocence that was made prominent and greatly emphasized by the U.S. news media, due to his physical build, age, race, class status, and personal recounts of his personality from family and friends that knew Shepard (O'Donnell, 2009; Ott & Aoki, 2002; Peterson, 2006). Additionally, this tragic frame was also achieved through the media's repetitious depiction of Shepard's

“gruesome” attack via written descriptions and the use of images (Dunn, 2010; Ott & Aoki, 2002; Peterson, 2006).

It is through this tragic framing of Shepard’s death that U.S. media was able to rid and relieve the greater U.S. public of any culpability or guilt associated with Shepard’s death (Ott & Aoki, 2002). Other media portrayals of Shepard saw him as a martyr of anti-gay hate violence and hate crime, as his death led to a demand for anti-hate crime legislation to occur in the U.S. (Dunn, 2010; O’Donnell, 2009; Ott & Aoki, 2002; Peterson, 2006). However, Ott and Aoki’s (2002) analysis of news media coverage of the Shepard case found that concerns for hate crime legislation dissipated once Shepard’s story itself dissipated from the attention of news media outlets. Although in 2009, under the Barack Obama administration, the U.S. enacted *The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009*, 18 U.S.C. § 249, a federal criminal law that criminalized willful acts of bodily injury based on actual perceived race, colour, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of any person (The United States Department of Justice, 2018). Part of the media coverage of the Shepard case was spent on Shepard’s attackers, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. McKinney’s and Russell’s lack of education, drug addictions, and past criminal history (Ott & Aoki, 2002) were made public in a manner for the media to vilify and separate them from the greater public. Both men were seen as “monsters” and “subhuman”, while McKinney was labelled a “savage” and a “wolf” (Ott & Aoki, 2002; O’Donnell, 2009). Such vilification by the news media allowed for public guilt of Shepard’s murder to be placed on McKinney and Henderson, as they “became victims for social purging, releasing society of responsibility” (Dunn, 2010, p. 617). Additionally, McKinney and Henderson were said to be representative of Laramie, Wyoming (the town where Shepard’s murder occurred, however, Laramie residents

came out and refuted such claims (O'Donnell, 2009). How the news media discussed the Matthew Shepard case, how his murder was classified, how he and his murders were discussed, and how U.S. society reacted to the murder, is of great interest to this thesis research and its attempt to understand how the Bruce McArthur case in its entirety was discussed amongst three Toronto news media outlets.

Media Reporting on Perpetrators of Violence Against Queer Individuals

Given the relative recency of Bruce McArthur's murder trial, there exists little literature that focuses exclusively on Bruce McArthur and his serial killings of the eight men within the Village. Haritaworn (2019), Seitz (2020), Semaan (2020), and Wahab (2021) are the few researchers to date, to have published work that discuss McArthur at length. Media coverage surrounding McArthur tended to focus on his "everyman" qualities and the shock revolving around what he did versus whom he portrayed himself to be (Haritaworn, 2019). Media outlets reached out to those that knew McArthur to get their perspective on who he was and how they felt about what he did, no interviews were done with members of Toronto's queer community (Semaan, 2020). This is a similarity shared with the 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, where there was more media attention on the shooter, Omar Mateen than there was on the LGBTQ2SIA+ Latinx victims and the majority of media quotes were from associates of Mateen (Valcore & Buckler, 2020). Haritaworn (2019) declares McArthur's serial murders as "transgressive" because he broke the media's and Toronto public's perception of what it means to be gay – a white cisgender male (p. 29). This, however, has resulted in more police presence and surveillance within the Village, which is problematic to LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals of colour that fall victim to police racial profiling and carding (Semaan, 2020). Semaan (2020) speaks further on McArthur's whiteness, explaining that it acts as an "insulator in the face of the law" as

one's whiteness protects them from the worst consequences of the law (p. 25). This holds as McArthur was brought in for questioning by Toronto Police (Brockbank, 2019a; Mukherjee, 2019). When speaking on the Orlando Pulse night club shooting, Katz notes that "dismissing the fact that the queer Latinx community was the target of the attack, ... strongly suggests that many in society are unable to associate and empathize with the queer community" (as cited in Valcore & Buckler, 2020, p. 293). It can be argued that this quote can be applied to the McArthur case as the majority of media attention was focused on McArthur and public reactions to his conviction led to more police presence in the Village that would be detrimental to LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals of colour, the population that McArthur's victims were part of.

Summary of Existing Literature

Throughout the literature review, it can be seen that violence and crime committed against queer individuals has been well documented and researched by previous scholars. Specifically, the varying types of violence and hate crimes experienced by queer individuals as a whole and as individuals. This notion of violence and hate crimes experienced individually by members of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community refers to the specific acts of violence faced by trans individuals (in comparison to cis gender, queer individuals) and queer individuals of colour (in contrast to white queers). Additionally, there is a great amount of research that covers the tenuous and hostile relationship between the institution of policing and the queer community. With specific mention of the lack of trust and protection felt by marginalized members of society and the LGBTQ2SIA+ community towards the police, as these members have historically, currently, and will continue to have different experiences with the police in comparison to their cisgender, white counterparts. Regarding media coverage of queer individuals and the greater community, existing research highlights the importance of media representation, and the manner

queer individuals are presented to news audiences. While representation is imperative and important to creating a society that accepts and understands queer individuals, the manner that such representation occurs in is also important, as potential misrepresentations can occur and be perpetuated to audiences. This literature review comes to end as research on media reporting on queer victims of crime and perpetrators of crime against queer individuals is discussed. The notion of worthy, sympathetic versus unworthy, non-sympathetic crime victims is particularly interesting, as it coincides with Gilchrist's (2010) hierarchy of victims and the Mathew Sheppard case, the first well known, well publicized victim of a hate crime. Moving towards perpetrators of crime against queer individuals, it has been noted that research on the McArthur and the case is limited. However, the existing research on the case determined that much of the media focus is on McArthur, rather than his victims, similar to the 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting.

Chapter III. Theoretical Framework

To help guide this research and answer the main and supporting research questions, three theoretical frameworks have been integrated, and used throughout this thesis. These frameworks are: missing white woman syndrome, homonationalism, and intersectional masculinities. Missing white woman syndrome and homonationalism act as the main theoretical pillars supporting this thesis, while intersectional masculinities will be used to illustrate a connection between missing white woman syndrome and homonationalism.

A phrase commonly heard when discussing crime and media is that “if it bleeds, it leads.” However, Dowler et al. (2006) argue that it is a matter of *who* is bleeding that determines if it will be top news (p. 841). This raises the question if there are discrepancies within media coverage amongst victims of crime that exist and how it can be explained. Families and friends of missing persons turn to the police and sometimes the media for assistance in finding their missing family member or friend, as it is known that media coverage can aid in the search and recovery of a missing person (Ferguson & Soave, 2021). While it may be perceived that every disappearance of a missing person is of equal importance, there is existing research that says otherwise. For example, missing Indigenous women and girls in Canada are severely underreported or at times not reported by the media (CBC Radio, 2017; Gilchrist, 2010; Moeke-Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro, 2018). One explanation for this issue’s continuous occurrence is missing white woman syndrome (MWWS), defined as extensive media coverage surrounding white women (and/or girls) that are young, attractive (based on societal norms of beauty), part of the middle or upper class, and who have gone missing (Conlin & Davie, 2015; Liebler, 2010). Sommers (2016) suggests that MWWS is an intersectional theory, as it encompasses various social identities like race, gender, age, and class (p. 285). Similarly, Conlin

and Davie (2015) assert that five characteristics will determine if a missing person will gain any media coverage, such characteristics of the missing person include: sex, age, race, socioeconomic status, and attractiveness (p. 38). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Gilchrist (2010) argues that within the news media, a hierarchy of female victims exists and those at the top are deemed worthy and innocent and those at the bottom are the exact opposite. Gilchrist (2010) suggests that female victims at the top of this hierarchy are “conventionally beautiful (thin, blonde, young), middle-class, White women” (p. 385), while female victims that do not possess any of these characteristics are underneath. Moreover, Gilchrist (2010) suggests that this female victim hierarchy creates an underclass of victims that would indicate to offenders that these women can be victimized easily since attention is not given to them (p. 385).

Research studies that have MWWS as a focus is sparse and vary amongst the type of news sources used. The majority of existing MWWS research sample television news or print news (Conlin & Davie, 2015; Gilchrist, 2010; Liebler, 2010; Min & Feaster, 2010; Simmons & Woods, 2015; Slakoff & Brennan, 2020; Slakoff & Fradella, 2019). However, there are a few studies (Jeanis & Powers, 2017; Sommers, 2016; Stein, 2012) that have used online news articles as part of their larger, diverse data source. This thesis research aims to expand to the limited MWWS research that utilizes online news articles as a data source. Although this phenomenon specifically focuses on white women, it will be used to help determine if the race and sexuality of McArthur’s victims impacted how they were discussed in comparison to other victims. While MWWS focuses on media coverage of white women, what is lacking is an understanding of how bodies that do not match the MWW criteria are discussed or portrayed within the media, more specifically queer and of colour bodies. It is important to understand the narrative manner in which these bodies are discussed as it can be a reflection of how society as a whole views them.

Within the next section, Puar's (2007) homonationalism examines the dichotomy between white queers and queers of colours that exists within the queer community initiated by heterosexuals.

In 2007, scholar Jasbir Puar released *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* where she coined the term, *homonationalism*. A derivative of the words, homonormativity, and nationalism, homonationalism is described as the "process by which collusion is generated between homosexuality and American nationalism through rhetorics of patriotic inclusion"

(Hyndman et al., 2010, p. 403). Specifically, Puar (2007) theorized that homonationalism is:

one discursive tactic that disaggregates U.S. national gays and queers from racial and sexual others, foregrounding a collusion between homosexuality and American nationalism that is generated both by national rhetorics of patriotic inclusion and by gay and queer subjects themselves (p. 39).

The entirety of Puar's (2007) work is written from an American, post-9/11 perspective, explaining that after the terrorist attack in New York City, there was a stigma shift from queers to Arabs (also broadly including brown queers or queers of colour) (p. 44). Simultaneous to this stigma shift, American flags and other paraphernalia began to make appearances in traditional gay spaces (bars, clubs, gyms, parades), further perpetuating white gays to adopt a patriotic pride for their country (Puar, 2007). With this new sense of national pride, white queer individuals began to identify as victims of the 9/11 terrorist attack and supported the U.S. as the 'war on terrorism' took place in Iraq (Puar, 2007). In response to this, queer individuals of colour stood in solidarity against the war with "their respective nonqueer mainstream racial and immigrant advocacy groups rather than with mainstream queer organizations" (p. 44). Puar (2007) mentions an "us versus them" rhetoric, where "U.S. patriotism momentarily sanctions some homosexualities, often through gendered, racial, and class sanitizing, in order to produce

“monster-terrorist-fags”; homosexuals embrace the us-versus-them rhetoric of U.S. patriotism and thus align themselves with this racist and homophobic production” (p. 46). This was seen when the U.S. media began to sexualize and racialize Osama bin Laden by associating him with negative connotations of homosexuality, like femininity, perversion, pedophilia, lack of family, being dark and stateless (Puar, 2007, p. 46). Similarly, Smith (2020) summarizes homonationalism as accepting of some queer citizens and recognizing gay rights but at the expense of racialized others (p. 67). From this, it can be seen how the divide between white queers and queers of colour came to be, and how such a divide is maintained by white queers.

Homonationalism can be understood in simpler terms as the normalization of white queer bodies to exclude *other* non-white, racialized queer bodies (Kehl, 2020). Jungar and Peltonen (2017) support this summarization, as they write that “homonationalism excludes or may even produce sexualized and racialized ‘others’” (p. 716). Moreover, homonationalism relies on how race is ascribed to some queer individuals but not others, this acts as a deciding factor when deciding who is “acceptably queer” and can be considered a patriot and be worthy of state protection (Kehl, 2020). Homonationalism can be seen as analytics of power (Awwad et al., 2016), as Puar (2007) argues that homonationalism is sustained by individuals who have privileged relations to capital but also through discourses of nationalism and its connection to racial harmony and gender normativity. Homonationalism has become ingrained in society, Puar (2013) asserts that homonationalism can be resisted and re-signified yet not opted of, as all of society has been conditioned by and through it (p. 336).

Homonationalism has been used in some research studies to analyze how queer teen characters are portrayed in the media. Campisi (2013) conducted a discourse analysis of season one of *Pretty Little Liars* (2010-2011) to understand how homonationalism is exemplified in the

construction and portrayal of a queer teen TV character. Campisi (2013) deconstructs queer teen character, Emily Fields, from *Pretty Little Liars* coming out to her parents as a lesbian utilizing Puar's (2007) theory to understand how homonationalism shapes society's understanding of queerness. Campisi (2013) found that Fields' mother is against her daughters' sexuality, accusing an Other of causing Fields' queerness and is outraged at Fields's father, a U.S. soldier who just returned from war overseas, for being accepting of his daughter's sexuality, accusing him of changing his values when he was deployed to war and interacting with an Other. From a homonationalist perspective, it can be assumed that Fields' queerness and Fields' father's acceptance of her queerness are a result of them interacting with an Other. Despite Puar's work initially coming out in 2007, Campisi has shown that homonationalism is still in effect in the late 2010s. Jaffer (2012) also analyzes how homonationalism plays out in news media reporting. Following a failed deportation of a disabled Indian refugee, *The Vancouver Sun* released a homophobic and xenophobic news story that can be viewed as homonationalist (Jaffer, 2012). Based on Puar's (2007) work, Jaffer's (2012) analysis of this situation leads to an understanding of how "operations of power that help construct the Canadian national as tolerant or supportive of queer identity, versus the racialized outsider, who is irremediably homophobic and always constructed as Other." (para. 5). Additionally, Jaffer (2012) noted that this homophobic and xenophobic news story put "(white) queers against immigrants of colour, the media constructed these two communities as separate and monolithic, failing to take into account not only intersections – one could be both queer and immigrant – but also the alliances that exist among and between the two communities." (para. 8). Semaan (2020) utilized homonationalism within their comparative and critical race analyses of the Bruce McArthur cases and police participation in the Toronto Pride Parade held annually by Pride Toronto. What was found from these analyses

is the processes of overall whiteness and homonationalist politics that plague the queer political stage, specifically the Toronto queer political stage (Semaan, 2020). Semaan also noted that the Bruce McArthur case is a contribution to a “longer history of racially motivated predatory violence toward queer people of colour” (p. ii). The latter of the two studies mentioned are of interest to this research as it illustrates there is potential to study homonationalism within news media and more specifically, the Bruce McArthur murders. Homonationalism will be used in this thesis to determine what types of media narratives emerged from the news coverage of the McArthur cases.

Puar’s (2007) theory of homonationalism stands as a macro-level theory, MWWS is a micro-level theoretical framework. To bridge these two theoretical pillars for this thesis research, the theoretical framework that is intersectional masculinities will be used to join the two aforementioned theories together and make them practical. Intersectional masculinities is a derivative of Connell’s (1995) work on hegemonic masculinity but with the added aspect of intersectionality, from the works of Crenshaw (1991). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have defined hegemonic masculinity as being “patterns of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue.” (p. 832). This limits masculinity to exist only on a gender basis, disregarding other social identifiers such as race, sexuality, class, etc. However, Connell’s (1995) work on hegemonic masculinity did not exclude the possibility for an intersectional analysis, however, it was never explicitly discussed (Christensen & Jensen, 2014). Furthermore, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) briefly acknowledge the possibility of intersectionality within masculinities, stating that “every structural analysis defines new intersections of race, class, gender, and generation” (p. 845). Concerning intersectionality, Evans (2019) writes that various social identities interact and

overlap each other to produce lived experiences that cannot be reduced to either single social identity. One must recognize the importance of such interactions and the effects these interactions have on the individual and greater society. Harnois (2017) acknowledges that individuals have multiple social statuses, possess multiple identities and argues that performances of masculinity are interconnected with performances of race, ethnicity, class, age, etc. (p. 143). Additionally, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality can shape the way men enact masculinity, the contexts within which these masculinity performances take place, and the extent to which men can benefit from gender inequality (Harnois, 2017, p. 144). It should be noted that despite individuals possessing a multitude of identities and statuses, no identity or status is more important than the other (Salinas & Beatty, 2013).

Christensen and Jensen (2014) note that the aim of an intersectional approach to masculinities is uncovering the “intersecting patterns between different power structures and how people are simultaneously positioned – and position themselves – in multiple categories, such as gender, class, and race/ethnicity” (p. 69). More on power, Harnois (2017) suggests that gender is not only just a hierarchy where men and masculinity are privileged over women and femininity but a hierarchy where rather some men and masculinities are systematically privileged over other men (p. 144). Men that are disadvantaged due to their sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class lack full access to the power and privilege that comes with masculinity (Harnois, 2017, p. 144). Aspects of power and privilege include authority, respect, status, and material benefits which Connell (1995) has referred to as “patriarchal dividend” (p. 79). However, patriarchal dividend is not distributed equally amongst groups within society (Harnois, 2017). Christensen and Jensen (2014) note that class status, racial and ethnic identity, and sexuality of a male can support their dominant position and male privilege as it strengthens the legitimacy of their

masculinity, however specific configurations of class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality can also diminish their dominant position and male privilege and weaken their masculinity legitimacy (p. 69). The theoretical framework of intersectional masculinities will be used in this thesis research in conjunction with MWWS to understand why the Toronto media and general public began to care about these disappearances when a white person was said to be a victim. As well, intersectional masculinities will accompany homonationalism in explaining the narratives that emerge from the media reporting of the McArthur case.

Chapter IV. Methodological Framework

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological framework of this research. In order to understand the media narratives that emerged and framed media discussion of the Bruce McArthur case, discourse analysis will be used in this study. This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section explores discourse analysis, the research method employed, what it entails, its outcomes, and how framing theory will guide the discourse analysis. The second section focuses on the research data and data gathering strategy utilized in this thesis. This section encompasses details of the data sources and the data collection process and period. The third and final section concentrates on the analytical procedures and explains the thematic analysis approach.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has been described as a research approach that examines the use of language in various types of text, written, spoken, and visual (Meyers, 2004; Taylor, 2013; Paltridge, 2012). Taylor (2013) explains that the text analyzed within this specific research approach attempts to explain language material that goes beyond the individual, meaning trying to explain the specific society at the time the language material was created. On a similar note, Paltridge (2013) notes that discourse analysis looks at patterns of language used and the social and cultural contexts the language and texts occur in. Discourse analysis has a variety of uses that can differentiate the outcomes and results of such analysis. Johnstone (2018) explains that discourse analysis reveals how meaning is created through pieces of information arranged together in a series of sentences. Paltridge (2013) follows a similar thought pattern when explaining discourse analysis, stating that the research approach is interested in the organization of information of text, what is said first and what is followed after. As well, discourse analysis is

used to describe how large-scale social and material influences can effect changes in patterns of language use, e.g., power relations (Johnstone, 2018). With regard to the relationship between society and discourse analysis, Van Dijk (2011) argues that discourse analysis and society and culture are “mutually constitutive” (p. 370), every time language is used, it contributes to the reproduction and/or transformation of society and culture (p. 370). Paltridge (2013) seconds this thought, asserting that discourse analysis can be viewed as a social construction of reality, where texts (written, verbal, or visual) are “communicative units embedded in social and cultural practices” (p. 7). Furthermore, discourse is shaped by and shapes the world, shaped by language and shapes language, shaped by previous discourse and shapes future discourse (p. 7).

A Framing Theory Approach to Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is utilized within the study and the analysis will be guided using Framing Theory. Framing theory came to be became popular through the works of sociologists like Erving Goffman and communication scholars like Robert Entman, who define framing as taking aspects of a “perceived reality” and retelling such aspects in various media forms (i.e., text or video), in a realistic manner to portray a “true reality” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). An interesting piece within Framing theory, theorized by Entman (1993), is that frames have four place settings throughout the communication process, these place settings are the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (p. 52). Entman (1993) asserts that communicators unknowingly or knowingly make “framing judgements” while deciding what to say or not to say, while the text contains frames that are present or absent in specific buzz words and images (p. 52). Additionally, the receivers’ beliefs and/or thinking may or may not be influenced by the frames used within the text or image they have seen, and the culture is filled with various frames however, there is most likely a commonly agreed upon or accepted frame that exists (Entman,

1993, p. 52-53). The framing process is summed up easily by Ardèvol-Abreu (2015), who states that certain parts of an event are highlighted over other parts, are used to define and select a problem, attribute cause and blame, and thus propose a solution to the problem (p. 425).

When media outlets cover crime events, Jewkes (2004) asserts that the media have the ability to socially construct crime and crime news can be framed and manufactured according to a specific set of values or agenda by prioritizing which stories are told over others, thus labelling certain crime events a problem or not (as cited in Bouchard et al., 2020). This allows the media to influence audience thought processes and public opinion on what are or are not problems within society. In addition, the frame that news events are presented in (episodic or thematic) can shape audiences' interpretation of the news event and who is to blame for the news event being covered (Johnston et al., 2015). Episodic frames are event-oriented and lean towards individualistic attributions of responsibility, while thematic frames place the news event and the main news event issue within a larger social context with responsibility for the event being placed on greater society (Iyengar, 1994; Johnston et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2010).

Analysis Framework

Discourse analysis has been present and utilized within various social science disciplines, such disciplines ranging from sociology, anthropology, psychology, communications, and political science (Pederson, 2009; Taylor, 2014). Gee (2014) suggests there are two approaches to discourse analysis, descriptive and critical. The descriptive approach aims to describe how language works to understand while the critical approach aims to attempt the same feat, it also wants to make connections to social or political issues or problems in the world (Gee, 2014, p. 9). Additional aims of critical discourse analysis include exploring hidden relationships between pieces of discourse and wider social and cultural formations, illustrate how discourse is shaped

by power relations and power struggles, and uncovering connections between discourse, ideology, and power (Corson, 2000). The discourse analysis approach that will be utilized in this thesis research is a critical approach, which is more commonly known as critical discourse analysis (CDA). However, there are a variety of approaches to CDA, like Fairclough's CDA, Van Dijk's CDA, Wodak's CDA, and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Foucauldian discourse analysis is based on Foucault's perspective on power relations and discourse, where everyone in society (except those who are confined) has power and can exercise their power amongst others (Liao & Markula, 2009). Moreover, Foucault argues that some groups within society become powerful amongst others due to the way they use discourses to assert their power (Liao & Markula, 2009). Therefore, a Foucauldian discourse analysis works to discover what pieces of knowledge dominate particular discourses, where these pieces of knowledge come from, and how they came to be so dominant (Liao & Markula, 2009). Ruth Wodak's approach to CDA is known as the discourse-historical approach (DHA) (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018; Wodak, 2009). DHA integrates a multitude of socio-political and historical contexts within an analysis of discourse, as Wodak (2009) believes discourses are connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events that are taking place at the same time or have occurred before (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Additionally, Wodak (2009) notes that DHA can explain why some interpretations of discursive events are seen to be more valid than other interpretations. Van Dijk takes a socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis, stating that social cognitions are "socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning" (p. 257). In this socio-cognitive approach, the focus is on social cognitions that act as a mediator between texts and society (Van Dijk, 2001).

While these approaches to CDA are well known, perhaps one of the most prominent approaches to CDA is Fairclough's approach to CDA. Fairclough (2003) describes his approach to CDA as being situated in the assumption that "language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life" (p. 2). Additionally, Fairclough (2003) notes his approach arises from the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory that looks at the relationship between language and elements and aspects of social life (p. 5). Fairclough's (1993) CDA approach is three-dimensional, where an analysis of the text, of processes of text production and interpretation (also known as discourse practice), and of context (also known as sociocultural practice) occurs (see also Fairclough, 1995). First, an analysis of text includes analysis of vocabulary, grammar, semantics, etc. (Sheyholislami, 2001). Fairclough asserts that any sentence is analyzable because they articulate representations of particular ideologies, constructed identities of a writer and readers, and construction of a relationship between a writer and readers (Sheyholislami, 2001). Second, an analysis of how text is produced and interpreted is referred to as discourse practice, the practice of how text is produced by large institutions and how text is received by readers (Fairclough, 1995; Sheyholislami, 2001). Third, an analysis of the context (sociocultural practice) in which the discourse occurs. More specifically, Fairclough (1995) notes that:

the link between sociocultural practice and text is mediated by discourse practice; how a text is produced or interpreted, in the sense of what discursive practices and conventions are drawn from what order(s) of discourse and how they are articulated together, depends upon the nature of the sociocultural practice which the discourse is a part of (p. 97).

Fairclough's CDA approach is the analytic framework that is used in this thesis research, to uncover what media narratives emerged and framed media discussion around the Bruce

McArthur case. Additionally, Fairclough's CDA approach aids in revealing if a victim's race or sexuality impacted how the media discussed their death.

Data Collection and Procedures

The data for this thesis came from news articles from the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, and *Xtra* that covered the Bruce McArthur case. These three news media outlets were chosen due to the audience that they represent and their political standing that may influence coverage of the McArthur case. As mentioned in Chapter I, the *Toronto Star* is known to be politically left-leaning, while the *Toronto Sun* is known to be politically right-leaning (Austen, 2020). *Xtra* is known to be a media outlet that covers news events with a queer lens for its intended queer audience (Xtra, n.d.). It is imperative that the data be accessible online, as only online news articles were utilized in this study. The data consisted of online news articles that were gathered from each media outlet's Facebook page. Facebook, a popular social media platform, acts as a database on its own as it hosts and stores links of news articles by each of the media outlets to their own website.

Eleven search terms were used on each media outlet's Facebook page. The terms are as follows: 1) Toronto Gay Village Murder Victims, 2) Toronto Gay Village Serial Murders, 3) Bruce McArthur, 4) Selim Esen, 5) Andrew Kinsman, 6) Dean Lisowick, 7) Abdulbasir Faizi, 8) Soroush Mahmudi, 9) Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam, 10) Majeed Kayhan, and 11) Skandaraj Navaratnam. These search terms were chosen to ensure any and all news posts about the victims, the perpetrator, the homicides, the police investigation, and all other matters related to the case would be present in the search results. Facebook posts made by the media outlet that included URL links to actual online news articles that directly mentioned or were relevant to McArthur, the victims, the homicides, the police investigation were collected. Facebook posts that were just

standalone text posts, video posts, or were not relevant to the victims, McArthur, homicides, police investigation were not collected. The selected online news articles were converted and saved as in PDF form. The file names for these articles consisted of the date that the article was collected, the search term used, the media outlet they belong to, and the date of publication, (e.g., Jan2BruceMcArthurXtra01/29/2019). Files were titled in this manner for clarity and to ensure no duplicate articles from other search terms are present. Online articles published between the January 1st, 2017 and December 31st, 2020 were collected, as 2017 was the year one of the victims, Andrew Kinsman, went missing and more notable TPS and media attention was given to the disappearance of gay men from the Village. There was a total of 114 articles collected from the *Toronto Star*, 66 articles collected from the *Toronto Sun*, and 32 articles collected from *Xtra*.

The analysis of the articles was conducted through a deductive coding process. A preliminary list of codes (see Appendix B for preliminary coding list) gathered from a brief first look at the articles to act as a guide for what general themes to look for when the discourse analysis occurred. The preliminary list of codes consisted of five codes, including: descriptions, images, relationships, Toronto Police Service, and Pride Toronto. These (parent) codes contained several child codes that related specifically to the subject matter of each code. For example, the parent code, descriptions, had seven child codes, that included imagery of Bruce McArthur, imagery of the victims, details of McArthur's life, details of victims' lives, details of the murders, details of the police investigation, and details of court proceedings. Throughout the critical discourse analysis, more codes emerged and were added to or modified within this preliminary coding list (see Appendix C for finalized coding list).

Chapter V. Framing of The McArthur Case

This chapter is one out of two analytical chapters based on the findings of the critical discourse analysis conducted for this thesis. In this chapter, an analysis of how the Bruce McArthur case was framed by the *Toronto Star*, *Xtra*, and *Toronto Sun* will be discussed. This chapter consists of two sections surrounding the framing of the McArthur case. The first section reveals how the police investigation leading up to and after McArthur's arrest was portrayed by the selected news outlets, the *Toronto Star*, *Xtra*, and the *Toronto Sun*. The second section of this chapter uncovers the manners in which the relationship between the Toronto Police Service and Toronto's queer community is portrayed and discussed by the aforementioned news outlets.

Framing of the Police Investigation

As mentioned earlier within this thesis, there were two missing persons investigations, Project Houston and Project Prism, led by the TPS. The former has been the subject matter of criticism used against TPS by Toronto's queer community for the mishandling of the investigation by TPS. While both the *Star* and *Xtra* have written about a potential lack of resources directed towards Project Houston and the missing persons at the centre of the investigation (Bowness, 2019; Moon, 2018); TPS claim this is not the case (Paradkar, 2018). Project Prism, the latter of the two investigations, turned into a homicide investigation upon the arrest of McArthur in mid-January of 2018 (Canadian Press, 2018b). All three news outlets described the police investigation as "extensive" (Mann, 2018e; Syed & Rizza, 2018; Yuen, 2018), the *Star* goes further and referring to the investigation as a "sprawling probe" (Gillis, 2018g, para. 7), and the *Sun* detailing the investigation as being "unprecedented in size and scope" (Connor, 2018, para. 11). The *Sun* has also quoted Ontario's Chief Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Michael Pollanen who described the investigation as "unique" (Hunter, 2018b, para. 28).

Additionally, the *Star* and the *Sun* were seen to have quoted Toronto Police regarding how the investigation (post-McArthur arrest) is leaving a ground-breaking, historic impact within the service. When discussing the forensic investigation of McArthur's apartment and the burial grounds of the victims, multiple members of the investigative team have referred to the investigation as the "largest forensic examination in the service's history" (Gillis, 2018c, para. 18); The *Sun* has referred to the investigation in the exact same manner, additionally mentioning other crime scenes and vehicles related to McArthur (Canadian Press, 2018c).

While projections of the nature of the police investigation have been delivered to readers as something of top tier level, what follows are the details that support the grandeur nature of the investigation. Such details include what took place during multiple forensic searches of McArthur's Thorncliffe apartment, the Leaside home backyard where McArthur buried dismembered parts of the victims, McArthur's previously owned vehicle, and other properties connected to McArthur. Both the *Star* and *Sun* identify the search of McArthur's apartment as being four months long (Canadian Press, 2018c; Gillis, 2018c). The *Toronto Sun* quotes lead investigator Sergeant Hank Idsinga describing investigators searching McArthur's apartment "inch by inch" (Warmington, 2018c, para. 19), *Xtra* also illustrated that investigators are "combing through McArthur's apartment" in an attempt to demonstrate the meticulous nature of the investigation (Mann, 2018e, para. 9). The *Sun* again quotes Sgt. Idsinga who tells media sources that the forensic search is "a painstaking process from the ceiling to the walls to the dresser drawers" (Warmington, 2018c, para. 19).

TPS not only conducted a forensic investigation of McArthur's apartment, but they also conducted a forensic investigation of a Leaside area home where McArthur had a working relationship with the homeowners, to store equipment for his landscaping business in exchange

for free landscaping/gardening work done on their property. It is here where McArthur buried the dismembered body parts of the eight victims in multiple planters and in the ground backing onto a nearby ravine. What was stressed by all news outlets was the various usage of TPS' canine unit to assist the investigation. All three news outlets discussed how the canine unit was used to identify areas of interest, which eventually led to the discovery of human remains. The canine unit was used to identify human remains within multiple planters found on property, as the *Star* mentions that two of the dogs showed a strong interest in five planters that McArthur had brought onto the property (Gillis, 2019d). Two excavations occurred on the Leaside property, the second excavation having occurred in the spring of 2018, as the ground began to unthaw from the winter that just past. The *Star* quoted Sgt. Idsinga discussing how the investigation is being carried out with a collaborative effort between the canine unit and investigators, stating that investigators are "prioritizing areas which give us the strongest indications with canine units" (Gillis, 2018b, para. 19). The *Sun* noted how essential the use of the unit was stating that the dogs notified investigators of areas where human remains were present, this lead investigators "to unearth remains on virtually every day of their second excavation of the property and surrounding area" (McQuigge, 2018, para. 7). The discussion of human remains being found every day throughout the second excavation was mentioned in all three news outlets. The *Toronto Star* discussed the everyday discoveries, writing that: "Human remains are found virtually every day of the nine-day excavation of what police called a 'compost pile' at the back of the property" (Gillis, 2019c, para. 59). Additionally, the news outlets all mentioned that the second excavation had drawn assistance from outside services, such as the Ontario Provincial Police, Durham Regional Police Service, and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service. As *Xtra* had written, the previously mentioned services were all present and partaking in the excavation,

“digging through the compost pile by hand, placing the refuse into buckets and then sifting through it all slowly, searching for any human remains” (Mann, 2018l, para. 5). In attempt of transparency between TPS and the public, Sgt. Idsinga allowed the media to observe investigators excavating the ground at the Leaside property, the *Toronto Star* wrote that the observation involved “reporters and TV cameras in tow, at least for five minutes of see-and-tell. Believe me, Toronto cops have never before in memory been so generous with media” (DiManno, 2018c, para. 3). Also mentioned by the *Star* was an attempt by an unnamed media outlet to covertly view the excavation scene (DiManno, 2018c). DiManno (2018c) from the *Star* quoted Sgt. Idsinga further on his reasoning for the media observance to occur, citing:

I’m a big advocate of you guys and the public knowing what we do, ... Rather than fielding a hundred questions about what’s going on in there, come on, I’ll show you, ... It’s transparency and, I think, an education piece for everybody to see exactly what’s going on down there, right? The process is impressive to watch (para. 8-10)

Aside from forensic investigations of McArthur’s apartment and the Leaside property where McArthur stored his landscaping equipment, TPS carried out investigations on various properties that had connections to McArthur through his landscaping business. All the news outlets mentioned this part of the overall investigation. News reporting on these properties provided some detail on how many properties were being investigated and where these properties were located, the selected news outlets wrote that TPS used their canine unit to search over 100 properties across the Greater Toronto Area (Gillis, 2018b; Mann, 2018n; Postmedia News, 2018). The number of properties in question varied as time went on, dropping to 30 properties then jumping to 70 and 75, and finally dropping again to five, as reported by all news outlets (Harris & Gibson, 2018; Mann, 2018c; McLean et al., 2018; Micallef, 2018; Sparks, 2018;

Warmington, 2018c). However, they were two properties that were of specific interest to TPS, one in Madoc, Ontario and the other in Scarborough, these properties were eventually released back to their owners, as reported solely by Harris & Gibson (2018) of the *Toronto Star*.

The manner in which the *Toronto Star*, *Xtra*, and *Toronto Sun* wrote about the police investigation framed it to be viewed and thought of as a matter of historic importance. The importance of the investigation was further stressed through details of how widespread the investigation was in a geographic manner, the number of properties searched and how far away they were from Toronto. Additionally, the portrayal of the investigation as being a thorough, time- and resource- intensive was made known by the news outlets. This was done through consistent quoting of the investigative progress by Sgt. Idsinga, the lead detective of the police investigation, as well as mentions of outside police services and emergency services aiding in the investigation. Perhaps it can be argued that this constant media endorsement of TPS and their investigation was done in an attempt to mend the relationship between TPS and Toronto's queer community that has historically been and currently is tense and strained. Framing of this specific relationship is discussed within the next section.

Framing of the Relationship between Toronto Police and Toronto's Queer Community

The relationship between Toronto Police and the queer community in Toronto has been known to be strained, given the expected ebb and flows of a powerful institution and its interactions with marginalized communities. With the occurrence of the McArthur case, a spotlight was put on this specific relationship, showcasing many areas of concern. Such concerns include the history between TPS and Toronto's queer community and missteps by Toronto Police and former Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders. These missteps include dismissal of rumours and concerns of a serial killer within the queer community, accusations of a lack of help

from the queer community regarding the McArthur case, and misconstrued safety cautions towards the queer community regarding online dating. Within the framing about the relationship between TPS and the queer community, responses from TPS and the queer community were discussed. Toronto Police's exclusion from the annual Pride Parade were also part of the framing of this relationship.

As mentioned earlier within this thesis, the relationship between the TPS and Toronto's queer community is still marked with animosity. This is partially due to the history of discrimination and physical attempts of queer erasure brought on by TPS, like the bathhouse raids in the 1970s and 2000s. This is reflected in the news reporting of the relationship, specifically from Isai (2018b) of the *Toronto Star*, who wrote that the "sporadic bathhouse raids in the late 1970s, culminating in the 1981 raids and mass arrests, put a massive wedge between police and the community" (para. 19). It should be noted that the *Toronto Star* and *Xtra* were the only news outlets to discuss the bathhouse raids in relation to the history between Toronto Police and the queer community. Discussing the relationship in a broader sense, the news outlets framed the relationship as being tumultuous and violent, the *Star* described the history between the two groups as "combative" and "hostile" (DiManno, 2018b). Adding onto this, what was also presented in the framing of the relationship was how the queer community had to protect themselves from others and even from the police. Lenti (2019) from *Xtra* explains that "Queer and trans people — as well as queer and trans spaces — had long been targeted by police, and to say that relations with the country's police forces have remained tense in the decades following the raids is an understatement" (para. 2). Speaking more so to the mistreatment of the queer community by Toronto Police, Gibson (2018b) of the *Star* notes that historically, gay men in Toronto were simultaneously over-policed and under-protected by Toronto police. *Xtra* provides

a current perspective on the current state of the relationship, as explained by a member of Toronto's queer community in an interview with Lenti (2019), the current relationship "has become much more complicated because we've become much more complicated. For some people, police are now friends that protect their property; for other people, they're still the same assholes that arrest you all the time" (para. 7). Given the mishandling of Project Houston and the overall McArthur case, the relationship is still riddled with anger and hurt. Speaking on how TPS handled the McArthur case in relation to the queer community, Keenan (2018) of the *Star* claims that "the police failed to protect a community. A community with which they already have a historically strained relationship" (para. 17).

Throughout the course of the police investigation, former TPS Chief Mark Saunders made several claims that upset and placed further strain on the relationship the service has with Toronto's queer community. The first being the dismissal of the community's concern of a serial killer targeting individuals within the Village. At a press conference on December 8th, 2017, then TPS Chief Mark Saunders shutdown concerns held by Toronto's queer community that a serial killer was active within the Village (Doherty & Bykova, 2017). The *Toronto Star* described this dismissal as Saunders having downplayed these concerns (Gillis, 2018c), *Xtra* referred to the queer community's concerns as simply as suggestions (Joaquin et al., 2019b). The news outlets further quoted Saunders during that specific conference, providing some reasoning as to why he was dismissing the concerns. The *Star* quoted Saunders telling media at the conference, "We follow the evidence, and the evidence tells us that's not the case right now. The evidence today tells us there's not a serial killer" (Doherty & Bykova, 2017, para. 14). TPS and Saunders faced immense backlash about this dismissal once McArthur was arrested in 2018. Despite this, the *Toronto Star* and *Toronto Sun* wrote that TPS still stands with the former Chief's claims made at

that 2017 conference (Gillis, Wallace, & Gallant, 2018; Pazzano, 2018c). Doherty & Cruickshank (2018) of the *Star* quoted Saunders defending himself and his claim, stating “In policing — what we do is we follow the evidence, and what I said at the time was accurate at that time” (para. 10). It is understandable as to why Saunders made the claim that he did, he was following standard protocol, yet Mann (2018g) from *Xtra* thinks otherwise, asserting that:

If the Toronto police had publicly stated that a serial killer was one possible reason that men were disappearing from the Church-Wellesley Village, it would have been a major media story, making the front pages of newspapers and leading nightly broadcasts. That could have led to many more tips coming in that could have helped the investigation. Instead, by consistently downplaying that possibility, they ensured the story of missing men received minimal coverage (para. 11-12)

The second claim made by Saunders that further strained the relationship between police and the queer community occurred in late 2017, Toronto Police cautioned those in Toronto’s queer community and those who use online dating apps about the potential dangers of such apps (Howells, 2017; Sparks, 2018). This caution was put out after the disappearances of gay men from the Village, TPS had mentioned they all used online dating apps (Howells, 2017). As reported by the *Toronto Star*, TPS were “urging individuals to get to know the person they’re connecting with as well as possible” (Gibson, 2017, para. 4). This could be done through exchanging photos and social media profiles of each other, as well as talking on the phone first prior to meeting in person (Gibson, 2017, para. 4). The *Star* wrote about additional safety precautions mentioned by TPS, which included leaving a note or telling a friend if one had decided to meet up with someone, “even for a casual connection, do so in a safe space” (Gibson, 2018b, para. 5). The *Toronto Star* discussed this at length, McKeen (2018) provided a queer

perspective to the issue from a Village community member who expressed their displeasure with the TPS caution:

“It’s frustrating because there’s an ongoing discourse from the Toronto police of blaming dating and blaming apps and tying sexuality to these deaths ... They’re telling us not to be afraid of something we should be afraid of, and telling us to be afraid of something we shouldn’t be afraid of ... it ties death to gay sexuality which is a very old rhetoric” (para. 7-11)

Within this quote, there is mention of TPS’ dismissal of the queer community’s concern about a serial killer within the Village and targeting queer individuals. Further on this point, Vaughan (2019) from *Xtra* wrote that the “burden of safety (and thus culpability)” (para. 9) was placed onto gay men themselves once this caution statement was released by TPS. by issuing warnings about dating apps. Despite the criticisms surrounding the caution, McKeen (2018) of the *Star* quoted Toronto Police claiming that it was never their intention to create fear amongst those in the queer community, rather to help those make “informed decisions going forward” (para. 13).

The third claim from Saunders that placed further strain on the relationship between the TPS and Toronto’s queer community is that the community themselves did not pass along any information that could have assisted investigators with arresting a suspect. In a 2018 interview with the *Globe and Mail*, Saunders revealed that if information had been discovered earlier, it potentially would have resulted in arresting McArthur sooner rather than later (Keenan, 2018). The *Star* quoted Saunders further expanding on what he meant, “We knew that people were missing and we didn’t have the right answers, ...But nobody was coming to us with anything.” (Keenan, 2018, para. 3). This part of the interview was the cause of outcry within the queer community, news outlets gathered responses from several community members. Boland (2018)

from the *Toronto Sun* quoted two community members on their reaction to Saunders' claim, one saying "They are also incredibly inaccurate and from the get-go, the community has been driving the bus in the McArthur issues and other issues around police safety" (para. 6), the other saying "It is almost like passing the buck. I always thought that was the job of police ... of the police chief to reach out to the community instead" (para. 12). In addition to the news outlets providing community perspective on this misstep by Saunders, the *Toronto Star* and *Xtra* gave their opinion on the matter. Keenan (2018) from the *Star* suggested that Saunders is "placing the blame for this alleged killer's horrifying crimes, and the Toronto Police Service's failure to catch him earlier, at least partly on the very community McArthur is accused of victimizing" (para. 4). Oliveira (2019) from *Xtra* referred to the Saunders' claim as a "manifest lie" (para. 6), while Mann (2018g) from *Xtra* criticized Saunders, describing Saunders as being "dumbfounded [as to] why some Torontonians, many of whom have suffered mistreatment at the hands of police, might not want to come forward to give evidence" (para. 6). Out of all three news outlets, *Xtra* was the only one to report that when civilians did try to pass along information to the TPS, they were brushed off (Mann, 2018g).

Toronto's queer community's reaction and response to the McArthur case was well represented by all news outlets. Feelings of disappointment, frustration, anger, and betrayal on behalf of the community was seen throughout the selected news articles from the news outlets. Larocque (2020) of the *Star* quoted a community member who spoke about community reaction to the McArthur case, stating that "that the mistrust and collective trauma response that the community has in the presence of police is completely warranted ... What other outcome could there be in the face of such a fractured history?" (para. 9). Mann (2018h) from *Xtra* quoted Pride Toronto in their reaction to TPS and the McArthur case, stating "This has severely shaken our

community's already often tenuous trust in the city's law enforcement ... we feel more vulnerable than ever" (para. 6). Again, from the *Star*, Cruickshank (2017) mentioned that within the queer community there is a "lack of confidence that "mainstream institutions" such as the police will take care of members of the LGBTQ community the same way they would others" (para. 11). This statement was published prior to McArthur's arrest but around the time Project Prism was initiated by Toronto Police, however it is a commonly shared sentiment amongst the community found in every news outlet reporting on the matter. There was also discussion on how the TPS could mend the errors they have made with the McArthur case. The *Toronto Sun* had mentioned that there is a lot of work needed to be done by Toronto Police in order for reconciliation to occur between them and the queer community as a lot of harm as occurred between the two before and during the McArthur case (Canadian Press, 2019).

TPS' 2018 exclusion from Toronto's annual Pride Parade, carried out by queer community organization Pride Toronto, was well reported by all three news outlets. TPS had first been banned from participating in the Parade in uniform in 2017, after a sit in protest occurred within the 2016 parade by activist group Black Lives Matter – Toronto (Martis, 2019). TPS was asked to not participate in the 2018 Pride Parade, given the mishandling of the McArthur case. Gillis (2019c) of the *Star* cited that the anger and shock around the deaths in the McArthur case, along with insufficient investigations conducted of other missing persons cases was the reasoning for Pride Toronto asking TPS to not participate. The *Toronto Sun* reported on the issue similarly, specifically stating that the deaths of Tess Richey, Alloura Wells, along with the deaths of the victims in the McArthur case have deeply impacted the relationship between the police and Toronto's queer community (Germano, 2018). The news outlets discussed that this participation withdrawal or banishment is more than just lack of police presence in the parade, it

is representative of a greater change that is much desperately needed. *Xtra* noted that TPS was past the point where symbolic gestures could be used to mend the relationship between the two. Mann (2019d) recalled what Pride Toronto has proclaimed, that “only a significant commitment and meaningful action can start the critical work of making our communities safer” (para. 2). Isai (2018c) of the *Star* wrote that the withdrawal/ban should focus on “getting to the core of community relationships...building respect and trust” (para. 16). Germano (2018) of the *Sun* quoted Pride Toronto and its suggestion that Toronto Police take the time they would have used to plan their participation in the parade and use it “better consult with the LGBTQ community about what it thinks it needs to keep itself safe” (para. 8). Saunders’ response to Pride Toronto’s requested withdrawal was one filled with action statements. Germano (2018) from the *Sun* quoted Saunders explaining that the Service’s withdrawal is hoped to be taken as a “concrete example of the fact that he is listening closely to the community’s concerns” (para. 2). Additionally, Germano (2018) quoted Saunders expressing a desire to work towards a time where the Service’s participation in Pride is “no longer a point of controversy and where participation of our members in the Pride Parade is accepted and welcomed” (para. 13). Gillis (2019f) of the *Toronto Star* quoted Saunders expressing some slight indifference, “I certainly won’t let the parade define what our relationship is going to be with the LGBTQ-plus community. It is their parade and who they invite and who they don’t invite — it really is up to them” (para. 2).

Toronto Police are well aware that significant work is needed from them to mend and rebuild their relationship with the queer community in Toronto, as mentioned in all of the news outlets. Specifically, *Xtra* asserted that TPS should be open to any and all criticism against them, responsibility should be taken for the mistakes the Service has made within the McArthur case,

and open conversations should be had between Toronto Police and community organizations that represent the queer community (Lenti, 2019). Saunders provided statements to both the *Toronto Sun* and *Toronto Star*, explaining steps the Service was going to be taking to mend the relationship with the city's queer community. Warmington (2018b) from the *Sun* quoted Saunders reassuring the community that their concerns are being taken seriously and "we see this as an opportunity to improve our police service and build our relationship with the community" (para. 14). Additionally, Gillis (2019f) noted that Saunders has acknowledged that concerns of trust and accountability from the queer community exist and to achieve such trust and to be accountable is a "day by day process ... we are actively and continuously working to develop those relationships" (para. 14). Similar remarks were heard when the *Star* interviewed a queer Toronto Police officer, Sergeant Henry Dyck. Gillis (2019f) quoted Sgt. Dyck's perspective on what needs to occur next from Toronto Police, "I think we just have to work towards building back the trust of the people that we are serving. And that involves a lot of listening and trying to do the right things for the right reasons" (para. 26).

The history between Toronto Police and Toronto's queer community, along with the several off-hand comments made by former Police Chief Mark Saunders and the requested withdrawal of the TPS by Pride Toronto have been put together here and used in a manner to frame the relationship between the police and the queer community as unsettling, tumultuous, and perhaps where the police are the aggressor and the queer community as helpless victims. Additionally, discussion and representation of how the police investigation of the McArthur case as something of grandeur level that was also time and resource consuming in reality. In the following chapter, discussion surrounding the framing of McArthur and the victims will take

place. Media depictions McArthur, the victims, and the victims' families through images, imagery, and descriptions from the news outlets will occur.

Chapter VI. Framing of the Offender and Victims

This chapter is the second of the two analytical chapters based off the findings of this thesis research. Various depictions and framing of the offender, Bruce McArthur, the victims (see Appendix A for list of victims), and of the victims' friends and families were apparent throughout the critical discourse analysis of the three selected news outlets. News media framing of McArthur occurred in two frames, one portraying McArthur as an innocent, "normal" man, the other portraying McArthur as this villainous monster. The victims were framed as a group but also individually, the frame assigned to each victim varied due to the differing characteristics and social identities of each victim. The framing of the victim's families and friends was prominent during the critical discourse analysis. Andrew Kinsman's family and friends were portrayed be grateful and appreciative of the TPS and how they handled the entirety of the McArthur investigation, while the deep sorrow and anger from the family and friends of the other victims were constantly reported on by the news outlets.

Framing of Bruce McArthur

Two media frames of Bruce McArthur were present throughout the critical discourse analysis of the news articles from the *Star*, *Xtra*, and the *Sun*. The first frame being McArthur as an innocent, normal man – just like one of us. This particular frame first emerges in January 2018, when Toronto Police announced they had arrested Bruce McArthur at his Thorncliffe Park apartment in Toronto. While all three news outlets utilized this innocent, 'normal' frame of McArthur, it can be seen that the *Toronto Star* used it more so than the *Toronto Sun* and *Xtra*. This frame is emphasized through personal recounts by friends and family who knew McArthur. McLean and Yang (2018) of the *Toronto Star* quoted McArthur's sister, Sandra Burton, after finding out about her brother's arrest, "He's a wonderful brother and father and grandfather and

friend. And it's not in his nature to do anything like this... He would do anything for anyone. He's that kind of a person. He would not kill anybody" (para. 10-11). Hunter (2018b) of the *Toronto Sun* also quoted Burton, who described McArthur as wonderful and someone who "wouldn't hurt a fly" (para. 12). Gillis (2019d) of the *Star* quoted Karen Fraser, homeowner of the Leaside property where McArthur buried the remains of the victims, saying "I just couldn't picture Bruce killing" (para. 65), explaining that McArthur had come off as someone not "capable of masterminding anything, so she'd assumed he'd been caught up in something orchestrated by someone else" (para. 65). Additionally, Gallant et al. (2018) of the *Star* also quoted a former co-worker of McArthur who described him as "...just a regular guy — obviously not, but he was just a regular guy" (para. 83).

Aiding in the construction of this innocent, everyday person frame of McArthur was the description of McArthur's physicality, personality, and employment by the news outlets. Writers that belonged to the *Toronto Star* provided numerous descriptions that built this innocent, "normal" frame. Gallant et al. (2018) described McArthur as a "gregarious white-haired landscaper who brought beauty to upscale Toronto neighbourhoods" (para. 1), who held a "seemingly benign, everyman quality" (para. 19). Paradkar (2018) wrote this about McArthur: "Avuncular, white-haired, white guy. "Harmless" is the word that springs to mind, right?" (para. 5). McKeen (2018) wrote that one of McArthur's dating profiles "paints a picture of a reserved senior searching for companionship" (para. 1). Discussion around McArthur's once active and available Facebook profile (TPS deactivated the profile days after McArthur's arrest) that shed light into McArthur's personal life was prominent. Isai (2018a) of the *Toronto Star* wrote that McArthur's Facebook profile provided "a glimpse into his life, which appears to be filled with family get-togethers and time out in the city's gay community" (para. 7). Mann (2018b) from

Xtra expressed that McArthur's Facebook profile, "showed a man who appeared to live an eminently normal life. He vacationed in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, volunteered as a mall Santa and took the ALS [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis] ice bucket challenge" (para. 6).

Supporting this innocent frame of McArthur were the images of McArthur (see appendix D) used within articles about him specifically, but also about the investigation and court proceedings. Doucette (2018) of the *Toronto Sun* noted that "photos of the jovial-looking, husky landscaper have been splashed in the media" (para. 1). Images of McArthur consisted of what the media could gather from his Facebook profile, specific photos of McArthur are taken at the Toronto Pride Parade with York Regional Police officers, at a Toronto Blue Jays baseball game, at Niagara Falls, and dressed as Santa Claus (Isai, 2018a; Szklarski, 2018). TPS faced criticism for not releasing McArthur's mugshot. Szklarski (2018) quoted TPS spokesperson, Mark Pugash, who stated that "a valid investigative purpose" (para. 6) must be needed for a mugshot be released, what constitutes as a valid investigative purpose is if there is "somebody who is at large and poses a risk to the public... helping to find missing people...[and] if we are concerned that there might be more victims" (para. 7-8).

The media framing of Bruce McArthur as an innocent, everyday man was constructed by the news media through the personal recounts of McArthur by his loved ones, the specific descriptions of McArthur's personality, physicality, and employment, and through the use of images. Vaughan (2019) from *Xtra* indicates that this frame has been employed on past serial killers like Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer, where Bundy's crimes were posed as strange since he was "good looking and well spoken...Dahmer is painted as misunderstood, even suggesting an ounce of empathy for the man who took 17 lives" (para. 16). Vaughan (2019) suggests that if McArthur is to be framed in a similar manner, he could "easily enter the folkloric realm of

modern-day serial killers — a mall Santa, a friendly landscaper — and his victims quickly forgotten” (para. 16).

The news outlets transition to the second frame of McArthur as a deceptive, evil person with monster qualities attached to him. This frame first appeared, quietly, when McArthur was arrested in 2018 but became the dominant frame once Toronto Police began their investigation at the Leaside property and McArthur’s apartment, and when McArthur’s court proceedings began. Again, all three news outlets utilized this frame in their articles regarding McArthur however, the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Sun* utilized and emphasized this frame more than *Xtra* did. This frame comes about through the descriptions of McArthur, the murders he committed, and the imagery used to describe him. Mann (2018c) from *Xtra* has described McArthur to be “one of the most prolific serial killers in Toronto’s history” (para. 8), Warmington (2019) and Pazzano (2019c) of the *Toronto Sun* backs this claim, calling McArthur an “evil serial killer” (para. 1) and a “horrific offender” (para. 15), respectively. DiManno (2018b) from the *Star* referred to McArthur as a “diabolical individual” (para. 6), while Gallant et al. (2018) of the *Star* proclaimed that the accumulation of information of the case and McArthur from interviews, court documents and media reports contribute to the “evolving portrait of evil” that is Bruce McArthur (para. 4). A contradiction is seen with respect to describing McArthur’s personality in this frame, Hunter (2018a) of the *Sun* wrote that multiple people who knew McArthur described him as “cold”, “unfriendly”, and had a “hair-trigger temper” (para. 12).

Gillis and Hasham (2019b) from the *Star* note that McArthur had been described by Superior Court judge John McMahon as “morally bankrupt” (para. 1). What is new is how McArthur’s behaviour is described in the media, specifically through court proceedings. DiManno (2019b) of the *Star* quoted Crown prosecutor Craig Harper, asserting that McArthur

“wasn’t remorseful. He wasn’t ashamed. He wasn’t repulsed by what he’d done. He enjoyed what he did. He murdered those men for what can be described as nothing more than self-gratification” (para. 31). The *Star*’s DiManno (2019b) noted that judge McMahon referred to McArthur’s behaviours (murders) as “pure evil, perverted, and depraved” (para. 4). McArthur’s deceptiveness was seen through the language used by the *Toronto Star*, Gallant et al. (2018) wrote that McArthur was a “master of duplicity who beguiled his friends” (para. 3) and whose “pleasant demeanour masked a smouldering malevolence” (para. 2). As well, news outlets that gathered statements from those who knew of McArthur who were shocked or surprised at the news of McArthur’s murders aided in the construction of framing McArthur as deceptive. Gallant et al. (2018) of the *Toronto Star* quoted a friend of McArthur who was stunned to learn about the murders, “it was an absolute shock. If the concept is hiding in plain sight, he did it” (para. 17). DiManno (2019b) likened McArthur to a chameleon, explaining that he led a “double life even after he’d come out as gay to his own family, never apparently revealing the menace and the depravity, the cruelties that thrilled him” (para. 30). Additionally, Gallant et al. (2018) noted that there was “no hint of malice, no telltale signs of roiling anger or aggression” (para. 22) that could be seen from McArthur by his friends, and that there were hints of “brutal undertones” to McArthur’s behaviour that he kept quiet (para. 58). Doherty & Cruickshank (2018) of the *Star* quoted a bartender from the Black Eagle, a bar McArthur frequented, who was stunned at the revelation, stating this:

He was just a typical Joe person, that’s what shocked me when I saw the picture, just like, oh my god, this person just blended in...when you picture somebody doing something like that, that’s not what I would have pictured. I thought it was going to be a homophobe redneck from somewhere (para. 32-33)

From the *Toronto Sun*, Warmington (2019) had quoted a lawyer from a separate - but connected - case, who explained that “McArthur’s monstrous nature was difficult to uncover because he led a life of extreme deception” (para. 15). It is in this quote, a brief mention of McArthur as a monster occurs. Language like that was used throughout the selected news articles of the case that shaped this image of McArthur as a monster or an animal. A *Toronto Sun* news article by Mandel (2019a), whose headline calls out McArthur as a monster, “From trophies to staging his victims, Bruce McArthur is a monster”, to Hunter (2020) of the *Sun* describing McArthur as a “rotund landscaping ghoul” (para. 4). Language used by the news outlets to portray McArthur as an animal can be seen through the extensive use of referring to McArthur as a predator and asserting that he preyed on the Village community and his victims (Doucette, 2018; Gillis & Hasham, 2019b; Mann, 2018d). DiManno (2019b) of the *Star* again quotes Superior Court judge John McMahon who declares McArthur “a sex predator. He preyed on his friends, he preyed on the vulnerable. He deliberately preyed upon them at a moment of sexual intimacy, when they were most vulnerable” (para. 13). Additionally, language was used to allude to imagery of McArthur as a wolf, Oliveira (2019) and Pazzano (2019c) of *Xtra* and the *Sun*, respectively, referred to McArthur as a “wolf in the fold”. Larocque (2020) of the *Star* briefly mentioned the queer community’s recounts of McArthur, stating “some would share stories, vague memories of him —or someone like him —on the periphery of a dance party or night out, a wolf circling the flock, waiting to pounce” (para. 3).

Framing of the Victims

A total of eight men were identified as victims in the McArthur case. The majority of the men shared similarities, while a few did not. Several themes were seen throughout the media reporting of these eight men, these themes consisted of sexuality, race and ethnicity, and the

marginalization and vulnerability associated with these men given the various social identities they held. Additionally, the images and lack of images used within articles that discussed these men was also a point of discussion within news articles. This chapter of this thesis focuses on themes that emerged through media discussion from the selected news outlets of McArthur's victims.

Framing of the Victims' Sexualities

Throughout the analysis, the selected news outlets referred to a victim's and/or all of the victims' sexuality by stating that either the victim(s) were either part of the queer community in Toronto or had some connection to the Village, as a broad attempt to classify all the victims as gay, despite the fact that all were not gay. Three out of the eight victims, Dean Lisowick, Soroush Mahmudi, and Krishnakumar Kanagaratnam, were reported to not be gay or have connections to the Village. For example, Gillis (2018f) of the *Toronto Star* reported that Krishnakumar Kanagaratnam's friends did not think he was gay. Similarly, Connor (2018) of the *Toronto Sun* quoted Sgt. Idsinga who stated, "there is no evidence to link him [Kanagaratnam] to the Gay Village...we don't know how he had contact with Bruce McArthur" (para. 4). Mann (2018j) from *Xtra* reported similarly about Kanagaratnam. There was no direct mention that Dean Lisowick was gay, the *Star* was the only news outlet to mention that he would sleep outside in the Church Street area (Gillis, 2018e). Gibson (2018a) of the *Star* reported that it is unclear how Mahmudi and McArthur knew each other and that Mahmudi's wife did not know if Mahmudi visited the Village. Interestingly, Mann (2018c) from *Xtra* was the only one to have quoted Sgt. Idsinga who stated that Lisowick and Mahmudi "don't quite fit the profile of the earlier victims...But it certainly encompasses more than the gay community — it encompasses the city of Toronto" (para. 9). All of the news outlets wrote in a general sense that the victims

had ties or connections to the Village or Toronto's queer community. The Canadian Press (2018a) from the *Sun* has referred to the victims as "men who disappeared from Toronto's gay village or had ties to the city's LGBTQ community" (para. 6). Again, from the *Sun*, Pazzano (2019d) detailed that all the victims either "lived in or frequented Toronto's Gay Village" (para. 5). From *Xtra*, Joaquin et al. (2019b) referred to the victims as "men who frequented the Village" (para. 16). McIntosh (2018) of the *Star* directly wrote that "many of the victims were members of Toronto's LGBTQ community" (para. 6).

Specific frames seen throughout the news reporting of Faizi, Kayhan, Kinsman, and Navaratnam and their sexualities are noteworthy to discuss. There is contrast in the framing of their sexualities that was noticed throughout the analysis. Faizi and Kayhan kept their sexual orientations hidden from their families despite being active within the Village (Gibson, 2018b; Isai & Syed, 2018; Syed and Gillis, 2018). Faizi was last seen in the Village, leaving the Black Eagle bar where he was a "regular" at (Gillis & Wallace, 2018; Gillis, 2019e). After his disappearance, Faizi's wife filed for divorce in 2012, under the assumption he had abandoned her and their children (Syed & Gillis, 2018). Seen in court documents, Faizi's wife claimed adultery as the reason for the divorce, Syed and Gillis (2018) quoted court documents that state: "It was discovered after Abdulbasir's disappearance that he had multiple adulterous relationships during his marriage with men and had used the family's financial resources and home for these affairs" (para. 28). As written in the *Toronto Star*, Syed and Gillis (2018) point out that Faizi was a closeted gay man, whose family and friends were not "aware of his other life" (para. 31). Faizi's life was complicated, as put by Gibson (2018b) of the *Toronto Star*, he was known to be active within the Village but his family "appeared to know nothing about the time he spent in the Gay Village" (para. 9) prior to his disappearance. Similar to Faizi, Majeed Kayhan had been "active

in the Church and Wellesley area since at least the mid-1990s” (para. 11), as reported by Isai and Syed (2018) of the *Star*. Kayhan was not out to his family about his sexuality and did not talk about his wife or children openly, as reported by the *Star* (Isai & Syed, 2018). The *Star* also mentioned that Kayhan did have a partner outside of his marriage, who he lived with in the Village for some time, however his partner passed before Kayhan went missing (Isai & Syed, 2018). The reporting of Skanadaraj Navaratnam’s sexuality shared similarities to that of Faizi and Kayhan, yet a slight difference in his story was seen. The *Star* reported that Navaratnam was out to only one of his brothers about his sexual orientation, the rest of his family did not know (Syed, 2018). Navaratnam’s brother, Navaseelan, explained to Syed (2018) of the *Star* that: “We told him ‘we accept you for who you are’...but he never said anything else, and I didn’t push him” (para. 13).

Within the articles, there is discussion around the victims of colour who are gay and how they kept their sexual orientation a secret or had an “other” life where they were open with their homosexuality. DiManno (2019c) from the *Star* refer to these gay, of colour men as keeping their homosexuality a “dark secret from spouses and sibling and children” (para. 12). Gibson (2018a) of the *Star* referred to these men as living “double lives” (para. 10). Isai and Syed (2018) of the *Star* explained that these “double lives” these men were living may have prolonged the time that passed before someone noticed they had gone missing. Paradkar (2018) of the *Star* acknowledged that “gay men of colour who are in the closet face particular vulnerabilities” (para. 19). Noticeably absent within this specific discussion is *Xtra*. There was brief mention by Joaquin et al. (2019a) from *Xtra* that McArthur sought out victims who were vulnerable based on a variety of characteristics, one of them being “men who were not out to their families or felt they could not come out” (para. 24) These vulnerabilities may differ from the vulnerabilities that

gay white men – closeted or open – face. Gay men of colour are subject to fetishization, discrimination, and homophobia, homelessness, etc. Quoting Alan Wong, a queer individual and Vanier College professor, Paradkar (2018) of the *Star* writes that “racialized gay men often face opposing dilemmas — fetishization and discrimination...overt racial fetishization (is) based on common sexual stereotypes (e.g., the submissive Asian, the well- endowed black man)...racism is based on outright rejection...for example “no Blacks, no Asians, White men only” (para. 24-25). Additionally, Paradkar (2018) from the *Star* explained that the victims:

who came from South Asian and Middle Eastern communities would likely be wrestling with not only homophobia in their communities and around them, but also battling stigma connected to their religious and cultural identities, and class issues if they were new immigrants — all of which layer up as compounding pressures (para. 30)

Shedding light as to why Navaratnam and Kayhan did not speak about their family openly, Isai and Syed (2018) of the *Star* quoted a friend of Navaratnam who explained that within the queer community, “you can be gay and disowned or abandoned...There could be a number of reasons why you don’t talk about family . . . it’s not something we pry into that much.” (para. 25).

Gibson (2018b) of the *Star* quotes Shakir Rahim from the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention community group in Toronto who asserted that “there are hard questions that have to be asked, about how you deal with individuals who have complex lives...it requires a really high degree of cultural competency, outreach” (para. 10).

In contrast to this notion of Faizi, Kayhan, and Navaratnam having to hide their sexuality or being referred to as having an “other” life, the discussion of Andrew Kinsman’s sexual orientation did not follow a similar pattern. Throughout the analysis, it can be seen that Kinsman is framed as a martyr. This martyr frame comes about through detailed accounts of how active

Kinsman was in the queer community and how well loved he was by the community and how his disappearance and death acted as the sole turning point for Toronto police that led to McArthur's arrest. Fearon (2017) of the *Star* wrote that Kinsman was a "fixture of the community" (para. 8). DiManno (2019a) of the *Star* quoted one of Kinsman's sister who expressed that Kinsman "gave back to the community in which he lived, worked and volunteered. He wanted to make the world a better place for those struggling to survive. He was a champion of the underdog" (para. 35). Additionally, there was specific and repetitive mention by the news outlets regarding where Kinsman worked, he was heavily involved with the HIV/Aids community in Toronto, some considered him a LGBTQ+ activist (Harris, 2018; Mandel, 2019a). Doucette (2017) of the *Sun* commented that Kinsman was a "communications coordinator at the Toronto HIV/AIDS Network" (para. 7). Mann (2017) from *Xtra* noted that Kinsman was a "long-time volunteer at the Toronto People with AIDS Foundation (PWA)" (para. 2). Discussed within the news articles is how Kinsman's disappearance led Toronto police to investigate and eventually arrest McArthur. Wendling (2019) of the *Star* asserts that Toronto police "reopened the investigation only after McArthur killed Andrew Kinsman, an employed white man, and even then, only because Kinsman's employed white friends kept looking for him and put public pressure on the police" (para. 4). A similar sentiment is seen when Moon (2018) of the *Star* quotes a Village resident who expresses frustration, explaining "all of the sudden this white guy goes missing, and then [police] start to put out warnings, and get more involved" (para. 4). The sentiment was not only felt by individuals, rather by queer community groups as well. Paradkar (2018) of the *Star* quoted an open letter to Toronto Police from the Alliance for South Asian Aids Prevention, that stated: "It is saddening and unacceptable that it took the disappearance of Andrew Kinsman to reopen public interest in the cases of the missing South Asian and Middle Eastern men" (para.

10). A note titled “Bruce” in Kinsman’s calendar on the day he went missing, along with security camera footage of one of McArthur’s vehicles at Kinsman’s apartment helped Toronto police identify McArthur as a potential person of interest in Kinsman’s disappearance which led to his eventual arrest (Gillis, 2019c). Mandel (2019b) of the *Sun* quoted a friend of Kinsman who asserted that “Andrew’s small note of his name [McArthur] in Andrew’s diary that was instrumental in his arrest... Andrew outsmarted him. Andrew beat him” (para. 25-27).

Framing of the Victims’ Race and Ethnicity

Moving from shared physicality and onto shared racial and ethnic identities, the news media continuously mentioned the race and ethnicities of six out of the eight victims. However, there was more of a focus on the victim’s ethnicity more than their race. Pazzano (2019c) from the *Toronto Sun* discussed the race and ethnicity of the men: “All men, except Kinsman and Dean Lisowick, had brown skin, three were South Asian and Esen was from Turkey” (para. 5). Mandel (2019a) of the *Sun* referred to these six victims as “newly-arrived gay men from the Middle East or southeast Asia” (para. 4). However, this was an over-generalization as some of the victims were not new to Canada and some were not gay. With respect to ethnic identities, the news outlets were sure to mention each victim’s ethnic identity, including their immigrant status. There was mention of Faizi as an Afghan immigrant by the *Star* (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Syed & Gillis, 2018) and *Xtra* (Mann, 2018i). Kanagaratnam as a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee by the *Star* (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Gillis, 2019c; Syed & Gillis, 2018), the *Sun* (McQuigge, 2018; Pazzano, 2019c), and *Xtra* (Joaquin, 2019; Mann, 2018k). Kayhan was referred to as an Afghan immigrant by the *Star* (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Gillis, 2019c; Gillis & Moon, 2018). Esen was referred to as a Turkish immigrant and citizen by the *Star* (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Gillis, 2019c; Harris, 2018c). Navaratnam as a Sri Lankan

Tamil refugee by the *Star* (Gillis, 2019e; Harris & Gibson, 2018; Moon et al., 2018), the *Sun* (Mandel, 2019a; Mandel, 2019b), and *Xtra* (Mann, 2018f), and Mahmudi as being from Iran by the *Star* (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Gibson, 2018a).

While the theme of race and ethnicity was discussed in the news coverage of six out of the eight victims, it was prominent in the discussions of two victims, Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam and Skandaraj Navaratnam. Kanagaratnam and Navaratnam were framed as a scared and undocumented refugee and friendly immigrant, respectively. This frame placed upon Kanagaratnam comes to be through personal recounts from friends and family and constant reporting on his immigration journey from Sri Lanka to Canada. All of the news outlets discussed how Kanagaratnam was one of the individuals on board MV Sun Sea, a cargo vessel that carried nearly 500 Sri Lankans to British Columbia in an effort to escape the civil war that was occurring in Sri Lanka (Gillis, 2018e). After landing, Kanagaratnam and the other refugees were detained for a period time before being released, post-release Kanagaratnam relocated to Toronto (Syed & Gillis, 2018). It was during this time that Kanagaratnam was waiting to hear if his refugee claim would be accepted or declined. Friends recall that Kanagaratnam worked various odd jobs and long hours prior to his refugee claim being denied and subsequently been given a deportation order (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Mann, 2018k; Syed & Gillis, 2018). Once Kanagaratnam's refugee claim and appeal was denied, a friend recalled Kanagaratnam being devastated, depressed, thinking his life was gone and only discussed the stress he was feeling from the rejection (Syed & Gillis, 2018). Gillis (2018f) wrote that the two rejections drove Kanagaratnam "further underground, where he once again feared persecution; if the Canadian government deported him, he thought he would be sent back to Sri Lanka and killed" (para. 41). Kanagaratnam's disappearance was reasoned by family and friend to be due to

avoiding deportation. His brother explained to Keung (2020) that “his status in Canada may have been a challenge for him we lived in hope that he may have gone into hiding and may appear once his status was restored” (para. 13). Similar remarks were made by Toronto police, quoted by Pazzano (2019a) of the *Toronto Sun*, who explained that Kanagaratnam’s “disappearance was never reported to police by anyone who knew him, likely because they assumed he was in hiding to avoid deportation” (para. 5). Through the personal recounts of friends and family about Kanagaratnam, his immigration process, and subsequent issues with homelessness and employment, it is seen how the frame of a scared and undocumented refugee is placed upon him. Interestingly, Mann (2018k) from *Xtra* claims Kanagaratnam was a “victim three times over — first by the Sri Lankan government, then by the Canadian government and then by the man who took his life” (para. 14).

The frame of a friendly immigrant placed upon Navaratnam is supported through constant news coverage of his immigration from Sri Lanka to Canada and personal recounts from Navaratnam’s family. The news outlets referred to Navaratnam as either an immigrant or a refugee. Mann (2018f) from *Xtra* explained that Navaratnam was an “immigrant from Sri Lanka, he came to Canada via the United States to escape the civil war that ravaged his homeland since the 1980s” (para. 8). Navaratnam chose to leave Sri Lanka. Syed (2018) of the *Star* quoted Navaratnam’s younger brother, Navaseelan Navaratnam, who stated, “He never came back... We were worried, always asking him to come back... We told him how we haven’t seen you for such a long time. But we knew he was okay” (para. 10-11).

Framing of the Victims’ Marginalization and Vulnerability

Discussion of vulnerability and marginalization surrounded the victims, some more so than others. DiManno (2019b) of the *Toronto Star* specifically described some of the victims to

have been “isolated and marginalized” (para. 12). Mandel (2019b) of the *Toronto Sun* characterized the victims as being “men on the margins, vulnerable targets whose disappearance may not raise alarm” (para. 16). All of the news outlets pinpointed specific vulnerabilities some of the men held to further enforce this idea of them. Some of the men were part of Toronto’s queer community. Esen, Faizi, Kanagaratnam, Kayhan, Mahmudi, and Navaratnam were brown men and of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent (The Canadian Press, 2019). Kanagaratnam and Navaratnam were Sri Lankan refugees, the former had been served a deportation order (Bañares & Jackson-Kelso, 2019; Mann, 2018f; Mann, 2018k; Syed & Gillis, 2018). Faizi, Kayhan, and Navaratnam were still in the closet about their sexuality towards their families (Gibson, 2018b; Syed & Gillis, 2018; Syed, 2018; Isai & Syed, 2018). Esen, Lisowick, and Kanagaratnam were experiencing homelessness (Gillis, 2018f; Gillis, 2019e; Howells, 2017; Syed & Gillis, 2018). Esen, Lisowick, and Kayhan struggled with substance use (Gibson & Mathieu, 2018; Gillis, 2018d; Gillis, 2019e; Harris, 2018c, Syed, 2018). Mandel (2019c) of the *Sun* specifically mentioned some of the victims as “especially vulnerable — a refugee fearing deportation, a closeted married father, a homeless man with mental health issues” (para. 21). Gillis (2019g) of the *Star* acknowledged some of the vulnerabilities the victims had, stating that:

many of McArthur’s victims were of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent, and some struggled with homelessness, precarious immigration status in Canada, substance abuse and more... That McArthur was able to get away with his crimes for years has led to criticism police failed to take the disappearances of racialized and vulnerable men seriously (para. 11).

Additionally, Joaquin et al. (2019a) from *Xtra* mentioned that a statement of facts read out during the court proceedings of the McArthur case explicitly stated that:

McArthur purposely sought out men who were vulnerable: men he met on dating apps; men who were not out to their families or felt they could not come out; men who had difficulties securing housing or were facing financial hardship; men who were immigrants, predominantly of South Asian or Middle Eastern descent (para. 24).

Aside from specific mentions of the victims' vulnerabilities, the news outlets discussed how society and societal institutions allowed for these men to become victims easily. Ngabo (2018) of the *Star* wrote that the criminal justice system “does not do much to guarantee safety of people who are marginalized” (para. 13). Mann (2018d) from *Xtra* suggested that “serial killers prey on the vulnerable because they know society treats some people as disposable...our governments, police forces and other institutions do so much to ensure that people remain vulnerable” (para. 22). The *Star* continued the language of “disposable lives”, as the article by Paradkar (2018) is titled “Gay Village disappearances and police behaviour show ‘whose lives are disposable and whose lives are not’”. Moon (2018) of the *Star* quoted Enzo Yaskic, a professor at Northwestern University, who explained that serial killers target marginalized communities because these communities “produce those that are willing to connect with anyone, regardless of the personal risk, and whose absence may be overlooked due to systemic biases” (para. 17). Aside for social institutions failing these vulnerable victims and many others like them, Wendling (2019) of the *Star* suggested that society plays a part in vulnerable people becoming victims of crime because “serial killers know “know that they are more likely to get away with their crimes if they target people society rejects — people of colour, Indigenous people, women, homeless or drug-addicted people, sex workers, and so on” (para. 12). While the victims may have possessed certain vulnerabilities, it does not mean they were just limited to one

vulnerability. Larocque (2020) of the *Star* quoted former Ontario justice Gloria Epstein, who led the external review on how the TPS handled missing persons cases, who explained:

Sometimes it's easy to just say [the murders] happened to eight gay-identified men, but not all the men were identified as gay. [The review] attempts to look at intersectionality of the situation. That there are men of colour who experience poverty, but also mental health issues, homelessness, addiction, complicated sexual identities (para. 22).

Although, it might be complex, an intersectional perspective is needed to understand how overlapping vulnerabilities faced by these victims led to their unfortunate death.

Use of Victim Images

Images used to provide a visual of the victims within the news articles varied in quantity and image quality (see appendix E for images of victims). A few images used for Esen, Lisowick, and Kanagaratnam looked like they were either passport photos or mugshot photos (see Appendix E1 for these images). Additionally, photos of Mahmudi and Kayhan were blurry and unfocused (see Appendix E2 for these images). Faizi, Navaratnam, and Kinsman had photos that were of good quality that were used within the news media (see Appendix E3 for these images). Szklarski (2018) of the *Star* quoted local queer activist, Nikki Ward, who commented that some of the victim photos were not flattering, specifically citing Lisowick's photo as "particularly sad" and suggesting it may be sending a message to the public that he is "less deserving of sympathy" for what occurred to him (para. 12-13).

Framing of the Victims' Families

Throughout the news articles, it can be seen that there is a difference between portrayals of the families of white victims and of the families of brown victims. While both types of families are portrayed to be grieving the loss of their loved one, there is more of a focus on the

grieving felt from the brown families in comparison to the white families. Additionally, one of the white families – Kinsman’s – is portrayed to be much more appreciative of Toronto Police and all the work done by them to hold McArthur accountable for what he did, than any of the other families, including Lisowick’s family.

Framing of Andrew Kinsman’s Family

The news media reported on the searches Kinsman’s family and friends were conducting in an attempt to locate Kinsman after he had disappeared. Gillis (2019e) of the *Toronto Star* wrote that an “ever-growing contingent of friends, family and community members had assembled to plaster posters around town and publicize Kinsman’s case, and his face.” (para. 12). DiManno (2018a) of the *Star* quoted one of Kinsman’s sisters, Patricia Kinsman, who explained that “for six months, we’ve been searching for Andrew, with his friends, with his co-workers and even strangers...we looked for him in the rain, in the heat and in the snow” (paras. 14-15). Harris (2018b) of the *Star* quoted a friend of Kinsman who described the scope of this searches, “We walked every nature path, every green space within a reasonable walking distance, from his house outwards” (para. 17). Additionally, an unspecified app was used amongst those searching to ensure there was no overlap in search locations.

Kinsman’s family grieving process is portrayed in the news media to contain emotions of sorrow of the loss of Kinsman and animosity towards McArthur. DiManno (2019a) of the *Star* quoted Kinsman’s other older sister, Karen Coles, who recalled, “When he was missing, I’d lie awake at night, wondering where he was and what he might have suffered. Now, I lie awake and think about how he was murdered and dismembered by someone he knew” (para. 38). Upon hearing the news that Kinsman’s remains, amongst the other victims, were found in buried in planters at the Leaside property, Kinsman’s friend, Candace Shaw, stated “I’ve spent the

afternoon feeling like I'm going to cry or throw up" (Syed & Rizza, *Toronto Star*, para. 32). Mandel (2019b) of the *Toronto Sun* quoted Kinsman's sister, Patricia, who recalled viewing his body in the funeral home, "I can't describe the smell when the body bag was opened...shock and disgust. A wonderful man gone from the world" (para. 21).

With respect to animosity felt by Kinsman's family and friends towards McArthur, Mandel (2019b) of the *Sun* reported on the victim impact statements given by Patricia Kinsman and Edward Healey, a friend of Kinsman. Patricia Kinsman stated that their family never refer to McArthur by his name. While Healey asserted that McArthur has "known Andrew as long as I have. So he knows what he took away from me. From all Andrew's friends and family. And I hope that every time he thinks of Andrew he has the same empty feeling that I have now" (para. 23), as reported by Mandel (2019b) of the *Sun*. Additionally, Mann (2018a) from *Xtra* quoted Patricia Kinsman expressing that she has no words for McArthur, stating "I wouldn't waste my time...I wouldn't say anything to him" (para. 19).

With respect to Kinsman's friends and family's reaction to the work done by the TPS to apprehend McArthur, there was nothing but appreciation for the service and the officers involved in the investigation. Warmington (2018a) of the *Sun* wrote that Kinsman's family would not criticize the work of Toronto Police, despite pressing attempts by the media to do so the family "offered praise for the men and women in blue" (para. 2). Patricia Kinsman is quoted by Doherty and Cruickshank (2018) of the *Star*, stating "the police, in my opinion did their job, they had information that they could not share to us or the media...It took them less than 7 months to make an arrest and they had next to nothing to work with them" (para. 11-12). Patricia is quoted again, this time by DiManno (2018a) from the *Star*, showing praise for investigators, stating "No video surveillance...He didn't tell anybody where he went. There were no clues. He just didn't

come home. How do you go from having nothing to finding a killer in seven months?” (para. 31). Patricia and Karen Coles, Kinsman’s other sister, are quoted by Warmington (2018a) of the *Sun* as being happy with the police investigation of her brother’s disappearance turned murder, Coles reasons that “establishing the link between them is the difficult part... You can’t fault the police for taking the time that they do” (para. 4-5). Keung (2020) of the *Star* quoted a friend of Kinsman, who expressed great gratitude to the TPS and its officers, stating “I am grateful to the police who investigated Andrew’s disappearance. I am grateful to the investigators who first heard me: Andrew is missing, I beg you, help me. I am grateful to whomever connected Andrew’s disappearance to those of the other men” (para. 14).

Framing of the Other Families

The portrayals of the families of Esen, Faizi, Kanagaratnam, Kayhan, Mahmudi, and Navaratnam shared some similarities to the portrayal of Kinsman’s family. Some of these families carried out their own searches for their loved one in conjunction with police searches. After his disappearance, Faizi’s family searched his email account for clues to what had happened to him (Ling, 2020). Ling (2020) from *Xtra* explained that Faizi’s family discovered “his dating profiles and the conversations he had had with other men... his wife, Kareema, drove to the Village in hopes of discovering something about his disappearance” (para. 17). Kayhan’s family was reportedly working in tandem with police to try and locate him, per Ling (2020). The families of Kanagaratnam and Navaratnam both made online pleas on Facebook for any information regarding their missing loved one. Syed and Gillis (2018) of the *Star* reported that Kanagaratnam’s older brother “posted a desperate message on Facebook, pleading for help” (para. 49). Part of the message posted on Kanagaratnam’s brother’s Facebook is as follows, “He hasn’t made any contacts with the family in the past year... If you know about this person, please

(tell us) immediately” (para. 50), as reported by Syed and Gillis (2018) of the *Star*. Bañares and Jackson-Kelso (2019) of the *Star* noted that Navaratnam’s friends and family in Toronto combed “the Gay Village, Cabbagetown and the Don Valley for an explanation for his uncharacteristic disappearance” (para. 11). Ling (2020) from *Xtra* briefly mentioned that Navaratnam’s friends had “put up posters, searched ravines and parks” (para. 10). Navaratnam’s family back in Sri Lanka turned to Facebook in an effort to locate their loved one. Syed (2018) of the *Star* noted that Navaratnam’s brother, Navaseelan Navaratnam, made several posts on his Facebook account regarding his brother’s disappearance, pleading on September 19th, 2010, “Anyone in Toronto Canada who can help find my bro please let me know” (para. 21), a photo of the missing persons poster generated by Toronto Police accompanied this online plea.

In terms of the portrayal of the grieving process experienced by these families, there was much more focus and detail given in the news reporting by the news outlets. As reported by Gillis (2019b) of the *Star*, Esen’s family was devastated to learn their loved one had been murdered by McArthur. Esen’s brother, Cinar Ferhat, released a statement to the *Toronto Star*, which stated their family “can’t come to terms with his savage murder... How would anyone with a heart feel if their youngest brother, their son, is murdered when they thought he was living in one of the safest places in the world?” (para. 5-6), as recounted by Gillis (2019b) of the *Star*. Additionally, Ferhat stated to Gillis (2018d) of the *Star* that full closure of his brother’s death will only occur “until he, and everyone else, understands the scope of the tragedy that claimed his brother” (para. 19); Esen’s funeral had only brought partial closure as suggested by Gillis (2018d). A friend of Esen, Richard Kikot, expressed to media after reading his victim impact statement, that he “just wanted people to know that he wasn’t just a Turkish man like in Bruce McArthur’s file. There was no name for Selim that he was here and recognized and noticed”

(para. 4), as reported by Pazzano (2019b) of the *Sun*. Mann (2018i) from *Xtra* described that no surprise came from Faizi's family when they had found out he fell victim to McArthur's murders. Quoting Sgt. Idsinga who stated that the family, via Mann (2018i) from *Xtra*, was "really not surprised at the end of it... There's been so much coverage I think they've been expecting it" (para. 8). During a reading of her victim impact statement in court, recounted by DiManno (2019b) of the *Star*, Faizi's wife, Kareema, explained that her daughters "suffer terribly knowing what happened to their father... They pretend to be strong in front of me. But when they are alone in their room, they take a picture of their father with them. I hear them crying constantly" (para. 29). Syed and Gillis (2018) of the *Star* reported that Kanagaratnam's siblings did not want to tell their parents what actually happened to their brother, citing that their parents suffered from health conditions that could cause injury if told the truth about what happened to their brother/son. When Kanagaratnam's parents were told the truth, they had both fainted (Syed & Gillis, 2018). Syed and Gillis (2018) reported that Kanagaratnam's mother, Santhanaladchumy, was inconsolable during a video interview, she "couldn't speak about her son without breaking down in tears. She clasped her hand in prayer and then raised her palms to the air... "Why am I alive?" she said in Tamil" (para. 21-22). Having lost another child, Syed and Gillis (2018) quoted Santhanaladchumy saying, "I cannot (live) without both these children... I wanted to die before them" (para. 53). Gillis (2018f) of the *Star* detailed that Kanagaratnam's mother travelled to Toronto for his funeral, she "took a seat directly beside her son's casket, her face sullen and her hands clasped in her lap" (para. 5). Gillis (2018f) quoted a spokesperson for the family who mentioned that Santhanaladchumy was angry, "As a mom, she is angry with everyone" (para. 6). At the funeral, Gillis (2018f) recalled that one of Kanagaratnam's brother was seen to be:

doubled over on his brother's casket, at times pounding it with his fist. He was crying out, anger and grief spewing from his mouth. In his native Tamil, over and over, he screamed questions, asking how Canada could let his brother to be killed, why he hadn't been taken care of (para. 1-2).

There was not much news reporting on the reaction from Kayhan's family regarding his death. Sgt. Idsinga is quoted by Gillis (2018c) of the *Star* describing Kayhan's family's reaction to the news of his body being identified as one of the remains found buried in the Leaside home, "They are very grateful. They are very thankful for the closure, and they're very angry... They're angry, I think, at the right person, which is Mr. McArthur." (para. 10). Navaseelan Navaratnam told Syed (2018) of the *Star* that he was keeping the "devastating truth" (para. 2) about his brother from their mother, citing that she is a heart patient and did not want the truth to hurt her. A friend of Navaratnam, Jean-Guy Cloutier, told Gillis (2019a) of the *Star* that he has mixed feelings regarding the guilty plea made by McArthur, explaining that "it still doesn't bring Skanda back" (para. 44). Gibson (2018a) of the *Star* revealed that Mazook weeps "in privacy for the husband she's been hoping for over two years will return" (para. 12). Mazook is quoted by Gibson (2018a) to be yearning for her husband to return home, "I miss him, you know?... How would I forget him? I can't forget him... I want him to come back" (para. 14-21). In her victim impact statement, Fareena Mazook, told the court, as reported by DiManno (2019b) of the *Star*, that in response to Mahmudi's death, "the severe degree of my emotional distress had a major impact on my relationship with my son and my friends as my emotional and mental health changed drastically" (para. 26). DiManno (2019b) also recounted that Fareena has been struggling financially due to Mahmudi's disappearance as she had to leave her job due to psychological trauma.

With respect to these family's relationship and reaction to Toronto Police, there are mixed portrayals. Keung (2020) of the *Star* wrote:

those whose loved ones had legal status in Canada showed gratitude for the police involved and trust in their investigation...families of the victims who were refugee claimants, it was different. In their statements, friends and family expressed a fear of police, to the point where they said they were too afraid to even come forward to report a missing person, for fear of risking deportation (para. 2-3).

Esen's brother, Farhet Cinar, is portrayed to be furious with Toronto Police and how they handled his brother's disappearance and the other disappearances. The Canadian Press (2018) of the *Star* wrote that Cinar "didn't think police had taken the 2017 disappearance of his sibling, or other similar cases, seriously" (para. 4). Gillis (2018d) of the *Star* explains that Cinar "feels police should have done more to find the missing men earlier" (para. 20). Cinar is quoted by Mandel (2019b) of the *Sun* expressing that he and his family "find it hard to believe that the serial killing of eight innocent gay persons went unnoticed for seven years" (para. 11). Within the news articles, Cinar is seen to be calling for a public inquiry of the handling of the missing person cases to uncover how Toronto police truly handled this missing person cases. Gillis (2019b) from the *Star* quoted Cinar explaining that "a full independent public inquiry must be carried out in order to get into the bottom of this neglect over many years...Lives could have been saved, including Selim's, if there were proper investigation in time and place" (para. 13-14). An interesting point is mentioned by the *Star's* Isai and Syed (2018) who quote a friend of Kinsman, Greg Downer, who has made attempts to reach out to the victims of other families but explains "the common message we got back is it was something they'd already closed and left in

the past. So they didn't want to be part of this process" (para. 17). The process Downer is referring to is speaking to the media at a news conference.

Chapter VII. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this thesis suggest that a multitude of media narratives emerged from the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, and *Xtra* and framed the discussion of the Bruce McArthur case. Such narratives and their frames include the intensive, historic, and productive police investigation conducted by the Toronto Police Service, the duality of Bruce McArthur, the innocent, struggling, and sometimes closeted victims and their grieving families. In this final chapter of this thesis, the main findings of this research will be discussed, including an overview of what narratives occurred throughout the media coverage of the McArthur case, how a victim's and their families' race and a victim's sexuality impacted the media coverage of their death. Additionally, discussion of the findings that suggest that a difference in media coverage amongst all three news outlets will occur. Additionally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of research limitations, and openings for future research.

Key Findings

As outlined within this research, and written in depth in the two analysis chapters, various narratives were pushed by the news outlets about the McArthur regarding the police investigation, the relationship between Toronto Police and Toronto's queer community, Bruce McArthur, McArthur's victims, and the victims' families. Regarding the police investigation, the frame placed upon it was one that saw the police investigation being grandeur and top tier in nature, while also being of historic importance to the Toronto Police Service. All three news outlets commented on the nature of the investigation, referring to it as being "extensive" (Mann, 2018e; Syed & Rizza, 2018; Yuen, 2018). The amount of evidence reported to be collected from McArthur's apartment and the Leaside property also aided in the construction of this frame. All of the news outlets had quoted Sgt. Idsinga who reported that human remains belonging to the

victims were found every day during the excavation of the Leaside property (Gillis, 2019c; Mann, 2018m; McQuigge, 2018.). Concluding the investigation of McArthur's apartment, the *Toronto Star* and *Toronto Sun* mentioned that 1,800 exhibits and 18,000 photographs were collected as evidence from McArthur's apartment (Canadian Press, 2018c; Gillis, 2019f). Oliveira (2019) from *Xtra* specified that McArthur kept "massive amounts of evidence in his residence, in his car, at his places of work... notebooks, missing posters, trophies and digital images of his victims that he clumsily deleted, only later to have them recovered by police" (para. 8). Additionally, the news outlets (excluding *Xtra*) quoted Toronto Police on how the investigation was the "largest forensic examination in the service's history" (Canadian Press, 2018c, para. 5; Gillis, 2018c, para. 18). It can be argued that this frame placed upon the investigation was an attempt to mend the relationship between TPS and Toronto's queer community that has historically been and currently is strained and filled with tension. Conversely, there was a brief suggestion by Vaughan (2019) from *Xtra*, that "there will be an impulse to wrap this case up as tidily as possible in order to avoid the unpleasant work of taking a hard look at relations between police and LGBTQ2 people" (para. 14).

The portrayal of the relationship between Toronto Police and Toronto's queer community is seen as unsettling and tumultuous. When discussing the relationship, the *Star* and *Xtra* covered the hostile history between the two, mentioning the bathhouse raids of 1981 in Toronto and a general notion that queer individuals in Toronto have had to protect themselves from others and the police (Isai, 2018b, Lenti, 2019). Additionally, the multiple missteps made by Toronto Police through former Police Chief Mark Saunders was seen to construct this frame. Even extending it further, to be seen as the police as aggressors and the queer community as helpless victims. On behalf of the Service, Saunders was seen to dismiss concerns of a serial killer in the Village,

specifically cautioned to community about online dating app safety, and accused the community for not coming forward with information regarding the case. In response to these missteps, the news outlets covered the queer community's response to the McArthur case, which involved feelings of disappointment, frustration, anger, and betrayal. This is exemplified by *Pride Toronto*, quoted by Mann (2018h) from *Xtra*, the McArthur case "has severely shaken our community's already often tenuous trust in the city's law enforcement ... we feel more vulnerable than ever" (para. 6). The news outlets covered the Service's response to the pain felt by the queer community through the many statements given by Saunders, who expressed a willingness by the Service to work with the community to repair the damage that has been done. One of the statements given by Saunders, quoted by Warmington (2018b) of the *Sun*, reassured the community that their concerns were being taken seriously and views "this as an opportunity to improve our police service and build our relationship with the community" (para. 14).

News articles discussing McArthur framed him in two manners: as an innocent, 'normal', man but also as a deceptive, evil person with monster-like qualities. The former was the first frame to appear, taking place when McArthur's arrest was first reported by the news outlets. This innocent, 'normal' frame is supported through physical descriptions and personal recounts from those who knew McArthur. From the *Star*, Paradkar (2018) notes that McArthur looked like an "avuncular, white-haired, white guy. "Harmless" is the word that springs to mind, right?" (para. 5). Additionally, a friend of his, quoted by Gallant et al. (2018) of the *Star* described that learning about McArthur's murders was "an absolute shock. If the concept is hiding in plain sight, he did it" (para. 17). The transition into the deceptive, evil monster-like person frame occurred when Toronto Police began their investigation at McArthur's apartment and the Leaside property, and when the court proceedings began. Further support of this frame is given by the

imagery used to describe McArthur as an animal or a monster, the *Sun* and *Xtra* both referred to McArthur as a “wolf in the fold”, while the Larocque (2020) from the *Star* quoted some members of the queer community who recalled McArthur being “on the periphery of a dance party or night out, a wolf circling the flock, waiting to pounce” (para. 3). The monster descriptor of McArthur was used mainly by the *Sun* as they had written about McArthur in this manner. For example, a headline from Mandel (2019a) explicitly calls out McArthur as a monster, “From trophies to staging his victims, Bruce McArthur is a monster”. As the court proceedings were coming to a close, Vaughan (2019) from *Xtra* suggested that the “inevitable psychological speculations over his [McArthur] motives” would begin, reasoning that “the “why” will always be more entertaining for many than remembering the victims” (para. 14).

With respect to the framing of the victims, the frames varied amongst all eight victims. Esen was portrayed to be a struggling yet innocent individual, as his recovery from substance abuse was discussed, along with personal recounts from friends and family about his personality and “tender and kind humanity”, as mentioned by the Harris (2018c) of the *Star*. Abdulbasir Faizi was framed to be seen as an innocent family man who lived a secret double life, the news outlets discussed that Faizi was “cordial and down to earth” (Bañares and Jackson-Kelso, 2019, para. 16), in a 11-year marriage to his wife, and a proud father of two but kept his orientation a secret from his family (Gibson, 2018b; Gillis & Syed, 2018; Syed & Gillis, 2018). The frame of a scared and undocumented refugee was placed upon Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam, much of the focus by the news outlets was on Kanagaratnam’s immigration journey from Sri Lanka to Canada (specifically Vancouver to Ontario) and the fear he felt living in Toronto undocumented as his refugee claim was denied twice. Majeed Kayhan was portrayed to be a troubled closeted man by the news outlets, as there was discussion of his substance abuse and anger issues but also

how Kayhan has been active in the Village since the mid-1990's which was unknown to his family. Through the news outlets, the frame placed onto Andrew Kinsman is one of a martyr. Friends and family speak very highly and positively about Kinsman, regarding his personality and the work he has done for Toronto's queer community. It was reported within the media that Kinsman's disappearance was what led Toronto Police to reopen another missing person's investigation and how a note found in Kinsman's apartment with McArthur's name on it led Toronto Police to view McArthur's eventual arrest (Mandel, 2091b; Paradkar, 2018). Little media coverage was found on Dean Lisowick but discussion regarding him portrayed him to be a struggling homeless individual. Much of the information about Lisowick was gathered from homeless shelter staff who recalled Lisowick as kind and respectful, looking for work wherever he could get it, and who be in and out of the city's shelter system for months at a time (Gibson & Mathieu, 2018; Gillis, 2018f; Mathieu, 2018). Soroush Mahmudi was portrayed to be a hardworking family man by the news outlets. Personal recounts of Mahmudi from his wife aided in the construction of this frame, as she recalled him waking up early in the morning to go to work and spending time with their family but keeping in touch with his family from Iran (Gibson, 2018a). Lastly, the frame placed upon Skandaraj Navaratnam was of a friendly immigrant, based on the recollections from friends and family, they recall him being "incredibly social, gregarious, outgoing" (Isai & Syed, 2018). There was also constant referral of Navaratnam as either a refugee or immigrant as he did immigrate to Canada from Sri Lanka through the United States.

Aside from individual framing of the victims, the news outlets discussed the victims in a collective manner, focusing on their shared physicality, racial/cultural identities, and sexual orientations. Majority of the victims were middle-aged, had a good amount of facial hair (e.g.,

beards), of South Asian or Middle Eastern descent, and some were gay. There were instances of over generalization of the victim's sexuality, as only Kanagaratnam, Lisowick, and Mahmudi were reported as not being gay (Connor, 2018; Gibson, 2018a; Gillis, 2018e; Gillis, 2018f; Mann, 2018j). There was also discussion amongst the reasoning as to why some of the victims lived double lives and hide their sexual orientation from their families. Issues of homophobia and stigmas attached to being homosexual amongst South Asian and Middle Eastern religions and cultures could have influenced some of the racialized victims to keep their orientation a secret from their family, as there is potential for abandonment and disownment to occur (Isai & Syed, 2018; Paradkar, 2018).

In addition to discussion about the victims, there was also mention of their families by the news outlets, with respect to their bereavement and feelings towards Toronto Police. Amongst the articles about the families from all three news outlets, there seemed to be a comparison between Kinsman's families and the families of the brown victims, Lisowick's family was not included as he was estranged from his family prior to his death. While both families were reported to be grieving the loss of their loved ones, Kinsman's family was portrayed to be more appreciative of the work done by Toronto Police to identify and arrest McArthur for the crimes he committed. The other families were portrayed to either be angry with Toronto Police or did not want to discuss the matter any further. The frames placed upon the investigation, relationship between Toronto Police and Toronto's queer community, Bruce McArthur, the victims, and the victims' families have great implications on society and what they make of these frames and narratives of the McArthur case.

Discussion of Key Findings

One of the main media narratives to appear throughout the critical discourse analysis of the 212 individual news articles was the police investigation of McArthur's Thorncliffe Park apartment and the Leaside property where he had buried dismembered human remains of the victims. It was suggested that the news media portrayal of the police investigation appears to have occurred in an attempt to mend the relationship between Toronto Police and Toronto's LGBTQ2SIA+ community. The history between the two has been hostile, as news outlets cited the bathhouse raids that occurred in the early 1980s. Looking specifically at the McArthur case, there was disapproval from the community towards Toronto Police for mishandling the two missing persons investigations, Project Houston and Project Prism, that majority of the victims were at the centre of. Some members of the community reasoned this mishandling was due to racism and homophobia within the Service and by the officers working on these investigations. In response to this, Toronto Police reassured the community that no bias was involved in these missing persons investigations and that ample work and resources were invested. However, an independent civilian review into missing person investigations led by the retired Ontario Court of Appeal Justice Gloria Epstein, asserted that systemic bias, discrimination, and differential treatment were at play during the investigations of the eight missing men (Epstein, 2021). Furthermore, Epstein stated that "some officers had misconceptions or stereotypical ideas about the LGBTQ2S+ communities. At times, their perceptions impeded their work" (p. 3).

Moving from the Toronto Police Service to McArthur, the news articles were seen to portray McArthur in two manners, as an innocent, 'normal' individual but also as a deceptive, evil person with monster-like qualities to him. The findings of this thesis contribute to the work by Haritaworn (2019) who found that media coverage of McArthur was focused on his

“everyman” qualities and the shock expressed by the public regarding his crimes versus who he portrayed himself to be. During the critical discourse analysis, this “normal” frame was placed upon McArthur, appears to be supported through personal recounts of McArthur from those that knew him, and the images used by the news outlets within their articles. Both of these aspects reinforced this innocent, ‘normal’ frame of McArthur. Additionally, the findings of this thesis extend on the work of Haritaworn (2019), as the second frame of McArthur as an evil, deceptive monster-like person was seen within the news articles about him. There was some fear expressed by Vaughan (2019) from *Xtra* that if McArthur were to be portrayed through the first frame, like many other serial killers (e.g., Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer), he could “easily enter the folkloric realm of modern-day serial killers — a mall Santa, a friendly landscaper — and his victims quickly forgotten” (para. 16). If this were to occur, it would continue the cycle of ignorance where these vulnerable (due to their race, sexual orientation, class status, employment status, housing status) victims are ignored and subsequently forgotten by the news media and the greater public, further stigmatizing them and leaving them to feel helpless.

As mentioned earlier, the narratives of all eight victims varied based on their individual characteristics and social identities. The narrative of Andrew Kinsman stood out in particular, as he was portrayed to be a martyr amongst the victims. This narrative frame is supported through positive recollection of Kinsman from those that knew him, his active and close involvement in Toronto’s queer community, specifically the HIV/AIDS community, and how his disappearance and eventual death lead to the arrest of McArthur. Throughout this narrative, remnants of the missing white woman syndrome theoretical framework can be seen. As discussed earlier in this thesis, MWWS entails extensive media coverage of white women (and/or girls) who are young, attractive (according to societal norms of beauty), part of the middle or upper class, and who

have gone missing (Conlin & Davie, 2015; Liebler, 2010). Although Kinsman was not a young woman, he was white, conventionally attractive, not part of the lower class, and was reported missing. There appeared to be more media coverage of Kinsman disappearance and death in comparison to the other seven victims however, this could be reasoned to Kinsman being active and having many connections within the Village and his family and friends willingly talking to the media. It is important to note that out of all eight victims, Kinsman was one of the two victims (Esen was the other victim) to have their disappearance reported in the news media in a relatively close timespan from when they were reported to be missing. The only other white victim, Dean Lisowick, does not meet the criteria of MMWS. Despite being white, he was not a young woman, part of the middle or upper class, not attractive, and was not reported missing; therefore, his disappearance and death did not garner any media attention.

The findings of this thesis research suggest that a victim's race and sexuality does impact the news media discussion around their death, with respect to the particular narrative that accompanies them. While Kinsman is portrayed to be a martyr amongst the victims, the narratives of some of the other victims (aside from Lisowick) focused on their secret double lives or their immigration status in Canada, both of these relate to the victim's race. The victims who had these narratives attached to their death are Abdulbasir Faizi and Majeed Kayhan. Having this particular narrative attached to a victim is harmful as there is the possibility for the greater public to engage in victim blaming. As these victims kept their sexual orientations a secret from their families, their disappearance and death are their own fault because they were not out to their families who could have helped them. Additionally, it can be argued that the greater public may see the victims placing themselves in situations of great vulnerability by not being out to their families and thus, their disappearance and eventual death was expected to occur given the

circumstances. However, it is understood by Paradkar (2018) of the *Star* that these South Asian and Middle Eastern victims “would likely be wrestling with not only homophobia in their communities and around them, but also battling stigma connected to their religious and cultural identities, and class issues if they were new immigrants — all of which layer up as compounding pressures” (para. 30). This quote from the *Star* is an example of intersectional masculinities, one of the theoretical frameworks used within this research. Christensen and Jensen (2014) explain that the class status, racial and ethnic identity, and sexual orientation a male possesses can either support or undermine their dominant position in society, along with their male privilege. Either occurs based on how these identities are configured and interact with each other. From this summary of intersectional masculinities and the *Star* quote, it can be inferred that a white, American, heterosexual, upper class male would have more male privilege and be a more dominant position within society than a brown, Middle Eastern, immigrant, homosexual, lower class male (the majority of McArthur’s victims held these identities). With respect to how a victim’s race impacted the news media discussion that surrounds their death, this thesis contributes to Gilchrist’s (2010) notion of a hierarchy of victims. It can be argued that Kinsman sits at the top of this hierarchy and the other seven victims are underneath him due to their physicality and social identities, (e.g., age, race, attractiveness, class status), and if they were reported missing or not. However, further research should be conducted to determine exactly where the victims would be positioned within this hierarchy.

What is also seen within the findings of this thesis is a focus on some of the other racialized victim’s immigration status. This immigration status focused narrative can be seen in discussion regarding Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam and Skanadaraj Navaratnam. Regarding Kanagaratnam, there was intense focus on his immigration journey from to flee the civil war

occurring in Sri Lanka to Vancouver and then to Ontario, where he settled in the Toronto area. It was also noted that Kanagaratnam was served a deportation order after his refugee claim was denied, but instead was laying low to avoid any chance of being deported. It is through this narrative that there is potential for victim blaming to occur, if Navaratnam had just followed through with his deportation order, he would not have placed himself in a vulnerable position to become a victim of McArthur's. Additionally, this particular finding of this thesis contributes to the Puar's (2007) homonationalism, where white queer individuals are accepted and deemed worthy of protection by the institutional powers of state yet, non-white racialized queers are excluded from protection from the state through institutional powers. While Kinsman's disappearance became of great concern and generated police action, victims like Esen, Faizi, Kanagaratnam, Kayhan, Mahmudi, and Navaratnam are not afforded the same treatment. There may be a slight exception with Navaratnam as he did have friends that carried out their own search and rescue attempts to locate him after he was reported missing. Nonetheless, it appears as though these brown victims were not treated by Toronto Police or the news media in the same manner Kinsman was. Looking towards the narrative given to Navaratnam as the friendly immigrant, there is not much discussion on his specific immigration journey to Toronto, only brief mention by the Mann (2018f) of *Xtra* that he immigrated to Canada through the United States from Sri Lanka to avoid the civil war that had taken place. Other than this, the news outlets used the terms "refugee" or "immigrant" to describe Navaratnam.

Puar's (2007) homonationalism can be seen throughout these narratives attached to Faizi's and Kayhan's race and Kanagaratnam's and Navaratnam's immigration status. As mentioned earlier within Chapter III, the theoretical framework, Kehl (2020) noted that homonationalism relies on how race is ascribed to queer individuals, therefore race acts as a

deciding factor as to who is “acceptably queer” and who is not and thus worthy of state protection. This aspect of homonationalism is seen throughout the narratives of Faizi and Kayhan living secret double lives, as they were not out to their families regarding their sexual orientation. That these two victims kept their orientation a secret has the potential to lead the public to engage in victim blaming discourse, as it could be suggested that their secrecy placed themselves in harm’s way, reducing the opportunity of having their loved ones help them. Homonationalism is summarized by Kehl (2020) as the normalization of white, queer bodies and the exclusion of non-white queer bodies, this is exemplified in police conduct and overall media reporting of these racialized victims. Their disappearances did not garner much police attention and subsequent action and media coverage until their remains were found – in comparison to the police conduct and media coverage given to Kinsman.

There was a notable difference in the media portrayal of Kinsman’s family’s response to his death and the work of Toronto Police versus the other victim’s families’ response to their death and the work of Toronto Police. This comparison appears to be positioned as a narrative of white gratitude versus brown pain. It should be noted that Lisowick’s family is absent from this particular narrative as he was estranged from his family. Although, Gillis and Hasham (2019a) of the *Star* did quote his daughter’s victim impact statement, which stated that she hoped she would connect with her dad and learn he had a home and a family but that she now will “always have to live with knowing I will never have a relationship with my father because of what happened” (para. 41-42). While the news outlets depicted all the families to be grieving the loss of their loved ones, it appears as though there was more of a focus on the brown families’ and their grief and sorrow of their lost loved one – i.e., brown pain. This focus was particularly seen through news articles that discussed Kanagaratnam’s, Mahmudi’s and Navaratnam’s families’ reactions

to the news of their loved one's death and their behaviour at their funerals. The siblings of the Kanagaratnam and Navaratnam reportedly did not initially tell their parents about the death of their child, citing health conditions that could worsen upon hearing the news (Syed, 2018; Syed & Gillis, 2018). When told about her son's death, Kanagaratnam's mother initially fainted, then came to, "clasped her hand in prayer and then raised her palms to the air. "Why am I alive?," as reported by Syed and Gillis of the *Star* (2018, para. 21-22). At Kanagaratnam's funeral, Gillis (2018f) of the *Star* reported that Kanagaratnam's brother was seen "doubled over on his brother's casket, at times pounding it with his fist...crying out, anger and grief spewing from his mouth...When he finally began walking away from the casket, he collapsed to the ground, mourners rushing to his aid" (para. 1-2). Mahmudi's wife, as reported by Gibson (2018a) of the *Star*, stays in her apartment where she can "weep in privacy for the husband she's been hoping for over two years will return" (para. 12). Aside from sorrow and grief portrayed by the news outlets onto the victim's families, there is also anger expressed by some of the brown victims' families. Esen's family was portrayed in this light, as his brother criticized Toronto Police for their inaction in regard to disappearance and death of all the victims. Mandel (2019b) of the *Sun* quoted Esen's brother "We also find it hard to believe that the serial killing of eight innocent gay persons went unnoticed for seven years. If anyone can explain this to us, please let us know" (para. 11). Additionally, Esen's brother called for a public inquiry of how the Toronto Police handled the missing persons investigations to be occur (Gillis, 2018d).

In contrast to the brown pain experienced by the brown victim's families, white gratitude appears to be felt by Kinsman's family, who were portrayed to continually praise and thank Toronto Police for their work in their brother's disappearance and death. Doherty and Cruickshank (2018) of the *Star* reported that Kinsman's sister, Patricia, stated that she believed

“The police...did their job, they had information that they could not share to us or the media...It took them less than 7 months to make an arrest and they had next to nothing to work with them” (para. 11-12). Additionally, a friend of Kinsman was quoted by Keung (2020) of the *Star* saying “I am grateful to the police who investigated Andrew’s disappearance. I am grateful to the investigators who first heard me: Andrew is missing, I beg you, help me” (para. 14). Based on these findings, it can be seen how this white gratitude versus brown pain comes to be and is sustained.

From the critical discourse analysis, there appears to be five aspects of the McArthur case that were of focus throughout the selected articles. These five aspects are: the investigation (of McArthur’s apartment and the Leaside property), Toronto Police, Bruce McArthur, the victims, and greater societal issues like discrimination, homophobia, and marginalization. Looking at the *Toronto Star*, based off the selected articles from them, they appeared to focus on the investigation, McArthur, the victims, Toronto Police, and greater issues. Out of all three news outlets, the *Star* was the only outlet to write an in-depth article on each victim, while the *Sun* and *Xtra* did not write about all eight victims at length. The victims that the *Sun* and *Xtra* briefly discussed were Faizi, Kayhan, Lisowick, and Mahmudi. This action could be explained away as these victims did not have family or friends readily available or willing to speak to the media, and perhaps the *Star* pushed to get a quote or a story from those who knew these victims.

The *Sun* appeared to solely largely on the investigation, Toronto Police, and McArthur. Regarding Toronto Police, the *Sun* was the one news outlet to specifically focus on the trial of Sgt. Paul Gauthier, the TPS officer who interviewed McArthur for his 2016 alleged sexual assault case. The *Star* and *Xtra* were seen to discuss the trial of Sgt. Gauthier but not at great lengths like the *Sun*. Additionally, throughout all their articles within the sample, *Xtra* only

discussed Sgt. Gauthier once. Interestingly, the *Sun* was the only news outlet to discuss at length the cannibalism lead (where it was thought that the disappearance of Navaratnam was due to a cannibal that lured him to his death) that Toronto Police had during the Project Houston missing person investigation. It appears that the *Star* did briefly mention this lead while *Xtra* did not discuss this lead at all.

The main areas of focus by *Xtra* appear to be Toronto Police, the victims, and greater issues. *Xtra* appeared to discuss the relationship between Toronto Police and Pride Toronto and the issue of Toronto Police participating in Toronto's Pride Parade. As well, *Xtra* appears to focus on the queer community concerns regarding how Toronto Police handled Project Houston and Project Prism missing person investigations and the Bruce McArthur case, overall. The *Star* also discussed community concerns regarding TPS handling of the missing person investigations however, the queer perspective from a queer specific news outlet stood out amongst the two. Additionally, the *Sun* did discuss greater societal issues related to the McArthur case yet the angle they had come at it from was favourable towards Toronto Police rather than the victims and their families.

Contributions and Potential Initiatives

The findings of this thesis research contribute to existing literature regarding media narratives surrounding homicide victims, the Bruce McArthur case, and news reporting of crime. To start, this thesis contributes to the absence of Canadian based research on homicide victim narratives, specifically queer and racialized queer victims of homicide. Additionally, it contributes to the scant academic literature on the Bruce McArthur case. As mentioned earlier within this thesis, Jewkes (2004, as cited in Bouchard et al., 2020) found that the media has the ability to socially construct crime and crime news can be framed and altered to meet specific

values or an agenda by prioritizing what crimes are told over others, thus labelling certain crime events problematic and others not. The findings of this thesis contribute to this finding by Jewkes (2004) as it stresses the importance and consideration that should be accompanied by news journalists and news outlets when reporting on and framing crime and its various features (e.g., the offender, the victims, the police, and greater communities that are connected to a crime event).

Several potential initiatives can be born from these research results. These include media literacy development amongst the greater public, a greater public understanding of how complex intersectionality of individuals leaves them vulnerable to societal harm, and respectable news media reporting practice amongst news outlets when covering vulnerable victims. As suggested in this thesis, there are potential implications that can occur via the frame a crime or features of a crime is presented in, which may sway the beliefs and thoughts of a news audience. Concerning media literacy development amongst the greater public, it is imperative for news audiences to determine and understand what narratives are being put forward by news outlets to their audience as these prominent narratives have the ability to persuade and influence what their audience and the greater public knows and chooses to believe about an event. It would be beneficial for news audiences to read varying perspectives on a crime or news event from various news outlets (mainstream versus obscure, outlets writing for a broad, generalized audience versus outlets writing for a specific audience) to gain an understanding of how said crime or news event is being discussed and then developing their own opinion or thoughts on it. In addition to the potential development of media literacy skills, these thesis research findings could lead towards a greater public understanding of how the intersecting identities of McArthur's victims led them to become vulnerable to harm's way and eventually to their death. There could be greater public

advocacy to put in place social supports that would benefit and improve the lives of vulnerable individuals like McArthur's victims and prevent further disadvantage or harms. Finally, given the complexity of the intersectionality that some crime victims possess, like the victims of the McArthur case, great consideration should be given to the narratives and frames placed upon them by news outlets to ensure accuracy and clarity in the news reporting of their deaths. All victims, regardless of their age, race, culture, sexual orientation, class status, deserve to have a fair news media coverage regarding their lives and their death.

Limitations and Future Research

As with all research, after completion of the critical discourse analysis of all 212 individual news items, a few study limitations came to light. These limitations pertain to the data collection method and the diversity of the sample group. As mentioned within chapter four of this thesis, the methodological framework, the articles were gathered from each news outlet's Facebook page, as Facebook acted as a database that housed these articles. However, given that each news outlet controls what articles they want or do not want to post on their Facebook page, it is plausible that not all articles related to the search term utilized at the time of search appear in the search results.

Explained within the methodological framework chapter of this thesis is that the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, and *Xtra* were chosen to be the news media outlets in question for this thesis due to their political stance and the audience they represent that may influence their coverage of the McArthur case. As the critical discourse analysis was completed, it became known how much influence race and culture influenced and produced certain narratives of the victims. What this thesis lacks is a South Asian and Middle Eastern perspective on the McArthur case, as the majority of the victims were South Asian and Middle Eastern. Having a news media outlet that is

ethnically South Asian and/or Middle Eastern could potentially provide more insight towards this research but from a different perspective. A diverse sample group of news outlets that vary in political stance and the specific audience would be beneficial for future research to provide a well-rounded approach to the research to understand how varying news outlets discuss the same issue.

Appendices

Appendix A. List of Victims

Victim Photo & Name	Victim Biography
 <p style="text-align: center;">Abdulbasir Faizi</p>	<p>Faizi was married and a father of two young daughters and lived in Brampton (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b). Faizi is remembered as being a humorous, smart, and loving individual (Brockbank, 2019b). Faizi kept his sexual orientation hidden from his family, maintaining his social life within the Village (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b).</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Selim Esen</p>	<p>Esen is remembered by his family as a “friendly, kind hearted, open, independent-minded and curious” individual (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b). Friends remembered Esen as compassionate and caring, also he was an advocate for equity and justice (Brockbank, 2019b). Originally from Turkey, Esen immigrated to Canada from Australia as he was unhappy with his life in Turkey while being an out gay man (Brockbank, 2019b).</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam</p>	<p>Kanagaratnam immigrated to Canada from Sri Lanka in 2010 and eventually made his way to Toronto (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b; The Canadian Press, 2019). Kanagaratnam made the move to help provide for his family back home while working in Canada (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b). His refugee status claim and subsequent appeal were both denied, which led his family to believe his sudden lack of communication was due to him hiding from immigration officers to avoid deportation back to Sri Lanka (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b).</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Majeed Kayhan</p>	<p>Kayhan was a married, father of two, and grandfather of three young children (Brockbank, 2019b). Kayhan had frequented the Village often, even had an apartment in the area and would attend bars in the area, although this part of his life was kept hidden from his family (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b).</p>

 <p data-bbox="386 520 613 552">Andrew Kinsman</p>	<p data-bbox="824 197 1419 661">Kinsman is remembered by both family and friends as a well-known activist in the Village community, working heavily with the Toronto/HIV AIDS Network (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b; The Canadian Press, 2019). His sister described him as “the kindest and most compassionate sibling”, who cared deeply for the well-being of others (Brockbank, 2019b). Friends of Kinsman describe him as a “happy” and “upbeat” individual and a fixture within Toronto’s queer community (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b).</p>
 <p data-bbox="402 1014 597 1045">Dean Lisowick</p>	<p data-bbox="824 674 1412 1176">Lisowick is remembered by friends and family as a loving, caring, polite gentleman that was a fixture within the Village community (BBC, 2019; The Canadian Press, 2019). Lisowick was close with his family until his struggles with mental illness and substance abuse found him homeless however, he periodically kept in touch with his parents (BBC, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b; The Canadian Press, 2019). Members of the gay community in the Village remember Lisowick being an active volunteer and protected sex-workers within the Village (Brockbank, 2019).</p>
 <p data-bbox="380 1438 620 1470">Soroush Mahmudi</p>	<p data-bbox="824 1188 1412 1507">Mahmudi is remembered as a husband and father (Brockbank, 2019b). A friend commented that Mahmudi was an “easy-going jokester” that enjoyed playing soccer and going camping (Brockbank, 2019b). Mahmudi immigrated to Toronto from Iran in his early 20s and met his wife in Toronto years later (BBC News, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b).</p>
 <p data-bbox="354 1785 646 1816">Skandaraj Navaratnam</p>	<p data-bbox="824 1520 1419 1875">Known to friends as “Skanda”, Navaratnam was a “charming, kind and charismatic” individual (Brockbank, 2019b; The Canadian Press, 2019). Navaratnam had an outgoing personality and an infectious laugh (BBC News, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b). Immigrating to Canada from Sri Lanka in the 1990s as a gay refugee, Navaratnam wanted to give his family back home a better life and would financially support them while living in</p>

	Toronto (BBC News, 2019; Brockbank, 2019b).
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Appendix B. Preliminary Coding List

Code	Child code
Descriptions	Imagery of Bruce McArthur
	Imagery of victims
	Details of McArthur's life
	Details of victims' lives
	Details of the murders
	Details of police investigation
	Details of court proceedings
Images	Types of images used of McArthur
	Types of images used of victims
	Lack of image(s) used for some victims
Relationships	Between TPS & LGBTQ+ community
	Between TPS & Pride Toronto
	Between Pride Toronto & LGBTQ+ community
	Between LGBTQ+ community and its own members
	Between LGBTQ+ community and City of Toronto
	Between victims & their families
Toronto Police Service	Handling of missing persons cases
	Handling of Project Prism
	Handling of Project Houston
	Victim blaming comments
	Lack of information comments
	Dismissal of serial killer comments
	Arrest of Sgt. Paul Gauthier
	Comments from Politicians
Pride Toronto	Banning/Allowing TPS to March
	Comments from Politicians

Appendix C. Finalized Coding List

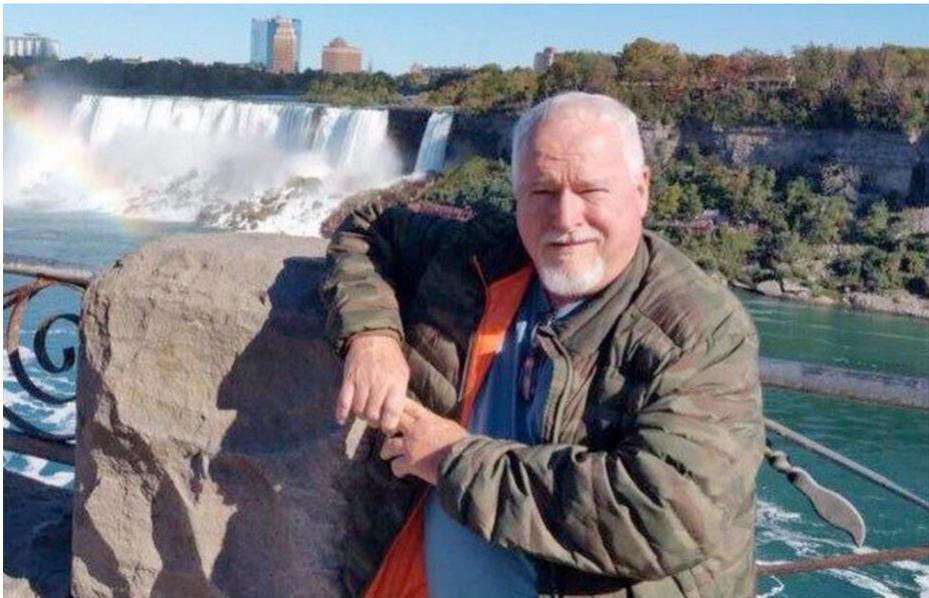
Code	Child Code
Aftermath of Case	Calls for a Public Inquiry
	Commodification of Case
	Community Programs
	Independent External Review
	TPS Internal Review
	TPS Missing Persons Unit
	TPS Neighbourhood Officer Program
Community Response to Case	Action Oriented Response
	Emotional Response
Descriptions	Abdulbasir Faizi
	Andrew Kinsman
	Bruce McArthur
	Court Proceedings
	Dean Lisowick
	Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam
	Majeed Kayhan
	Murders
	Police Investigation
	Selim Esen
	Skandaraj Navaratnam
	Soroush Mahmudi
	Victims (as a whole)
	Differences in Victim Experiences
McArthur Family	
White Families	
Imagery	Of Bruce McArthur
	Of Victims
Images	Bruce McArthur
	Lack of Victim Images
	Relating to Case
	Victims
McArthur Criminal History	2001 Assault
	2016 Alleged Sexual Assault
Misrepresentation of Queer Life	
Pride Toronto	Addressing McArthur Case
	Allowing & Banning TPS in Pride Parade March
	Comments from Politicians
Relationships	McArthur & Others
	McArthur & Victims
	Pride Toronto & Queer Community
	Queer Community & Itself

	TPS & Pride Toronto
	TPS & Queer Community
	Victims & Their Families
Social Issues Surrounding Case	Bias in Policing
	Hardships of Racialized Gay Men
	Homelessness
	Homophobia
	Immigration Issues
	Racism
	Systemic Oppression
	Vulnerability & Victimization
	White Privilege
Toronto Police Service	Claims of Lack of Information
	Comments from Politicians
	Dismissal of a Serial Killer
	Handling of Other Missing Persons Cases
	Handling of Project Houston
	Handling of Project Prism
	Sgt. Paul Gauthier
	Victim Blaming

Appendix D. Media Images of Bruce McArthur



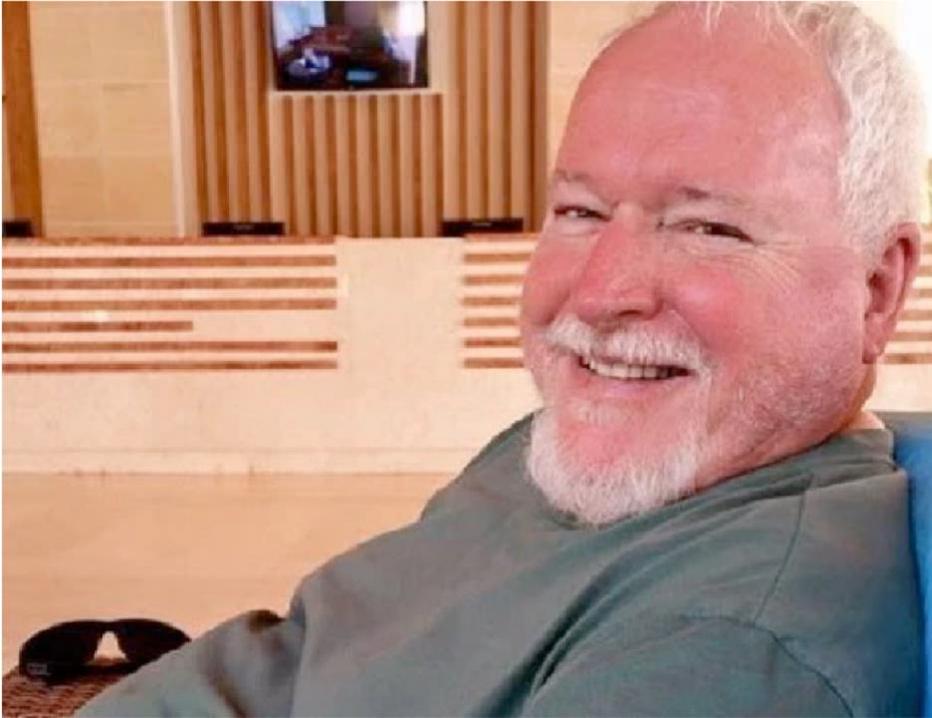
(Harris & Gibson, 2018)



(Keung, 2020)



(Hunter, 2018)



(Doucette, 2018)



(Braun, 2018)



(Hunter, 2018)

Appendix E. Media Images of Victims

E1. Selected images of Esen, Lisowick, and Kanagaratnam



(Gibson, 2017)



(Gibson & Mathieu, 2018)



(Postmedia News, 2018)

E2. Bad quality images of Mahmudi and Kayhan



(Moon, 2018)



(Mann, 2018b)

E3. Good quality images of Faizi, Kinsman, and Navaratnam



(Warmington, 2018c)



(Mann, 2017)



(Pazzano, 2018a)

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