

**Securing Bodies: Performances of Security by Transgender
Travelers in Canadian Airports and Borders**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Political Economy

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

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ISBN: 978-0-494-94280-2

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ISBN: 978-0-494-94280-2

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Abstract

This project investigates the experiences of trans travelers with airport and border security to illuminate the interlocking relationship between gender as a social category and security as a governing technology framing neoliberal society. I argue that the symbiotic relationship between gender and security is upheld through the way that each of us are integrated into the daily labour of maintaining gendered performances. When performed properly according to normative conceptions of gender, race and class, these performances come to be seen as safe. (Homeland) security then comes to be evaluated through proper gendered performances. Drawing on narrative analysis as a method, I interrogate the ways in which security has extended beyond physical border spaces, to be enacted through micro-political processes.

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking my five research partners, Rory, August, Bob, Charlie and Johnny. I am honoured that you felt comfortable to share your stories and your feelings with me. This project would not have been possible without the time and the stories that each of you contributed. I hope you see this work as something truly collaborative, and that you see your own voice reflected in these pages.

I also need to thank Dan Irving, whose dedication and support for both this project and myself deserves far more than words on a page. Without your kind, although sometimes necessarily brutally honest, feedback I doubt I could ever have finished this project. Your countless hours of assurances and emotional handholding have not gone unnoticed or unappreciated. Your constant pushing to reach further, think more critically and push my own limits have no doubt influenced me as a better scholar *and* person. Whether it was time spent ~~arguing~~ debating about the merits of going on to a PhD, struggling to write a paper together, sharing vegan food or catching stray cats, I will cherish each moment of this process.

I would also like to thank Ummni Khan and Lara Karaian. You may not have asked particularly easy questions, but your faith that I could answer them instills a confidence in me that I wish I'd had during the whole process. Your thoughtful feedback will certainly factor in to my future research questions. Thank you as well to both Janet Siltanen and Donna Coghil, who have provided valuable assistance throughout my time in IPE.

It is also necessary to thank my peers, those with whom I started in IPE, but particularly James Braun and Kritee Ahmed. I certainly cannot thank you for keeping me on track, any future work we do together must be in offices that are located a safe distance from each other. However, you were both instrumental in my enjoyment of this process. No week for the past 2 years was complete without Bad Pizza Monday, and while I don't miss the food, your company is a notable absence. Also, thank you for finishing first. The ability to text you with my anxious questions made the last part of this journey slightly more bearable.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. Each of you have offered me something special in this process. Mom, you've given me nothing but unconditional love and a kick in the butt when I needed it. Jo, your contributions in the final months, whether it was giving me space to vent, encouraging my creative endeavors, or helping to edit work, have been extremely valuable to my ongoing mental health. Lastly, but never least, I want to thank Ignacio. You should be commended for your ability to listen to me complain! Our journey together, across the province and through several degrees, has been epic. Even if this wasn't a project that we did together, I never felt like I was in it alone.

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Introduction

In February of 2011, Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper and United States President Barack Obama announced the signing of a Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness Action Plan. Known as ‘Beyond the Border,’ the declaration states that the long-term plan includes working together “to enhance our security and accelerate the legitimate flow of people, goods, and services.”¹ The emphasis on security includes a plan to “address threats early,” which includes developing a shared understanding of what constitutes a threat, combining security systems and “supporting the effective identification of people who pose a threat, which will enhance safety and facilitate the movement of legitimate travelers.”²

The public Action Plan document designed to brief Canadians on the role of this bi-national partnership at no point identifies what the shared understanding of threat might include, or what is meant by the repeated use of the word ‘legitimate’ in relation to people and cross border mobility. Underpinning the document is the notion that security is only ensured through legitimization. The vagueness of language of legitimacy speaks to a culture of nation, citizenship and securitization that encourages the individualized security practices of the “neurotic citizen.”³

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness*, (2011) http://actionplan.gc.ca/grfx/psec-scep/pdfs/bap_report-paf_rapport-eng-dec2011.pdf

² DFAIT, *Beyond the Border*, 3.

³ Engin Isin, “The Neurotic Citizen,” *Citizenship Studies* 8(3) (2009), 217-235.

Similarly, in July of 2011, Transport Canada made amendments to their Identity Screening Regulations. Among these amendments was a subsection that described the relationship between a traveler's appearance and the gender marked on their identification. Section 5.2 of the Identity Screening Regulations states:

- (1) An air carrier shall not transport a passenger if: ... (c) the passenger does not appear to be of the gender indicated on the identification he or she presents;*
- (2) Despite paragraph (1)(a), an air carrier may transport a passenger who presents a piece of photo identification but does not resemble the photograph if*
 - (a) the passenger's appearance changed for medical reasons after the photograph was taken and the passenger presents the air carrier with a document signed by a health care professional and attesting to that fact;⁴*

This piece of legislation arguably entrenches discrimination against transgender travelers, and reifies gender as immutable and beneficial in the biopolitical administration of bodies. The amendments went largely unnoticed until January of 2012, when trans activist Christin Molloy called attention to them on her blog.⁵ From there, a number of prominent news and media outlets shared the story, including statements from trans activists, NDP LGBTQ Critic Randall Garrison, and then Transport Minister Denis Lebel. Activists were concerned that the legislation unfairly targeted trans people, specifically those pre and non-operative trans people who are less likely to pass in their 'chosen' gender and those who are unable to access medical care. In response, Lebel's spokesperson told the *Huffington Post* that the regulations were not discriminatory as

⁴ Identity Screening Regulations (SOR/2007-82), <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2007-82/page-2.html#docCont>

⁵ Christin Molloy, "Transgender People are Completely Banned from Boarding Airplanes in Canada," *Christin Molloy: Working Towards a Better Future for Canada*, January 30, 2012, <http://chrismilloy.ca/2012/01/transgender-people-are-completely-banned-from-boarding-airplanes-in-canada/>

“[t]hey apply to all passengers, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and they do not impose barriers to any particular group.”⁶ He went on to reiterate that anyone affected by the regulations could present a letter from a doctor or surgeon “explaining the discrepancy.”⁷ Although there have been no known cases of anyone coming forward to Transport Canada to make a complaint about being refused access under these regulations, the new requirements highlight the way that gender/sex are taken as stable and constant and become vital to the construction of traditional and biometric security systems.

Contrasted with this, in response to recent activist work and a ruling from the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, the Ontario government is now required to allow trans people to change their birth certificate without requiring proof of sexual reassignment surgery. Trans people in Ontario will now have the ability to change the gender on their birth certificate by submitting a letter from a physician. While Ontario is the first province in Canada to remove this requirement⁸, and many activists view it as a victory, the fact that a letter is required by a doctor continues to tie transition to the medical model even if it eliminates the need for surgery. Furthermore, as it pertains only to Ontario, it does not change the fact that the process for other types of document changes continues to remain unclear at the federal level and in other provinces.

⁶ Althia Raj, “Transgender Community Effectively Banned From Flying,” *The Huffington Post*, January 31, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/01/31/canada-air-travel-transgendered-community_n_1245598.html

⁷ Raj, “Transgender Community Effectively Banned From Flying”

⁸ “Ontario Allows Transgender People to Change Birth Certificate without Surgery,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 12, 2012, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/ontario-allows-transgender-people-to-change-birth-certificate-without-surgery/article4609037/>

It is no surprise that the Beyond the Border partnership and the Identity Screening Regulations were finalized in the ten-year anniversary of the attacks of September 11th 2001. The specter of the ‘terrorist’ haunts the public imagination of both the United States and Canada. In response, Canada has been involved in increasing security measures, especially at border checkpoints and airports. New developments have included increasing spending on security, as well as the tightening of security surrounding identity documents.

But there is another haunting in contemporary Canadian society, that which calls attention to the social violence⁹ that continues in the name of security, citizenship and nation building. In her discussion of haunting, Avery Gordon posits that it is “precisely the domain of turmoil and trouble, that moment (of however long duration) when things are not in their assigned places, when the cracks and the rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving...”¹⁰ Haunting serves as a constant reminder of the bounded authenticity of binary categorization: secure/insecure, man/woman, public/private. What if, however, beyond illuminating the cracks, those same specters actually *created* them, the spaces in between?

In their engaging introduction to the ‘trans-’ special edition of *WSQ*, Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean Moore state that “[t]he movement between territorializing and deterritorializing “trans-” and its suffixes,...as well as the movements between temporalizing and spatializing them, is an improvisational, creative, and essentially poetic practice *through which radically new possibilities for being in the*

⁹Avery Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” *Borderlands e-journal* 18, 2011, Pg 1-21.

¹⁰ Gordon “Some Thoughts on Haunting,” 2.

world can start to emerge” (emphasis mine).¹¹ The exciting possibilities of approaching trans- in this way speaks to the potential for trans methodologies not only to question binaries, but to transcend them altogether by *creating* new spaces.

Issues such as Identity Screening Regulation and birth certificate changes make evident the material grounds within which both trans experience and this analysis take place. However, both ‘haunting’ and ‘trans’ speak to the analytical potential to produce critical knowledge that drives this project forward. Trans activism, which sometimes seeks to bridge the material and the analytical, is a space of progressive opportunities foreclosed upon by the interpolation of trans subjects within neoliberal and hetero/homonormative logics. To address this, my project investigates the experiences of trans travelers with airport and border security to illuminate the interlocking relationship between gender as a social category and security as a governing technology framing neoliberal society. I argue that the symbiotic relationship between gender and security is upheld through the way that each of us are integrated into the daily labour of maintaining gendered performances. When performed properly according to normative conceptions of gender, race and class, these performances come to be seen as safe. (Homeland) security then comes to be evaluated through proper gendered performances.

Defining Trans

For the purposes of this project, I have engaged with a broad theory of trans-, one which emphasizes identity, and rejects binary and essentialist notions of sex and gender.

¹¹ Susan Stryker, Paisely Currah and Lisa Jean Moore, “Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender,” *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 36 (3/4) 2008, 15.

At its simplest, trans people are those whose gender and/or sex identity differs from the one assigned to them at birth. I come to this understanding aware of the contestation that occurs between those who use the term transgender and those who use the term transsexual.¹² In seeking participants, I used ‘trans*’ in my posters and circulations, because I wanted to ensure that I made my project as broad and welcoming to those who identified as trans in any way, including people who identified as transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfuck and a host of other identifiers.

Structure of the Project

This project was partially born out of a desire to transcend borders, to reject their role in the categorization and governing of our lives. Undertaking this analysis involved moving beyond disciplinary boundaries, past traditional understanding of researcher/subject and to an extent disregarding expectations about how research processes should work. However, presenting this information as part of a formal academic exercise requires a clear synthesis and movement, one which demands some degree of categorization. In undertaking this argument, I have broken the thesis into three chapters, although the ideas are not contained within the borders of these chapters.

In Chapter one I outline my argument in greater detail, addressing the theoretical foundations of the project. I have also included my literature review in this chapter, and work to position my project within the broader theoretical debates. An introduction to my methodology is given in this chapter, although a break down of the method is found in

¹² Viviane Namaste, *Sex Change, Social Change: Reflections in Identity, Institutions, and Imperialism*, (Women’s Press), 2005. Further discussion of this tension can be found in chapter three.

greater detail in chapter two. The first chapter sets a theoretical base, and weaves together different disciplines to find the specter of those who fall in the spaces between that haunt the rigid boundaries.

Chapter two details the method used for gathering my research. It begins by introducing each of the participants individually, before crafting together their stories into broader themes. I chose to use narrative analysis as a method for my interviews because I wanted ground my theoretical framework within everyday practice. How did the interactions I had with research participants and the stories we told *together*, reflect the effects of securitization on the micro-political level? Chapter two not only presents the stories of border crossing by the participants, but is a practice in the continual labour of securitization between two people in a conversation.

In Chapter three I unpack the themes and issues that the participants raise, as outlined in the previous chapter. Here, I demonstrate how the participants experience of travel was outlined in a way that placed emphasis on their emotional responses. I demonstrate how these emotional responses are vital to the labour of performing security on the micro-political level.

In this project I argue that security is read on or through the body, and that the process of securitization extends *beyond* spaces of physical borders like airports. Security becomes a micro-political process performed in everyday interactions. Given this, *gender itself has become a site of securitization* which depends on externally validated performances for acceptance as legitimate, intelligible, or safe. Thus, performing security becomes a factor in the hyper-individualizing character of neoliberalism, making security

the responsibility of the individual. Failure to be read as safe becomes a failure of self; those who fail to be authorized have no one to blame but themselves. This governing discourse of personal responsibility was evident in the interviews that I undertook for this process. The research participants spoke about their emotional responses to moving through securitized spaces, the burden of carrying the financial weight of having to change their bodies and identities in order to be recognized, and of the importance of passing - not for who they are but they think the need to be.

Chapter One

My thesis investigates the experiences of transgender travelers with airport and border security to illuminate the interlocking relationship between gender as a social category and security as a governing technology framing neoliberal society. While I focus specifically on trans identified subject's experiences with airport security measures, my findings cannot be contained to trans subjects alone. Gender is a mode of governance regulating everyone, and as such, its relationship with security impacts each person, not only those whose sex and/or gender identities expose the fallacy of binary gender. The symbiotic relationship between gender and security is upheld through the way that each of us are integrated into the daily labour of maintaining gendered performances. Proper gendered performances come to be seen as safe, and home(land) security comes to be evaluated through proper gendered performances.

As I demonstrate in the literature review that follows, my analysis of securitized gender is a departure from disciplinary approaches to security such as those emerging from International Relations which privilege the state, mechanisms, policies and practices of border controls and biotechnology. Conventionally, studies in security have been concerned with the state and its military, questions of defending and expanding borders, terrorism, and foreign policies, with less attention paid to issues of citizenship or identity.¹³ Framed by "trans-" methodology, described below, and influenced by post-structuralist feminist and queer approaches to security, citizenship and subjectivity, there

¹³ Benjamin Muller, "(Dis)qualified bodies: securitization, citizenship and 'identity management'" in *Citizenship Studies* 8:3 2004, 282.

is an opportunity to transcend disciplinary borders. Mainstream and more established notions of security and citizenship are critiqued and enriched by poststructuralist researchers who bring concepts of governmentality, affect, queer and trans to bear on security and citizenship.

I argue that the experiences of trans identified travelers in airports and border checkpoints are indicative of the ways in which security is grafted on the body in terms of gender, race, class, sexuality and (dis)ability, and negotiated through everyday life events as micro-political processes. These processes cast the everyday as problematic,¹⁴ ensuring that embodied experiences are not separate from securitizing practices. Instead, security is continually bolstered through our every day interactions with other people, as we engage continually in the process of marking - and marketing- ourselves and others as safe. I posit that *gender itself is a site of securitization* dependent on externally validated performances that work to gain acknowledgement of oneself as a citizen and thus, secure. That gender and security are intimately intertwined and both are enacted by performance challenges the strict ontological categorizations of safe/unsafe, citizen/non citizen, security/insecurity, male/female, sex/gender and trans/non-trans.

Theoretical Framework

In undertaking this research, I stress a queer intervention into conversations about security, borders and transgender subjectivities. To this end, my work is framed by predominantly post structural feminist and queer theory, especially Judith Butler's theory

¹⁴ Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

of performativity¹⁵, as well as her theorizing the grievable life to consider how transgender travelers both embody and reject securitizing discourses.

Butler argues that

“acts, gestures, and desires produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play or signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured or sustained through corporeal signs or other discursive means.”(emphasis in original)¹⁶

Given this, she suggests that the gendered body has no ontological status beyond its performative acts. Butler notes that this performance is not necessarily done consciously, but often without one’s knowing, and that “doing gender” is never a solitary practice, as we are always performing gender for someone, “even if the other [person] is only imaginary.”¹⁷ What interests me here is the way in which *performances of security* might follow a similar path as gender performances. As individuals, we are performing security as a means of maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of others. Similarly, I argue that such an understanding may be expanded to consider *the secure body*. Much like gender, the secure body is one that is composed of a series of actions, gestures and articulated desires that give the *illusion* of security, an illusion which is maintained for the regulation of bodies and identities within a given national context. This illusion indicates that security has *no knowable natural state of being* outside of the acts undertaken by

¹⁵ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, (New York; Routledge Classics, 2006).

¹⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge Classics) 2006, 185.

¹⁷ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York; London: Routledge) 2004, 1.

individuals. By reducing the actions, gestures and desires to level of the individual, or “self,” the political and regulatory practices producing those actions become hidden.¹⁸ It is these hidden practices that I am interested in uncovering. How do the performances of both gender and security mediate each other? Considering this, we can unpack the relationship between gender and security as processes of gendered security performances as ways to ensure securitization of gender?

My project is also largely informed by Butler’s theorization of the grievable life. To mourn a life, that life must be recognizable by adhering to culturally understood norms. She states that “[t]he differential distribution of grievability across populations has implications for why and when we feel politically consequential affective dispositions such as horror, guilt, righteous sadism, loss and indifference.”¹⁹ This explains why little public attention has been paid to issues of discrimination against trans travelers despite the fact that trans scholars such as Toby Beauchamp, Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen²⁰ have demonstrated that border securitization projects which depend on gender as immutable have significant impacts on the ability for gender non normative travelers to move freely and confidently through those spaces. I argue that in an effort to maintain recognition as secure trans travelers both consciously and unconsciously perform the more normative aspects of their identities that ensure their status as recognizable.

¹⁸ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 186.

¹⁹ Judith Butler “Precarious Life, Grievable Life” in *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London; Verso, 2010), 24.

²⁰ Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen, “Securitizing Gender: Identity, Biometrics, and Transgender Bodies at the Airport,” *Social Research* 78 (2) 2011, 557-582.
Toby Beauchamp, “Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11” *Surveillance and Society* 6(4) 2009, 356-366.

Queer Methodology

My project is largely informed not only by queer theory, but also by queer methodology. In theorizing queer methodologies, Kath Browne and Catherine Nash notes that queer is a vague term, but defines “queer research” as any type of research “that is positioned within conceptual frameworks that highlight the instability of taken-for-granted meanings and resulting power relations”.²¹ They further argue that a benefit of queer scholarship is that we “can argue for the ‘playful’ possibilities of unstable and indeterminate subjectivities”.²² Pioneering queer theorist Michael Warner concurs by juxtapositioning queer theory with the more dominant rights-based sexuality studies commentary and lesbian and gay politics. He explains that queer approaches to intellectual inquiry: “rejects a minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political-interest representation in favour of more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal”.²³

Queer research and methodologies offer ways to resist rigid and deterministic boundaries separating disciplines and methods by questioning those lines, and fostering more fluid movement through space and place. Importantly, I believe that queering encourages research that transcends disciplinary boundaries. These disciplinary boundaries play a significant role in stifling research that seeks to centre the voices and experiences of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Queer research and methodologies

²¹ Kath Browne and Catherine Nash, “Introduction,” *Queer Methods and Methodologies*, eds. Kath Browne and Catherine J Nash, (New York: Ashgate) 2010, 4.

²² Browne and Nash, “Introduction,” 7.

²³ Michael Warner, “Introduction”, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 1993, xxiv.

provide an avenue to break down strict ontological categorizations. It is in the spirit of transcendence - of illuminating the spaces in between - that this project has emerged.

Despite the potential for transgression, queer methodologies are not immune to reproducing social relations of power that privilege particular voices or experiences. Yvette Taylor argues that “queer methodologies are often deployed by/for/with queers in ways that exclude or render invisible certain queer lives”.²⁴ For example, Browne and Nash identified a ‘geography of queer thinking’ which leaves unexamined the situatedness of queer scholars in the Global North.²⁵ Despite this erasure, Eithne Luibheid argues that the term queer “is used to mark the fact that many standard sexuality categories were historically formed through specific epistemologies and social relations that upheld colonialist, xenophobic, racist, and sexist regimes”.²⁶

There is value in these vague, fluid and multiple understandings of queer, as it allows critical scholars to understand how what is meant by queer is policed in situations where some behaviours, characteristics and politics are understood as more authentically queer than others. The policing of the authentic/inauthentic experience speaks to the constant creation and recreation of borders, designed to alert us to the potential of those who might threaten us. In light of this, I use Jamie Heckert’s conception of queer as a starting point in undertaking this project. Heckert understands queer as a *refusal to grant*

²⁴ Yvette Taylor cited in Browne and Nash, “Introduction,” 18.

²⁵ Browne and Nash, “Introduction,” 20.

²⁶ Eithne Luibheid, *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, eds. Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu Jr., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 2005, xi.

legitimacy to borders, but also as ways of becoming, of “learning to experiences the unreality of borders, to know profoundly that they have no independent existence”.²⁷

His understanding places the power of knowing, of learning and unlearning, in the hands of the individual. He sees methodology as a practice of becoming queer, and learning to let go of borders (between theory/data, researcher/researched, hetero/homo or right/wrong). In this way, becoming queer is always a *process*, just as methodology must always be a process.

Trans Methodology

Similar to Heckert’s notion of challenging borders, Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean Moore hyphenate ‘trans-’ to challenge boundedness and fixity and to (re)introduce theoretical and activist possibilities within various analysis of space and movement. Trans identities, as a fixed and bounded subjective way of moving between static identities, are not the most useful way to understand sex and gender as power relations. Nor can such categorical notions enrich understandings of the ways that manifestations of sex and gender are embedded within other forms of governance. They state that “rather than seeing genders as classes or categories that by definition contain only one kind of thing...[we] understand genders as potentially porous and permeable spatial territories...each capable of supporting rich and rapidly proliferating ecologies of

²⁷ Jamie Heckert, “Intimacy with Strangers/Intimacy with Self: Queer Experiences of Social Research,” *Queer Methods and Methodologies*, eds. Kath Browne and Catherine J Nash, (New York: Ashgate) 2010, 42.

embodied difference.”²⁸ To trans- spatiality and movement raises possibilities for escaping bounded subjectivities.

The notion of steady movement allows trans- as a methodology to add complexity to the production of individual subjective bodies and experiences. Gender, for example, is approached analytically as a set of biopolitical practices instead of being limited to established territories. They argue that trans- becomes a “space of connection and circulation between the macro- and the micro-political registers through which the lives of bodies become enmeshed in the lives of nations, states and capital-formations.”²⁹ Transgendered bodies occupy the same spaces as “nontransgendered”³⁰ ones, therefore, trans characteristics may be applied as a form of disciplining to bodies which do not self-identify as transgender but enact non-normative sex/gender performances.

In her 1994 piece “My Words to Victor Frankenstein,” Susan Stryker calls on the narrative of Frankenstein’s monster to (re)claim her body as powerful through its monstrosity. She argues that the transsexual body, as monstrous body, highlights the fallacy of the *natural* sex/gendered body. Calling on those who have committed ontological violence against trans bodies and identities, she warns “the Nature you bedevil me with is a lie. Do not trust it to protect you from what I represent, for it is a fabrication that cloaks the groundlessness of the privilege that you seek to maintain at my

²⁸ Stryker, Currah and Moore, “Trans-, Trans, or Transgender,” 12.

²⁹ Stryker, Currah and Moore, “Trans-, Trans, or Transgender,” 14.

³⁰ Stryker, Currah and Moore, “Trans-, Trans, or Transgender,” 13.

expense. You are as constructed as me; the same anarchic Womb has birthed us both”.³¹ (Stryker, p. 247).

Her call, fueled by what she terms “transgender rage”³², stems from the unstable relationship between language and materiality, whereby the indeterminacy of language necessitates “matter that simultaneously eludes definitive representation and demands its own perpetual re-articulation in symbolic terms”.³³ Stryker’s theory highlights the way in which individuals are required to police their own inclusion or exclusion within this indeterminate space, even given their awareness of these artificially demarcated boundaries. Transgender rage and the visually monstrous body then “literalizes [the] abstract violence”³⁴ that results from the illusion of naturalness. According to Stryker, the transsexual carries the pain of artificial construction that all of us as gendered subjects experience.

Security as Social Practice/Ideology

As an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, critical security studies problematizes the scope, meanings and roles of security. Scholars working within this burgeoning field question who is in control and why. Additionally, research couched within critical theoretical and methodological frameworks is often concerned with the impact of

³¹ Susan Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein about the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 1(3) 1994, 247.

³² Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein,” 252.

³³ Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein,” 252.

³⁴ Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein,” 254.

contemporary securitization on vulnerable populations. Significant work has been done in the area of critical security studies to demonstrate the ways in which security has functioned to benefit the “elite” who direct and control the state.³⁵ Gary Kinsman, Dieter K Buse and Mercedes Steedman offer a starting point for conceptualizing security by positioning national security as “*ideological*.” They argue that national security is a system that is created to define those who are “normal” and those who are “deviant” in determining what constitutes a threat to security.³⁶ They assert that this normal/deviant binary is central to maintaining an ideology of national security and cannot be removed from the question of who determines constructions of normalcy and deviance and for what purpose.³⁷

Mark Neocleous supports Kinsman's understanding of security, arguing that the term national security was coined as a way to escape the militarized connotation of ‘national defense’ as well as to expand the space and scope of state power in determining social and economic security agendas. He states that “[t]he doctrine [of national security] identifies security - simultaneously of the people and the state (since these are always ideologically conflated) - as the definitive aspect of state power. Security becomes the overriding political interest...”.³⁸

³⁵ Gary Kinsman, Dieter K Buse and Mercedes Steedman, eds. *Whose National Security? Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2000).

³⁶ Kinsman, Buse and Steedman “How the Centre Holds- National Security as Ideological Practice” in *Whose National Security? Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2000), 278.

³⁷ Kinsman, Buse and Steedman “How the Centre Holds”, 279.

³⁸ Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006), 18.

Neocleous' critique reveals ways that security has become an *expansive practice*. For instance, he identifies how liberalism, despite often being centered in debates about the relationship *between* liberty and security, has rendered the project of liberty a project *of* security. This practice becomes simultaneously an undertaking of sovereignty and *social control*.³⁹ The state must work to identify and eliminate threats externally whilst maintaining control over internal threats, or those who pose a threat to national interests.

Both Neocleous and Kinsman demonstrate that national security is a more complex process than merely defending physical territorial borders. They each provide an important analysis of the institutional aspect of national security, however their top-down approach to theorizing security fails to provide an account of the ways in which individuals become implicated in security apparatuses.

Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile's book entitled *The Canadian War Against Queers* signifies some movement beyond notions of the ideological by focusing major attention to the individual experiences of "homosexual" civil servants targeted by state authorities.⁴⁰ Their method, they claim, of "rewriting history from below"⁴¹ enabled them to investigate the degree to which queers engaged in self-disciplining practices during the cold war era. They argue that, as an ideological practice, the Cold War era Canadian National Security campaign had lasting common and diverse effects on queer experiences as it functioned as a process of sexual regulation.⁴² There is a contradiction

³⁹ Neocleous, *Critique of Security*, 13.

⁴⁰ Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2010).

⁴¹ Kinsman and Gentile, *Canadian War on Queers*, 27.

⁴² Kinsman and Gentile, *Canadian War on Queers*, Introduction.

apparent here, as they attempt to transcend the notion of ideological in their argument, but return to it as a mechanism to explain the Cold War.

By creating space for these voices and experiences to be heard, Kinsman and Gentile address some of the weaknesses of Kinsman's earlier work, however, their focus on the experiences of federal employees continue to address security at the national and institutional level. Their analysis focuses predominantly on *the impact of securitization on queer federal employees and their important, radical, and not to be overlooked acts of resistance*. Less attention is paid to *the ways in which* those federal employees, and indeed all queers in Canada during the war, *became implicated in the process of securitization*.⁴³

Security, Liberalism and Feminist Theory

Those with a vested interest in expanding practices of security (Kinsman et al. would call them the elite) continue to push a security agenda, legal and institutional measures are being taken which allow the violation of longstanding civil rights in the name of homeland security. The institutionalization of these measures, and the increasing role of the government in undermining rights, has led to what many refer to as a “*security state*.” Iris Marion Young conceptualizes the security state as “one whose rulers subordinate citizens to ad hoc surveillance, search, or detention and repress criticism of arbitrary power”.⁴⁴ The security state maintains security as an *expansive practice* by

⁴³ This evident even in the title, the war *ON* queers.

⁴⁴ Iris Marion Young, “The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State” in *Women and Citizenship* ed. Marian Friedman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20.

using notions of homeland or domestic security to push forth legislation that attempts to subdue the nation's population.

Young argues that such measures are understood as justified as necessary for the protection of the state, but that such discourses reflect a "logic of masculinist protection."⁴⁵ The gendered analysis of masculinist protection allows Young to highlight the way in which the state demotes citizens from full members in a democratic system to dependents. This creates a situation of subordinate citizenship where, she argues, dissent is seen not only as dangerous from a security perspective, but also ungrateful in the eyes of the state.⁴⁶

Young states that prior to 9/11 security measures were too lax, and that she supports thorough security measures. She argues that the government should "do its job to promote security without issuing guarantees it cannot redeem or requiring subordination from the people it promises to protect."⁴⁷ Young's critique of security focuses on *amount* of power that state authorities took and the lack of clarity and accountability in the security process. Such an outlook fails to consider the ways in which security in the capitalist state is increasingly *privatized*, and as such is a system in which the security for one person or group is bought at the expense of others.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Iris Marion Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection," 16.

⁴⁶ Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection," 21-22.

⁴⁷ Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection," 31.

⁴⁸ Anna Yeatman, *State, Security and Subject Formation*, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Group) 2010.

Security and the Neoliberal Citizen-Subject

One of the major tenants of neoliberalism is the increased vigilance regarding maintaining law and order. That security is becoming increasingly privatized reflects on the steadfast entrenchment of neoliberalism which at the government levels has led to outsourcing security for airports and borders. Neoliberal logics trumpet the virtue of the autonomous individual. This narrative places responsibility for self in the hands of the individuals charged with the responsibility of shaping themselves into entrepreneurial citizen-subjects. This entrepreneurial citizen recognizes that success is dependent on “invest[ing] in themselves as human capital and attain[ing] exceptional levels of physical, mental, financial and spiritual fitness to be recognized as valuable.”⁴⁹

Security, then, falls to the individual. It is their duty to ensure that all the necessary pieces for their authorization have been gathered, at their own expense of course. In undertaking these tasks, the neoliberal citizen must learn and perform the normative scripts that will mark them as secure. These include engaging in paid labour, private property ownership, belonging to a family unit, embodying normative gender roles, and consuming goods and services for both business and pleasure. Adherence to these normative scripts is validated through others during day-to-day interactions. This *legitimization* by others is crucial to securing one’s status as a neoliberal citizen.

⁴⁹ Dan Irving and Alicia Baker, “‘Taking Out the Trash’: The Neurotic Citizen confronts the Trans-Monster on gentrifying urban terrains” *Citizenship Studies* 2012 (under review).

Security and Queer Theory

Critical scholars working in the area of sexuality and security have identified the ways in which security functions as a method of sexual regulation. Kinsman and Gentile trace the discrimination against gay and lesbian civil servants through the Cold War and into the more contemporary war on terror. Gay and lesbian Canadians, or those suspected of being queer, were subject to federal screening programs designed to identify and remove them from the public service. Kinsman and Gentile argue that the screening program functioned according to the notion that queer men and women “suffered from a character weakness that made them vulnerable to blackmail and subversion, thus rendering them susceptible to the machinations of Soviet agents”⁵⁰. Neocleous makes similar observations about the ways that queers working in the federal government of the United States were perceived and treated. He also explains that questions regarding sexuality morality were not only applied to gay men, but used as a mechanism to regulate the actions of straight women as well, so that sexual *liberation*, not only homosexuality, also came to be understood as a security threat. He highlights this by telling the story of a woman who lost her job in the federal service for conceiving her child outside of marriage, despite later marrying the father. He also details the story of Marcelle Henry, who was questioned regarding her communist sympathies. This interrogation focused largely on detailing her sexual encounters with men. Fired from her job for her “disregard for the generally accepted standards of conventional behaviour,” Henry described her

⁵⁰ Kinsman and Gentile, *Canadian War on Queers*, 3.

interrogation by declaring "I am accused of loving the other sex too much".⁵¹ These stories are indicative of the ways that national security was used as a technique of *sexual governance*. This speaks to my argument that the securitization of gender is not a problem only for those who vary from binary understandings of sex/gender, but works as a mechanism of regulation for everyone.

I would like to expand on Kinsman and Gentile's work, especially in the use of "queer" as a way to cross and address the spaces between categorical boundaries. Kinsman and Gentile define queer as a way to include "a broader scope of *practices* than... 'lesbian,' 'gay,' or 'homosexual,' including non-normalized, non-heterosexual consensual sexual and gendered practices not easily captured by the latter terms (e.g., bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, and other sexual/gender practices)".⁵² This use of the term queer is important, however despite their intentions, queer is often used interchangeably with gay and lesbian. This could be, in terms of their interviews, a product of the time period from which they were drawing their participants, but I believe that my work offers an important contribution that troubles such ontological positioning.

I am also invested in drawing attention to the ways that identities are being framed in relation to gay/lesbian versus queer subjectivities. Addressing this requires understanding the ways in which hegemonic heteronormativity serves to justify security measures that mark queer individuals as threatening. Lisa Duggan notes that the regulation of queers has not excluded all gay people. Instead, she understands sexual

⁵¹ Neocleous, *Critique of Security*, 133.

⁵² Kinsman and Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers*, 5.

regulation as one arm of neoliberal agendas, which has created a new 'homonormativity.'⁵³ She defines homonormativity as "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency, and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption."⁵⁴ She argues that homonormativity is re/produced by national LGBT advocacy organizations whose 'gay equality' stance is working primarily for the monied elite, as evidenced by the push on issues such as marriage equality and military service.⁵⁵

Duggan's analysis of homonormativity has opened spaces for scholars within Sexuality Studies and Trans Studies to understand notions of sex/gender/sexuality as shifting sites of governance. This is important because homonormativity as a concept enables scholars to demonstrate the ways in which bodies and identities *become integral to* hegemonic ruling regimes. Gay and lesbian subjects can become secure by performing proper subjecthood, by casting off their queerness; however, such an opportunity can only be seized upon by a limited few. Performing proper subjecthood requires that gays and lesbians adhere to and maintain power relations based on class, whiteness and nationalism. In this way, gays and lesbians are implicated in processes of maintaining boundaries that keep queers out.

Jasbir Puar also considers homonormativity in relation to state regulation and security, tracing the relationship between queers, the state and security discourses in the

⁵³ Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*, (Boston: Beacon Press) 2004.

⁵⁴ Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality*, 50.

⁵⁵ Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality*, 45.

post 9/11 context. Puar notes that certain individuals, primarily affluent white married gay men, were encouraged to embrace patriotism through consumption and unity against racialized others. In return those who adhered to normative scripts were rewarded temporary state recognition.⁵⁶ At the same time, the meaning of queer shifted to all things not white, American and wealthy. Drawing on several cultural examples including photographs, television shows and posters, Puar highlights the relationship between the terrorist and the fag, both portrayed as perversely sexualized and racialized and, whose inability or indecision to adhere to national scripts of race, class, gender and nationalism ensure that they remain firmly outside the bounds of citizenship⁵⁷. In this way, both Puar and Duggan highlight the way that neoliberal approaches to recognition have made strides for particular queer subjects, ones which are decidedly not queer at all, at the expense other queer bodies. Puar uses various poster campaigns enacted by racialized communities to distance themselves from Arab and Muslim communities. Neither Puar nor Duggan *explore fully the articulated subjectivities of these normative neoliberal subjects*, and there is little consideration of the ways in which these individuals *understand their role* within these financially and politically securitized situations.

In an article co-authored with Dan Irving entitled “‘Taking Out the Trash’: The Neurotic Citizen confronts the Trans-Monster on gentrifying urban terrains” (under review) I investigate the relationship between neoliberalism, citizenship discourses and zoning practices. We argue that normative subjects, those who appear to have economic

⁵⁶ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham; London: Duke University Press) 2007.

⁵⁷ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

privilege, whiteness and properly sexed and gendered bodies, are constantly faced with the reality of their own precarity and as such manage the risk of the annihilation of their own value through perpetrating the social and subsequently the literal death of Others.⁵⁸ In this way, the performative labour of individuals within the security state can be seen as one of self-preservation. The reifying discourses of the Other embodied by normative individuals becomes a governing technique, in which the elected officials and certain branches of the government encourage citizens to govern, and subsequently secure, themselves through their own neuroses.⁵⁹ Similarly to Puar and Duggan though, this work is not engaging in the same qualitative way to investigate how narratives of the queer/normative subject are constituted by systemic relations of power and constitutive of them. Narrative accounts are important for queer/trans research because it is vital to center voices that have been so often silenced. Furthermore, as I discovered in this project, we cannot overlook the emotional responses that have an important role in shaping the actions of individuals.

Security and Trans Studies

Trans travelers are certainly not immune to these regulatory techniques. Toby Beauchamp argues that in reaction to the difficulties that trans travelers face in the United States, primary responses from transgender advocacy organizations have tended to reify

⁵⁸ Dan Irving and Alicia Baker, "'Taking Out the Trash': The Neurotic Citizen confronts the Trans-Monster on gentrifying urban terrains" *Citizenship Studies* 2012 (under review).

⁵⁹ Isin, "The Neurotic Citizen," 217-235.

securitizing nationalist discourses and support the continued policing of deviant bodies.⁶⁰ In her analysis of the Christina Madrazo case, Alisa Solomon notes that Madrazo called upon a “time honored immigrant story” of hard work and persistence to continue to legitimize not only her presence but her story. Madrazo is an undocumented Mexican migrant living in the United States, who was sexually assaulted at the Krome detention centre after being arrested for soliciting. Madrazo launched a lawsuit against the United States government for failing to act in response to her sexual assault. From the outset of her case, Madrazo was met with racist, transphobic and anti-sex work attitudes, including slanderous and libelous material printed in local papers that implied “Mexican tranny equals perpetually sex-crazed prostitute...and therefore (though this is only tacitly implied) she could not have been raped”.⁶¹ In countering these claims, Madrazo claimed that her solicitation arrests were indicative of her desperation of money and that she was fleeing persecution as a transsexual in Mexico. She began to speak publicly about *her transition*, which she framed in terms that not only related to her gender, but in terms of shifting her nationality. Madrazo began what Solomon calls “self-Americanizing”,⁶² to have her story and her identity legitimized and her status as ‘criminal illegal immigrant’ downplayed. Madrazo began to speak and perform her story in a way that could be palatable according to common sense neoliberal values contributing to the meaning of

⁶⁰ Toby Beauchamp, ‘Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11’ in *Surveillance and Society* 6(4)

⁶¹ Alisa Solomon, “Trans/Migrant: Christina Madrazo’s All-American Story,” *Queer Migrations*, eds. Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 2005, 19.

⁶² Solomon, “Trans/Migrant,” 22.

normal within the United States. She accomplished this by drawing on American citizenship narratives such as those emphasizing hard work and overcoming hardship.⁶³

These self-governing techniques are, I argue, one method by which the 'imagined community'⁶⁴ acquires the *continual labour* of its members. That existence, which is perceived as being constantly under threat, requires an expansive process of securitization that functions to naturalize as many physical and psychological characteristics as possible to maintain the illusion of rigid boundaries of legal and imagined citizenship. To this end, Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen investigate the ways in which *gender has become a product of securitization* through TSA airport programs in an attempt to continue the securitization of identity as a means of future governance. They argue that "the effects of gender's unreliability as an unchanging measure of identity do not constitute a problem for the TSA but rather for the individuals whose narratives, documents, and bodies reveal the mutability of the category."⁶⁵ It is certainly true that the difficulties faced by trans people in airports and other border sites seem to have little to no impact on the state implemented programs. The recent Canadian outcry against the revised Identity Screening Regulations⁶⁶ as well as an increasing push to have gender identity and expression protected by law (e.g. Bill 279 presently before parliament) indicates that

⁶³ Soloman, "Trans/Migrant," 23-4.

⁶⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on Origin and Spread of Nationalism Revised Edition*, (London; New York: Verso) 1991. Interesting enough, in criticizing the dominant conceptualization of nation as a natural and universal state of being for people, Anderson draws on gender to highlight this fallacy. Specifically he states that "The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept- in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender- vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations..." (p. 5).

⁶⁵ Currah and Mulqueen, "Securitizing Gender," 558.

⁶⁶ Molloy, "Transgender People are Completely Banned" <http://chrismilloy.ca/2012/01/transgender-people-are-completely-banned-from-boarding-airplanes-in-canada/>

there may be significant political difficulty coming for elected officials and policy-makers if they continue to treat sex and gender as both interchangeable and immutable.

Understanding the specifics of border sites as securitized places is important for contextualizing how the experiences of trans travelers might impact their relationship with the Canadian government and neoliberal logics. This requires more investigation into Canadian security policies at border sites and airports, specifically as they pertain to gender identity, which remains an underrepresented scholastic realm.

Aren Aizura's focus is less on physical borders. He directs his analysis towards imagined national and gendered borders arguing that acceptance as an (Australian) citizen requires the proper performativity of whiteness, masculinity and class, and that liberal capitalist approaches to rights which accept these terms have devastating outcomes for non normative gender variant people.⁶⁷ Drawing on this, I investigate *the relationship between national borders and gendered borders through subject formation and citizenship*. My work is significantly informed by Aizura, but differs in that I am concerned with the *specific securitized sites* of border checkpoints and airports and the ways in which the performance of proper subjecthood in these spaces is mediated by one's social location. Furthermore, I stress that trans travelers are actors in the production of their own (in)security through their performance(s) of deserving subjects.

Contextualizing (homeland) security, citizenship and borders on the body allows us to extend theorizations of performativity to the broad world of security. Given the

⁶⁷ Aren Aizura, "Of borders and homes: the imaginary community of transsexual citizenship" *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7(2) 2006, 290.

increasing recruitment of citizens as “foot soldiers”⁶⁸ into the war on terror through biometrics, not only at the border but through technologies in our everyday lives such as smart phones and other mobile devices, it becomes easy to reproduce unconsciously those actions that mark us as safe.

Narrative as Method

In undertaking queer and trans methodologies, I elected to use narrative research as my mode of data gathering, as well my tool for structuring my argument. Anne-Marie Bathmaker notes that narrative inquiry emphasizes the relationship between personal and public experiences, and the ways that these experiences are may be interpreted.⁶⁹ This speaks to the ways that I seek to uncover how my research participants comprehend themselves, as well as how they interpret the ways that others view them within securitized spaces like airports. This is vital to understanding the ways the knowledges about (in)security are co-produced. The participants in this project do not perform security in a vacuum, but rather the performance is crafted on conscious and unconscious registers through the narratives they hear and in response to their interactions with others.

What drew me as a researcher to narrative inquiry was the potential for a radical disruption of the boundaries so often drawn in social science research. Particularly, I embrace the notion that the researcher and the research participant are in a relationship with each other that affords both parties with opportunities to learn and change. These

⁶⁸ Louise Amoore, “Biometric Borders: Governing mobilities in the War on Terror” *Political Geography* 25 (2006), 346.

⁶⁹ Anne-Marie Bathmaker, *Exploring Learning, Identity and Power through Life History and Narrative Research* (New York: Routledge) 2010.

opportunities allow for the co-creation of knowledge, an act which resists academic emphasis on the researcher as expert as well as hyper-individualizing neoliberal logics that encourage learning as an individual activity rather than a community project.

Given the historic erasure of trans voices, and with sensitivity to my position as non-trans identified researcher requesting sensitive information, I was eager to find a method that would include participants not only as objects of study, but as full partners in a process of making visible the shared precarity of many of us within a system that not only genders security practices, but which furthers the securitization of gender itself.

One of the primary motivations for the use of narrative methodology is a self reflective one. I hoped to uncover how stories were shaped not just by my participants, but to consider their construction through our conversation, and further through my analytical and writing processes. What stories did the participants choose to tell me and why? What words did they choose to convey not only the 'facts' but their emotional responses? How does my positionality as a trans ally and queer identified academic factor into the construction of these stories?

The use of narrative methodology, in one way, acts as an example of performativity of security that I am addressing in the project. In the beginning, as a Master's student I had to engage with my own feelings about authority and expertise. In what ways was I qualified to undertake this research, and how would I prove this, or *securitize my position* vis-a-vis my participants? I made conscious decisions about the kinds of clothes I would wear when interviewing research participants and I wrote, rewrote and practiced how I would pose questions. These anxieties speak to the need for

legitimacy that comes from the acceptance of others, a key tenant, I argue, in the creation and maintenance of a securitized gendered space. Likewise, my interview participants expressed anxieties about the acceptance of their stories. Some participants apologized for not having stories of difficulties in the border and airport travel, downplaying the contributions they had made throughout their interviews. One participant began the interview by stating “I’m not sure if this will be any use to you. Sorry if I waste your time.” By addressing any perceived criticism I may have had ahead of time, the individual was attempting to mediate our relationship perhaps to position themselves as amenable to change should their current proof of legitimacy (the telling of their story) be rejected.

The discussion of legitimacy is particularly important to this project given the questions raised about the legitimacy of trans people’s experiences so regularly. I was personally sensitive to the fact that as an ally, I did not want to indicate that I was granting their experience legitimacy. Rather, I continue to be amazed by the fact that my participants so wholly accepted my status as researcher, one about which I had particular anxieties. These varying anxieties and performances throughout my relationships with my participants are indicative of the ways in which, as Engin Isin points out, we are governed by neuroses.⁷⁰ Similarly, and vital to this project, is the recognition that *we are all* gendered subjects. Though the experiences of trans travelers offer a unique and often overlooked perspective, the project of securitizing gender is one that is extended to all

⁷⁰ Isin, “The Neurotic Citizen,” 217-235.

bodies residing within the state; however, it is a project that requires us to forget the truth of our shared status as gendered subjects.

Chapter Two

In undertaking this project, I conducted interviews with five trans identified individuals. I had originally hoped to have ten *research partners*, however I ran into difficulty recruiting participants. I believe that this may be due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, along with the knowledge that the trans community has an uneasy history with academic researchers. I was particularly sensitive to this history in *my own negotiations* in the project as discussed in the introduction/chapter one. Even with the small sample size, what was evident in the interviews was the way in which securitization was a process that extended beyond the physical border. Performances of security were enacted in each interview that I participated in, and made evident the ways in which securitization is an on-going micro-political process.

This chapter begins with brief biographies to introduce each research partner. I will then arrange the interview responses into a number of themes. The data will be shared using direct quotations from my research partners, as well as more story-telling narratives designed to paint a picture about the experiences that my research partners shared with me. These narratives were written collaboratively with trans travelers through my drafting each section as a story and inviting research participants to edit these sections. In this way, the stories *themselves* encapsulate the ways in which security is enacted and interpreted through micropolitical processes. By this I am referring to the events and relationships that occur within our everyday lives, for example a gendered greeting such as “good morning, sir.”

Interview Methodology

The interviews conducted either in person or over Skype averaged forty-five minutes for each participant. In person interviews were recorded digitally and Skype interviews were converted to text files. I began with semi-structured interview questions to gather basic demographic information such as age, location, race and personal identifiers as well as to provide space for them to discuss their sex/gender/trans identities.⁷¹ As I will discuss further in chapter three, posing the question “*who are you?*” remains a significant component of neoliberal security policies and securitization processes.⁷² These questions were followed by a discussion of the last time they had traveled, reoccurring experiences in their travels and their experiences of security whether positive or negative (or both) when traveling.

The demographic information for my participants is quite broad in terms of age. Participants ranged in age from nineteen through to their late forties. I spoke with students, labourers and working professionals. Overall, my participant’s gender identities leaned more towards trans masculine identities. This may tell a story about the kinds of people who have the ability to travel and the relative safety of being able to share their stories with me, but also speaks to the resources that are required for these interviews. Participants had to dedicate time, travel and in some cases Internet access was required and my limited budget meant that I was unable to offer financial assistance. The majority of my participants identified themselves as middle class, although some indicated that

⁷¹ The irony is not lost on me that ‘who are you’ functions as a primary question in securitized spaces as well.

⁷² Muller, “(Dis)qualified bodies:,” 279-294.

they may have a history of poverty or grew up in a working class household. I also asked the participants about their racial and ethnic identities, each of which is addressed in their biographies. Geographically, my participants came from central and eastern Canada, and I had no participants from west of Ontario. This was not an intentional choice but one of circumstance as I circulated my call for participants Canada wide, but only participants who identified themselves as being from central or eastern Canada volunteered to participate.

It was also very common for the participants to travel alone. The youngest participant in this project, August, indicated that they had traveled primarily with their family but most of my other participants were working professionals or adult graduate students and indicated that when they did not travel alone, they would usually travel with their partners. All of the participants had traveled internationally.

There was diversity amongst research partners concerning their level of openness and their relative degree of 'outness' regarding their trans identities. Some of the trans travelers with whom I spoke were vocal about their identities and not particularly afraid of their stories or experiences being shared through knowledge dissemination within academic forums. Other participants, however, were much more concerned with the assurance of anonymity concerning the project. I believe that these concerns were also evident in the stories that they shared. Although there were shared themes among participants, there were varying levels of concern about being outed in public, which shaped the construction of the narratives during and after the initial interviews. The idea of being outed is rooted in historical and contemporary relations trans people had with

Gender Identity Clinics, women’s organizations, social service providers, as well as mis/representations in mainstream media wherein they were framed as ‘tricksters.’ Trans people were – and as debates concerning Bill C-279 dubbed the “Washroom Bill” can attest, still are – labeled as dubious, opportunist, dishonest and irrational shape-shifters. To be outed implies that one is hiding or deceiving. However, as in Stryker’s trans-monster, there is value in being *out*. To be out, of one’s own choice, is to illuminate borders that divide people. Participants who were worried about the potential of being identified seemed more hesitant in answering questions, and were more likely to ask me not to include details that they had shared. This functioned as a form of securitizing, ensuring that their identities and livelihoods remained protected.

Biographies

Rory is a genderqueer student and sales associate in their early twenties who is from Northern Ontario. When asked about their personal identification, Rory indicated that they⁷³ were a white and Metis person who lived just above the poverty line. Rory shared their experience of three trips that they took over the last year - two international and one within Ontario. On the whole, Rory explained that they had relatively positive experiences with air travel and attributed some of this to the fact that they are not currently transitioning and as such they pass for their assigned gender.

Bob is a trans man from Atlantic Canada. Currently a graduate student, Bob indicated that he traveled very often including traveling to Ontario every couple of

⁷³ For both Rory and August, I have elected to respect their chosen pronoun of ‘they.’ While there are alternative pronouns such as ze and hir, I have chosen to place respect for their identities above absolute grammatical clarity.

weeks. When asked, Bob identified himself as being from Europe and noted that he had white privilege. He is a dual citizen of both Canada and Europe, which has complicated the status of his identity documents. Bob explained that he had a lot of anxiety about security at airports, which may have been compounded by his experiences of border security as a child combined with the fact that he is a nervous flier.

August is a nineteen-year old trans/transgender/genderqueer/queer student originally from Toronto but now living in Ottawa for post secondary school. They identified themselves as white. Regarding class, they explained that they defined themselves on the basis of their parent's socio-economic status which is middle to upper middle class. August has traveled fairly extensively to visit friends and family, as well as to go on vacations. They explained that they felt a lot of anxiety over how closely their passport picture matched their current appearance, as well as discomfort over the use of their legal name. However, they also explained that they are willing to go through the hoops at the airport to make travel as easy as possible.

Charlie is a Two Spirited/genderfluid/trans guy/trans graduate student from Montreal. He further identified himself as being bi/pansexual, polyamorous, a mom, teacher, activist and drag neo-burlesque performer. Charlie openly discussed fear of violence, and voiced that he distrusted customs officers, security personnel and the police. He also made reference to the fact that his limited income has impeded his ability to legally change his identity documents which causes him to experience a significant degree of anxiety when attempting to traverse borders.

Johnny is a thirty-something trans guy and professional from Quebec who currently resides in Ontario. He identified himself as Jewish and white. After having experienced a shifting in socio-economic status over his life, Johnny now feels as though he is moving into the upper middle class. As a professional, he travels approximately every two weeks for work. It has been only recently that he has begun to shed the anxiety he felt about traveling. Johnny stressed that he noticed a change in his travel experiences as he began to dress and act more normatively than he did during his youth.

Common themes

Despite the diversity of experiences, a number of common themes weave through the interviews including the emotional responses of the participants to airport and border security, as well as the interview process. Additionally, the participants addressed identity documents, difficulties at the border, surveillance and profiling, passing, positive experiences, knowledge about industries and ministries involved in Canadian security, and ideal conceptualizations of security. Each of the themes described below will function as the point of analysis in the next chapter. A few of the themes that arose were different than I had anticipated, either because they were different than the responses I had predicted, or I was not expecting such a topic to arise. This is significant to my analysis of trans- security narratives because it speaks to the way that these stories are constructed collaboratively. Each participant was able to tell their story in an individual way, but my questions and writing allow for the development of multiple perspectives. I

did not always agree with the participant's interpretations and their various stories and experiences were not always consistent with each other.

Emotional Responses

Despite the fact that only two participants identified concrete instances of difficulties they experienced at a border crossing/checkpoint/customs, every participant expressed that they dealt with significant distress at airports and borders. They raised a number of the fears they experienced whilst traveling including anxiety about the possibilities of being identified as trans and then subsequently mistreated, as well anxieties about identities being erased, and for some of the participants there was stress related to distrust of authority.

In talking generally about the process of moving through security at airports, Rory explained that they feel “[n]ervous and uncomfortable. My anxiety increases when I’m in those types of situations, and I’m always nervous that they won’t let me into the country even though I haven’t done anything wrong.” Likewise, August described their experience as uncomfortable and worrying, telling me that they felt “[A] little anxious. I guess because I know I’m very privileged in a lot of ways too, this only really causes internal problems for me...I feel like the climate of security and the climate of society and trans people in general...makes me on edge and makes me feel like ‘I don’t belong here. The way I am does not fit your system.’” August further described their unease as a feeling of “I’m not meant to be here,” noting that “It feels irrational to me, but it causes anxiety nonetheless.”

Charlie's anxiety stemmed predominantly from his lack of cohesive identity documents; however, he also described a particular distrust of authority that caused him distress when traveling. He explains that his wariness of authority stems from relating them to acts of violence: "the nastier stuff I've heard more with respect to cops, but to me they're all the same...customs, security, cops." Johnny also identified a distrust of authority, telling me "because when I was younger I guess I spent some time in the youth system and I had an association with authority in uniforms being a really negative thing, a lot of times my fear and my feeling that I couldn't...that I had no control, were worse than sometimes what would actually happen."

Bob expressed a lot of anxiety about the security process at airports and borders. He said observed that "I feel like its always in the background as a possibility. When you don't fit...whatever it is they are looking for, 'the norm,'...then I think you always have to be concerned, or prepared. You have to be prepared for what would happen." Here, Bob highlights a theme that was common throughout the interviews - the anxiety these trans travelers experienced stemmed from a place of uncertainty. None of the participants knew of any specific cases of discrimination or harassment that indicated they might have a problem. Instead, the *threat* of what might happen to them was vague, and many expressed that they tried not to call attention to themselves in any way.

My participants also demonstrated some unease during the interviews in response to some of the questions. Of particular note was the discomfort that many displayed regarding demographic questions concerning their socio-economic status. Many of the participants seemed unsure of how to answer the question, as though it made them

uncomfortable or seemed like a strange question. This was represented primarily through repeated ‘ums’ and ‘uhs,’ asking for clarification, and responding as if their answer was a question (e.g. “Um {pause} maybe middle class?”) Most of the participants identified themselves as being middle class, although many discussed the fluctuation of their class status over the years, especially in relation to the duration that they were students. Only one participant identified themselves in relation poverty. This anxiety about class identification is integral to notions of security because secure citizenship is largely mediated by neoliberal logics, which I will address in detail in chapter three.

Anxiety was a predominant factor in each of the issues about which my participants spoke. The concern that they had regarding moving through these spaces was not only about the events that occurred in those spaces, but was also a product of increased scrutiny in relation to identity documents, prevalence in the media, a lack of clear and cohesive information and few overtly positive experiences on which to draw. Each of the following sections speaks to the ways in which trepidation about passing, both in terms of gender identity and as a secure citizen, is a dominant response that shapes the actions and experiences of travelers in securitized spaces such as border checkpoints and airports.

Identity Documents

Issues pertaining to official identity documents are another major theme emerging from my research. While each participant had different challenges regarding their identification documents, there was a shared experience of tension vis-a-vis the status of their documents. What has also emerged throughout the stories shared by my participants,

is that the state of changing identity documents for trans Canadians is unclear, confusing, and often not universally applied. Both August and Rory, who identify as genderqueer, have ID documents that have their birth name and assigned gender on them. However, both trans subjects indicate that their documents did not provide much difficulty at the border, although it did cause some anxiety for each of them. August noted that: “one thing that did stand out to me is my passport is from about three years ago I think. So at the time I was sixteen, I looked younger, I didn’t have glasses in the picture and I had really long hair. So both times, going both ways across the border, they’d look through all the passports and they’d go like ‘Whose August? Where is this person?’ and then they’d look at me and it would be fine.” In discussing their reaction to this, August told me “that kind of discrepancy between my former appearance and my current appearance seemed to be funny for them, and I guess kind of funny for me too. Carrying around this picture that I don’t feel is representative, like this official identity that I don’t feel like.”

For Rory, whose identity document picture currently matches their appearance, there was also anxiety about being in an airport. They stated that: “it also makes me uncomfortable to have to go by my birth name and assigned gender.” This discomfort felt by Rory and August is indicative of the ways that linking identification documents with gender can render invisible those who fall outside of the normative gender binary.

However, Rory noted that they had a relative degree of privilege in moving through these spaces, stating “I think that although I may bind my chest and present differently than my assigned gender, I’m still read as such...I aim to dress generally androgynously... so I think that helps in these situations. I think that folks reading my passport and see me as

androgynous think that androgyny is kind of the middle so you can go either way, so they go with my assigned gender.”

For Bob, Charlie and Johnny, whose transitioning processes have included efforts to change their names and gender markers, identity documents proved to be a significant source of anxiety during the process. This was complicated further for Bob and Johnny who both hold dual citizenships. Regarding his documents, Charlie noted that: “I’m always a little paranoid because if they ask for additional ID for some reason, I’m a bit fucked. My provincial government ID (medicare, driver’s license) still have F on them because I haven’t been able to afford the process of getting them changed.” This causes him to worry that he will eventually be detained. To manage this stress, he always carries letters from his psychologist, endocrinologist and surgeon.

Johnny, who now has documents that reflect his gender and name, noted that his documents were complicated because when they were initially changed they had both his new name and his old names. Similar to Charlie, he also always carried letters from the doctor. He noted that “I spent a good three years with a lot of names, sort of more awkward than just having your old name. It was a strange mix...however, since 2008 I have had a Canadian passport that identifies me as Johnny and male.” He also talked about the differences between getting his gender changed on his Canadian passport and his American passport. He noted that the Canadian government allowed him to change his passport by providing a letter from his doctor explaining that he is indeed a man and that it is safer for him to travel as a man. However, the American government required that his doctor swear an oath saying that Johnny was a man. In describing the process for

his American passport, Johnny noted that “it was a huge study in discretionary power because that person, for whatever reason, concluded that what was needed was that my doctor should swear an oath. Why? I have no idea. Discretionary decision making power.”

Bob made a similar observation about the status and process of changing one’s gender on documents in Canada. He noted that “every person you get [customs officer/ border patrol person] is a bit of a mystery. Which, what is good about that is that they don’t know either, so sometimes you can get through the system that way. But, on the other hand, if it was someone who did know, that can make it worse. Because they can be like ‘No, you are to produce the following or forget it’.”

Bob’s experience with identity documents has also been complicated by the fact that he is a dual citizen, and that his UK passport has his old name and gender on it, along with an old picture. In order to change that, he has to go through the UK’s gender recognition panel. Regarding his Canadian passport, Bob said that “I’ve changed my name twice. So I’ve recently changed my name to the name that people were calling me. My in between name was also a masculine name...My Canadian passport...has a more recent picture, my previous name...and my wrong gender on it.” Bob told me that his driver’s license “thank god has all the correct information; my current name, it has M on it. So I use that to travel as much as possible, since most of my travel is in Canada and it’s a lot less complicated.” Bob expressed a significant amount of anxiety about the fact that his documents were so different. Like Charlie and Johnny, Bob indicated that he also carried letters with him when traveling to explain any perceived discrepancies.

What the stories indicate is that the challenges and inconsistencies in changing identity documents were a significant source of emotional disturbance for participants. It is clear as well that failure to provide an accessible and comprehensible way for people to change their gender causes some travelers more difficulties. Bob stated that: “I guess I don’t understand why we need a gender marker on our documents...I don’t understand why its useful.” August also discussed gender marker’s on documents, mentioning that they might feel more comfortable if they had the option to use a third gender designation on their documentation, but still questioning if it could potentially cause more problems by making them more visible.

Difficulties at the Border

For the most part, my participants expressed that they did not have significantly negative experiences at borders or airports in their recent travels. Charlie and Johnny did describe negative experiences that they had experienced in the past. Charlie describes a situation early during his transition after having just started hormones which had already promoted the growth of a little bit of facial hair. Taking me to the scene, he recalls a Greyhound bus trip to Plattsburgh during which “the customs officer that I got kept me for at least twenty minutes. I was worried the bus was going to leave without me. He was really giving me a hard time. He kept looking at me and back at my passport and I could tell he was trying to find something wrong. He scanned my passport and spent a long time just going through my computer file.” Charlie explained that the customs officer began asking about the name of Charlie’s ex brother in law, someone he had previously traveled with and had been stopped with at the border. “They had stopped us for

questioning because I had tattoos (this was pre transition). So our names are associated with each other in their files. So this time, when I was going to Plattsburg, he pulled that out from many years before and we had done nothing wrong or anything. He was just looking for something to nail me on I'm sure because I looked suspicious to him."

Johnny also described experiencing difficulties at the border when he was younger. "In the past when I was in a different socio-economic background and appeared more non normative, I had a lot more difficulty at the border. I have a lot of traumatic memories from that time. I also was a bit of a drug user and so I was not only different because of class but often I smelled of marijuana...a number of times I had all my stuff searched, and was given trouble going into the States or getting back into Canada."

Like Charlie, Johnny experienced trouble when he was traveling by Greyhound bus into the United States. "[I]t used to be that I was the target on the Greyhound. I knew that if we were going across the border that I was going to get pulled off and it was going to be hell and I would make everyone late." In describing his situation on the Greyhound, Johnny indicated that he thought being singled out for the fact that he smelled like drugs was fair on their part, but that the gender based harassment that accompanied it was not. "I had really really short hair and I represented as a butch dyke, and so there would be bad comments. Sometimes if I was traveling with a woman there would be some homophobic comments about, like, how do you have sex? And just like harassment. Really homophobic based harassment. Mostly gender non-conforming based harassment, I mean, those guys from the borders, at least in the US, they're eighteen and they're jerks. So there was a lot of that." Charlie and Johnny experienced more difficulties crossing

borders by bus than they did by air, and for both the experiences occurred before or very early on in transition. Both also indicated that they had other markers of non-normativity such as tattoos in Charlie's case and drugs in Johnny's case that may have contributed to increased scrutiny from the border guards.

Surveillance and Profiling

Surveillance and profiling also emerged from the interview transcripts as prevalent themes ordering trans traveler's experiences. When full body scanners were initially announced in Canada and the United States in 2010, several trans organizations put out reports detailing how they put trans people at increased risk, as they had the potential to 'out' or expose trans travelers. There are two primary types of body scanners, backscatter x-ray and millimeter wave scanners, with each security company manufacturing a different type. Both types of scanners used at the airport have the ability to outline genitalia in varying degree of detail and some are capable of showing details such as breast implants. In Canada the scanners are supplied by L3 Technologies⁷⁴ using millimeter wave technology and are capable of detecting "all types of materials (metallic and non metallic): liquids, gels, plastics, metals, powders, thin materials, ceramics, etc" as well as "all types of objects: weapons, standard and home-made explosives, contraband, drugs, money, papers, etc."⁷⁵ If this technology is capable of readings artificial materials within the body, it is highly likely that a penile prosthesis worn by some trans men and gender queer individuals (i.e. those who are packing) would also be

⁷⁴ Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, "Full Body Scanners" http://www.catsa-acsta.gc.ca/page.aspx?id=84&pname=Fullbodyscanner_scannercorporel&lang=en

⁷⁵ L3 Technologies, "ProVision Advanced Imaging Technology," <http://www.sds.l-3com.com/advancedimaging/provision.htm>

detected. Given the amount of attention that body scanners initially received, I wanted to speak with my participants about their experiences of this technology of surveillance and profiling during the airport security clearance processes and while crossing borders.

Four of my five participants had been through a full body scanner during their recent trips. Only Charlie had not been through one at the time of our conversation, although he did express some concern about the thought of being subject to this process. August described the experience as being uneventful. They did not put much emphasis on their feelings about the process, informing me that since they are read as female the fully body scanner does not pose much of an issue for them. Likewise, Rory did not experience a problem with the scanner, but described the process as “a little uncomfortable because I had never been in one before, and I felt a little exposed just because everyone is staring at you while you’re in it.”

Initially, Bob and Johnny expressed anxiety about the body scanners during the interview. However, both participants also explained that concern about the body scanner led to a certain amount of peace during the process because they recognized that some of the outcomes of these security measures were simply beyond their control. Johnny, who describes the body scanners as Xerox machines, explained: “The Xerox machines bother me. I’ve only had to go through one once, I guess, it bothers me...and when they were introduced I was paying a lot of attention to what trans advocates were doing about them, and privacy issues...but then I tell myself a lot of soothing stories about micro penises⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Here, Johnny is referring to those who have what medical practitioners deem a micro-penis, or a penis which is significantly smaller than the average penis. It is interesting that medical establishment feels it necessary to ascribe a different classification to a penis which does not literally ‘measure up’ to normative standards of the male body.

so...its very soothing. I tell myself ‘the world is a diverse place, and I can’t be the only one.’”

Bob expressed a similar process of self-soothing by saying “[f]or the thing with the scanner, at a certain point I’m just like ‘Okay, it is what it is.’ If they fucking obviously can see a lot on these scanners, I don’t know what they can see, but I assume they can see everything, then what? It is what it is. You literally have nothing to hide. So I was just like ‘Okay, if they have a problem, then they are going to talk to me, and I’m going to say look, I’m a trans person and what do you want me to do?’”

Despite the hype prevalent in the media or by responses to breaking news about the airport use of such technology provided by LGBTQ advocacy organizations such as Egale, none of my participants expressed that they had experienced difficulties at the border due to being selected randomly to go through the body scanner. In fact, it is possible that the increased media attention the body scanners may have contributed to escalating the anxieties of my participants.

Clearly, other types of surveillance and profiling measures are in place beyond body scanners and my participants shared a variety of experiences with such measures. Charlie, who regularly “picks”⁷⁷ while he travels, expressed concern about enhanced pat downs stating “whenever there is an airport where they actually do spot checks, like pat downs, I always feel weird. I pick, but what if it feels different to them, or moves in an unusual way when they pay attention around there?” Similarly, Bob expressed that

⁷⁷ Packing refers to the use of a prosthetic penis.

concerns about the potential problems that might arise by packing led him to avoid the whole situation altogether, choosing instead not to pack while traveling.

Most of the participants mentioned having to remove their shoes and belts as part of security clearance procedures. August discussed how the process of taking of their shoes at the airport reinforced the fact that they felt like they had less power at the airport. She explains: “Taking of my shoes, I think that it takes...I mean you’re already down several power levels from the security people in their uniforms, with their scanners and their power not to let you get on this plane...and it makes me feel more down. Taking off the shoes, like you’re walking around in sock feet like you’re a kid and they can just do whatever.”

While the “stripping for the state”⁷⁸ process of removing shoes seems to function as a near invisible power grab, the state also employs quite obvious and sometimes frightening methods of maintaining order. Johnny briefly mentioned his experience of traveling when trained drug dogs identified his baggage. “There situations, like when the dogs in particular pulled my bags out...[and] there was actually an empty baggy and I was like ‘Oh my god, kill me!’ That was actually the worst incident that happened.” Johnny attributed his border troubles and his experiences with the dogs to the fact that he was a drug user with a particular visual aesthetic rather than a trans person, telling me “it was a particular kind of world I was in, and all of those things led to profiling, not gender non normativity on its own.”

⁷⁸ Shoshana Magnet and Tara Rogers, “Stripping for the State: Whole body imaging technology and the surveillance of othered bodies,” *Feminist Media Studies* 2011, 1-18.

Overall, Charlie described the process of trying to cross the border as one where *everyone* is rendered suspect. He observed that “it’s like we’re all made to be feel like ‘bad guys’ with the goal to get across without incident, rather than being protected.”

Passing

Notions of passing, not only as their self-identified sex and/or gender but as safe and non threatening subjects also contributed to the anxiety that participants experienced concerning being in such securitized spaces. Obviously when discussing trans travelers, passing as the sex/gender that one identifies as is integral, but passing also refers here to passing in relation to class, race, and (dis)ability.

Class passing was particularly evident in Johnny’s recollections of travel. He vocalized clearly that his increased privilege in securitized spaces correlated with his upward class mobility. He provides some detail: “It was a strange transition that I went through on the Greyhound, because it used to be that I would always be the target on the Greyhound. I knew that if we were going across the border that I was going to get pulled off and it was going to be hell and I would make everyone late. Then, over time, it wasn’t me anymore, it was the black woman and her kids, and I saw that I was changing socio-economic classes, that I was passing in a different kind of way, and that was striking.”

Regarding passing in relation to sex and gender, most of my participants who had actively transitioned made distinctions between periods of early and later stages of transition. Stories that occurred earlier in transition were marked by more feelings of anxiety, and most negative incidents that participants experienced occurred earlier in their

transition. My participants explain that as they began to appear more normative, they experienced an ease regarding travel.

Charlie noted that his only negative experience crossing the border occurred early in transition: “I don’t think I was really passing a hundred per cent yet, my voice was still pretty high. But I had facial hair and short hair, and dressed like a guy. So either the officer wasn’t sure what I was, or maybe thought I was a hairy lesbian or something, you know that common stereotype.”

Rory notes that the fact that they are “not actively transitioning”⁷⁹ likely plays a role in their ease of security. “I think that although I may bind my chest and present differently than my assigned gender, I’m still read as such.” This, combined with the fact that Rory has matching IDs, and uses their assigned name to travel makes it easier for them move through the space relatively unnoticed. Like August, Rory explains that they *feel* uncomfortable with the fact that they must use their assigned name and gender to traverse borders easily. In this case, the passing refers to being understood according to one’s assigned gender and not as their actual identity. This is unlike Bob’s experience, whose relative degree of passing privilege is in their gender identity.

Some participants were able to move with little trouble through spaces where the risk of discrimination is high. Rory explained that they were pleasantly surprised at the positive experiences they had as a fat passenger who requires a seatbelt extender to fly.

As stories fill the media of the discrimination against fat fliers,⁸⁰ Rory relayed that “often

⁷⁹ Be referring to ‘not actively transitioning,’ I believe that Rory is referring to not pursuing legal document changes, or adhering to the medical model of transition.

⁸⁰ “Air Canada Obesity Class Action Lawsuit Given Green Light By Quebec Judge,” The Huffington Post December 12, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2011/12/12/air-canada-obese-lawsuit-obesity_n_1143566.html

when I fly, I require a seatbelt extender because of my weight, and I have never had a negative experience with this. All of the flight attendants have been extremely kind and helpful....Thankfully I've never experienced any discrimination.”

Positive Experiences

The anxiety about security processes can be mediated by positive experiences that participants have had while traveling. Although the *threat* remains, most participants identified positive or neutral experiences that they had had in securitized spaces that made it easier to continue traveling. Rory, who could not recount a specific positive experience, explained that “if security personnel are kind, it makes it better, but if they are rude or harsh, it makes it worse.” Other participants also suggested that interactions with friendlier or kinder personnel would make for an easier traveling experience.

Charlie shared a specific positive encounter related to his gender; “When I went to Florida for the first time, about three years ago, also a bit early in transition, still with the [female name] and F on my passport, the lady who checked my passport looked back and forth between me and my passport a couple times, but not really in a threatening way, just more curious I guess. She asked me ‘You’re [female name]?’ I said yes. She winked at me, and smiled and said ‘go ahead.’ She was an older lady, maybe in her 50s, who looked slightly butchy. Its like she just got it.”

Charlie’s story demonstrates that not all people working in security are interested in maintaining the status quo to the extent that it marginalizes travelers. Of course, not all security agents are terrible people on the hunt to harass trans travelers, and most of my participants pointed that out. Of particular note was the fact that during *routine* security

checks, several of my participants stressed that they could not be too upset with security agents as they were simply following orders or doing their jobs.

In recounting his positive experiences, Bob explained that “The more positive experiences tend to be with the flight attendant people. They can be more friendly...I feel like the nicest people are actually the people who check you in. If I had to pick out of the whole group, those would be the nicest people. I never have issues with them. And actually, that’s the place that I could, because they have more time with you. They’re dealing with your bags, etc.” However, he also noted that “Honestly, I’m just thankful when I get through it. I try to have as minimal interaction as possible. I think they reason that it goes okay is that they don’t know... I think the only reason that it does go okay is because I’m able to hide. That’s weird, but that’s how I feel.”

Knowledge of Bodies Governing Security Processes in Canada

At the end of each interview, I tried to get a sense of what understanding my participants had regarding the ways that security at airports and border sites were governed. I asked each participant if they knew which ministries were involved in security policy, and where they (the participants) might go looking for information. There was a significant amount of hesitation involved in answering the question from most participants, and many of them became visibly anxious. Most would answer the question, but follow up with “Is that right?” There seemed to be anxiety about being perceived as having a lack of knowledge about the situation. In response, I found myself reassuring participants ahead of the question by stating “This isn’t a test or a trick question.” These

micro negotiations between researcher and participant highlight the types of anxiety that come from uncertainty.

When asked about his general knowledge of security practices in Canada, Bob laughingly answered with “Hmm. I don’t know if I have any!” However, Bob specifically named Citizenship Canada, Canadian Border Services, and Transport Canada as being involved in the process. He noted that he knew it was federal jurisdiction and that he thought he could figure it out if he needed to. Likewise, Charlie identified it as a federal issue, and named the Passport Canada website as a place where “there is tons of information for travelers on there, so I would imagine that would be a place to go.” Charlie also said that he would be able to ask a friend, who was a former employee for Passport Canada, about who he should talk to.

Rory specified that they knew “very, very little,” but named the Canadian Air Transit Authority (CATSA) as the organization in charge of Canadian airport security regulations. They also noted that they knew very little about the specific regulations that are in place. Johnny also identified specific sources for information, predominantly made possible by his profession and education. However, he noted that he usually hears about these issues through the news originally.

August did not specifically mention any regulations, but discussed a resistance campaign that seeks to hold Canada to the International Civil Aviation Organization standard on sex unspecified passports. Canada is a signatory to these standards, and Transport Minister Denis Lebel has publicly stated that Canada is in compliance with

those standards, so some trans activists such as Christin Molloy⁸¹ have undertaken a campaign that encourages people to apply for passports without designating their sex. August did note however, that “I don’t really have the time, energy, or money to do this but I’m glad someone’s trying.”

Social media played an important role in most of the answers that were given by participants. Many mentioned accessing information through the news, but also through blog posts and by following links on Facebook. This is interesting for the project because it speaks to the ways that our very understanding of security is mediated through our day-to-day interactions with others. Social media makes it easy for information to go viral, with little regulation concerning its validity. Travelers then prepare for and experience these securitized spaces physically and psychically through narratives that continually expand and change, and which may or may not reflect the reality of the experience.

Security in a Perfect World

To conclude the interviews, I asked each participant to describe how security should work, or how it would work in a perfect world. Overwhelmingly, the participants each identified that they think there is a place for security or that some security is necessary. Charlie described it as understanding the need for security, but asserted that “the focus should be on keeping people safe rather than actively looking for criminals.” He emphasized the border crossing experiences he had as a child, describing the customs officers as less menacing and more friendly compared with his experiences as an adult

⁸¹ Christin Milloy, “How-To: Apply for Sex-Unspecified Canadian Passport in Protest” Christin Milloy: Working Toward a Brighter Future for Canada, February 9, 2012, <http://chrismilloy.ca/2012/02/how-to-apply-for-sex-unspecified-canadian-passport-in-protest/>

where he felt as though customs officers were “trying to get something out of you, trying to trick you into ‘messing up your story.’” Describing his ideal world, Charlie told me “it would go back to how it was pre 9/11, but with more awareness and respect of gender variance, and less racism.”

Rory felt that certain security measures were justified, specifically naming the x-raying of luggage as one because these are done in the interest of everyone’s safety. They also stressed that questions about travel should be limited to essential questions about where people are traveling to and why, with “no extra trick questions.” Rory also said that “Canadian passports should also allow other gender options, because this is also in the interest of everyone’s safety. Just because I don’t identify with the gender binary doesn’t mean I’m going to cause danger to the other passengers, and it will cut down on possible harassment or violence from guards, passengers, etc.”

Bob also felt strongly about gender markers noting that he does not understand why gender markers on documents are necessary. He followed up by noting “I mean, I can understand a picture... but I guess I would say that I don’t understand why its useful. Why do they need to know that? I don’t know what it helps. I really don’t.” Like both Bob and Rory, August expressed a desire to have more gender options for their passport, but showed hesitation in agitating for it because they did not want to draw attention to themselves.

Johnny did not have a clear picture of what he thought security should necessarily entail. He noted that there will always be security in these spaces, but questioned what that security should look like and how it should be balanced. He opted to compare the

approach between Israel and the United States. He told me that Israeli security “just interview people and they think it’s ridiculous that the Americans are x-raying people. They just think it’s the funniest thing. You know, they’ll do pat downs if they think it’s necessary. Now, those are more invasive, and the US is saying, and we’re saying, it’s better that we x-ray them. But is one more invasive than the other? I’m not sure. I would love to have a more public debate about it.”

Johnny also recalled Richard Reid⁸², the 2002 attempted shoe bomber in his discussion about security explaining that “despite heavy border security, nobody noticed the shoe bomber before [he was suspected by Israeli officials]. So we have to ask what the most effective things are. The shoe bomber was kind of a white guy from what I remember. He had long hair and looks a bit super hippyish, so profiling is not gonna work. But obviously this interview technique did.” Johnny concluded that “if we are going to accept the premise that there needs to be security at airports, then I’d like to see some tried and true empirical research...including number of threats, things that are stopped, what we are looking for. And I’m certainly not convinced that this fancy-dancy machinery is the way to do it.”

⁸² “Who Is Richard Reid,” *BBC News* December 28, 2001 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1731568.stm
Alan Philps, Sandra Laville and Sarah Womack “Shoe Bomb Suspect took ‘dummy run’ flight to Israel,” *The Telegraph* December 28, 2001 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1366537/Shoe-bomb-suspect-took-dummy-run-flight-to-Israel.html>

Chapter Three

As the conversations that I had with the participants in this study indicate, the impacts of securitizing regulation, though deeply personal for each person, impact all travelers regardless of sex, gender, race, class, sexuality and (dis)ability. A crucial part of this analysis though, rests on the understanding that our responses to this securitization both cerebral and emotional is mediated by our identities in relation to these categories.

Pertinent to this project is the idea that *gender itself is a site of securitization*, dependent on externally validated performances that mark an individual as citizen and, as such, safe. These performances are enacted with the 'domestic terrorist' haunting the background of securing the nation. The external validation, both of one's gender and of one's status as non-threatening is dependent on our performances at the micro-political level, or our daily interactions with other people. That gender and security are intimately intertwined and both enacted by performances challenges the strict ontological categorizations of safety, citizenship, security, male/female, sex/gender and trans/non-trans.

What was particularly striking about the interviews was the way in which participants understood and articulated their knowledge of their performance at the securitized sites, but perhaps more so was the way in which they adopted similar strategies in answering my questions. For example, where participants explained that they sought not to draw attention to themselves, they also expressed hesitancy with questions that could be seen as controversial. What is evident is the way in which gendered securitization, and the securitization of gender, works *beyond* highly securitized areas like

borders and airports. These relational processes are embedded in our day-to-day interactions with other people.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the relationship between securitization, gender and the micro-political spaces by moving through the themes that were raised in Chapter two including emotional responses, surveillance and profiling, identity documents and passing. The stories that have been told in this project have been my participants' stories, but it has been collaborative. I wrote each transcript initially, but each participant had the opportunity to edit. For this chapter, the analysis is entirely my own, shaping the understanding of the stories in the previous chapter. Here I work in two ways, one to secure my own voice as a new scholar and the other recognize and acknowledge the experiences of the participants in this project. I do not mean to imply that my status as a scholar and ally lends weight to their stories, it does not and it should not. Rather, the relationship between myself and my participants was fraught with unease, as strangers, as researchers and participants, as trans and non trans identified. This project is a reflection of the consensus that we came to, an acknowledgement that we are (for the moment) non-threatening.

Emotional Responses and Self Governance

Throughout the interviews, I was struck by how much the responses of the participants to their experiences of security were largely emotional. Few were able to point to specific cases of discrimination they have experienced that made them wary of travel. Instead, they expressed that their general knowledge, garnered from the media, advice from advocacy organization and conversations with friends, led them to *feel*

uncomfortable in these spaces, as though something bad could happen at any time. Most of the participants seemed to feel as though they personally were being scrutinized even more carefully than others in these spaces, and that any perceived difference would lead to potentially catastrophic situations such as violence or brutality.

Of course the worries of these participants are not without justification. It has been well documented that trans people, when outed, are at an increased risk of violence, up to and including death. That the news commonly reports on the murders of trans women is concerning and may lead trans people to feel more anxious about the potential of being outed. The large number of incidents of violence against trans people that goes without notice is perhaps even more alarming. Trans people know that their gender, race, class and behaviours make them susceptible to scrutiny. They pick up on narratives about what it means to perform proper security - some of which is garnered through problematic reporting of violence against trans people that paints the victims as wolves in sheep's clothing - and perform those scripts, becoming in part the unconscious neoliberal citizen.

Performances of security evident in my interviews with the research partners and in their co-constructed narratives are based largely on affect. August identified this perfectly when they noted that they sometimes feel like "I don't belong here. The way I am does not fit your system." The importance of affect hangs on its ability to mark "a body's belonging to a world of encounters...but also, in non-belonging, through all those far sadder (de)compositions of mutual in-compossibilities."⁸³ August's response to these

⁸³ Gregory J Siegworth and Melissa Gregg, "An inventory of Shimmers" in *Affect Theory Reader*, eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Siegworth (New York: Duke University Press) 2010, 2.

feelings, informing me that they knew such feelings were “irrational,” is indicative of the kinds of self-governing that we all engage in. While August could easily turn the blame for their lack of belonging onto the process that renders them invisible; instead they turn blame inwards onto themselves which minimizes their own feelings and identities

This type of self-governing creates travelers who are complicit within national security measures, and is resultant from the increasing *privatization of security* within the Canadian government. As a function of this privatization, much of the labour for security is downloaded onto citizens who are encouraged to protect themselves from omnipresent and increasing threats. For example, women are commonly encouraged to be responsible for their own safety. They are told not to walk alone or in the dark, to be aware of their surroundings, and to cover their drinks at parties. Women are told that the onus is on them to prevent becoming a victim. These ‘neurotic’ citizens then engage in all manner of self-soothing, by remaining hyper-vigilant against the threatening other, and taking measures to ensure their own safety by modifying their behaviours.⁸⁴

The secure citizen is particularly vulnerable when faced with reality of their own precarity.⁸⁵ This was reflected early in the interviews that I had with the participants. A source of anxiety or discomfort for some of them stemmed from a question that I asked them. When taking demographic information, I asked each participant to identify their socio-economic status. The majority of the participants demonstrated hesitancy in answering the question, and many of them looked for clarification. When giving an answer (which was almost always middle class), participants were likely to inflect their

⁸⁴ Isin, “The Neurotic Citizen,” 217-235.

⁸⁵ Irving and Baker “Taking Out the Trash” (under review)

words as though asking a question (“Maybe middle class?”). Of note however, is that three of the participants acknowledged that their socio-economic status had shifted over the course of their lives, and two of those participants articulated that they understood socio-economic status as both precarious and subjective. This is vital, because secure citizenship is largely mediated by neoliberal logics, and the responses given by these participants indicate that they understand that.

To express hesitancy about answering the question, and to position themselves as middle class (an identity divorced from their position vis-a-vis production) highlights that they understand the precarity of their secure citizenship. To maintain the illusion of the middle class is paramount to continuing acknowledgement of one’s safety, and as such one’s citizenship. In other words, their defense of the middle class as an identity divorced from labour and production functions as a form of securitizing. In answering the question ‘who are you,’ the participants ensure their belonging by clinging to the notion of the middle class, the unthreatening and the decidedly Canadian.

The idea of middle class is strongly linked with the entrepreneurial subject. Those things that are normative, such as being employed, having a family, and owning property are things that the middle class feel they can actually reach through their labour and activities. While this normativity is elusive, never tangible or fully realized, the middle class can achieve recognition by striving to achieve these things. In Canada, where there has largely been a myth of the middle class, even working class individuals and families may identify as middle class based on their ability to achieve certain things like families and property.

Some of the participants voluntarily disclosed information such as when they began transitioning, their pre/post/non operative status or whether or not they were taking testosterone. This was interesting because I intentionally avoided questions about these facets of their lives. Viviane Namaste notes that trans people are often required to “give their autobiography on demand.”⁸⁶ She further argues that this makes it difficult for trans people to talk about the real or important issues they are dealing with, and I wanted to ensure that I was sensitive to that. Furthermore, I believe that such questions are inappropriate and unnecessarily invasive, as well as serve to reinforce the medical model of transition.⁸⁷

Given this, it was interesting to have that information voluntarily disclosed to me. It is possible that those participants who shared that information had previous experiences working with academic researchers and expected that I would ask those questions, and so they presented that information up front, perhaps in an attempt to exercise some control over the sharing of that information. It is also possible that those individuals felt as if that information were important to their identity.

This information, regardless of intention, serves as a securitizing mechanism. By disclosing that information, participants offer ‘proof’ of their expertise in the manner, and also secure their status vis-a-vis other trans people through the medical model. Here, medical transition may function as a marker of both authenticity and authorization. By

⁸⁶ Viviane Namaste, *Sex Change, Social Change*, 3.

⁸⁷ I note here a tension with Namaste, who embraces transsexual as identity, and supports much political work involved in ensuring accessible medical access for trans people. I do not mean here to deride those who feel strongly about surgically altering their bodies, and I believe that political work that makes this accessible is vitally important. However, I am interested here in critiquing the medical model as the only ‘legitimate’ way of transition, and as the *only* way in Canada to access legal changes to one’s identity.

drawing borders around the authenticity/inauthenticity of the trans body, those who are not authorized, those with the wrong body, become threatening (and potentially risk being cast out all together). Sharing information about surgical status then functions as performance of security, giving the illusion that their body is secure by adhering to narratives that fit the standard for the regulation of (trans) gendered bodies. Furthermore, this lends tacit consent to identity papers indicated medical intervention.

Furthermore, the research partners chose to identify themselves in multiple ways. This was a function both of demographic questions I asked, but also the types of identifiers that the participants felt were important to capturing who they are. As previously discussed, increased risk of violence may lead trans people to identify in multiple ways for safety reasons, leaving those named and performed identities context dependent. This speaks clearly to the type of self-governance that is intrinsic to the performativity of security and demonstrates the ways that identities are secured in multiple temporal and spatial registers. In identifying in particular ways the participants indicated that they felt secure enough to perform in a particular way, while at the same time securing their narratives as valid for the purposes of my study. These identifiers are likely not to be in use in each facet of the participants' life, as evidenced by those participants who showed more concern about being outed.

Identity Documents, Biopolitics and Narrative of the 'Middle Class'

As Currah and Moore point out, identity documents are a vital part of state formation for biopolitical reasons, and significant aspect of this is the creation of state

borders. Identity documents guarantee that the government will “know who you are.”⁸⁸ Since identity documents use sex as a marker, it serves as a primary mechanism in biometric security programs because as a ‘permanent’ aspect of one’s body, certain aspects of the government, particularly those dealing with the administrative work of documenting citizens see sex as unchanging. I intentionally use the word sex here because while recent acknowledgement of certain transgender human rights indicates that the government is willing to concede to a diversity in gender presentation and identity, the restrictions that are placed on the ability to change ones identity documents are based on the physical and permanent changes of the genitalia, often described as ones sex.⁸⁹

Obviously given the nature of travel through airports or across borders, where identity authorizations are seen as necessary, many of the participants focused on discussion about their documents. For Charlie and Bob, identity documents caused some anxiety because of their inconsistency. Bob’s ID was complicated by his birth in another country, which meant that he had to deal with different requirements for having his sex designation changed in each place. For Charlie, financial limitations have prevented him from being able to fully pursue legal documentation changes, which means that his legal ID may not reflect not only his sense of self but his physical appearance.

These types of challenges increase the risk of being outed by security officials in these places. With this increased risk of outing there is an increased chance of

⁸⁸ Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean Moore, “We Won’t Know Who You Are: Contesting Sex Designations in New York City Birth Certificates,” *Hypatia* 24(3) 2009, 113-135.

⁸⁹ For the purposes of clarity, I acknowledge here that I deviate from the common understanding of sex as biological and gender as socially constructed. I feel that the relationship between sex and gender is one that is too complex for such a simple division, and fails to speak to the social construction involved in propagating the fallacy of binary sex.

discrimination or violence. Given this, some trans travelers mediate the anxiety and potential risk by carrying medical documentation that justifies any perceived inconsistencies (real or imagined) between the ID of the traveler and their physical appearance.⁹⁰ That these letters are accepted, encouraged and even seen as required is indicative of the way that biopolitical administration of the population is a factor in binding together state and individual responses. This type of biopolitical administration creates a system where trans people are required to be complicit in reifying securitizing discourses. In order to access mobility, trans people must pass through securitized spaces, which requires government sanctioned identity documents. When the choice is to 'play by the rules' or 'stay where you are,' is it any wonder that people accept the terms of mobility laid out before them?

For Bob, issues regarding citizenship - legal and metaphorical - are evident in his problems with identity documents. Born in the UK, Bob may be seen as an outsider, though Canada has been his home for quite some time. However, Bob has little trouble traveling internally, as he mostly uses his Canadian driver's license as identification, and his position as a white man affords him a lesser degree of scrutiny than a racialized person or someone with a noticeable accent and international documents.

Charlie's issue with identity documents is particularly interesting, given that he specifically mentions cost as a factor preventing him from continuing to pursue correct identity documents. In order to help ensure that Charlie's identity is verified, he is required to spend his own money to prove that he is authorized, not only to move but also

⁹⁰ Some trans men also carry documentation to explain the drugs, often injectables, that they carry with them.

to exist. This speaks to an individualizing of security and identity that interconnects both governing categories. It becomes the citizen's job to identify and secure themselves (within the boundaries of acceptable identities) and to cover the financial costs associated with it. In this way, a safe identity becomes a commodity, something to be bought, and security becomes the realm of those with the cultural, human and social capital to engage with it.

The neoliberal citizen-subject understands that he is expected to pay for his security. This is an extension of the idea that he needs to take personal responsibility for his own safety. In the current economic climate, citizens are encouraged to spend and consume in the name of security, both personal and national. Of course, consumption as security is something extended only to those with financial income or credit to purchase it.

Namaste also makes note of this in *Sex Change, Social Change*, where she argues that the requirement to prove that one has been living in one's desired sex for a period of five years in order to change one's name is easily attainable for minority of people, those with steady employment or attending school, but that this is not the case for those who are unemployed or not attending school because official documents such as pay stubs, transcripts and credit cards may be more difficult to come by. She argues that these types of restrictions reflect the possibility that "administrative procedures favour the middle class."⁹¹

⁹¹ Namaste, *Sex Change, Social Change*, 5-6.

Since the process for changing identity documents is not streamlined, this creates a system wherein people may have access to some changes but not others. For Charlie, this meant that he was able to meet the requirements (medical, legal and financial) for changing his driver's license, but that other types of identification changes are beyond his reach. While this may allow him some degree of freedom to move through securitized spaces, it also creates a second problem. Should Charlie be identified as a potential threat (a possibility given his identity as a genderfuck and Metis), the need to produce additional documents will reveal his holding of inconsistent documents. This will ultimately out him as trans especially as he may find himself having to defend his innocence in regards to accusations of 'identity theft.'

The importance of identity documents in Canadian security spaces cannot be overlooked. As Currah and Moore demonstrate, the government views identity documents as a primary way of validating our status as citizen subjects or foreigners. Since the process for changing documents in Canada is unclear and often inaccessible, this places trans people in a state flux and leaves them vulnerable. In turn, trans travelers are advised to carry letters from physicians and surgeons, explaining and justifying their inconsistent appearance/story/identity. These letters, combined with the ID documents, are indicative of the way that identity continues to be governed through biopolitics in Canada. However, this biopolitical process is one which bridges both state and individual responses together, and places the primary responsibility on the individual for performing proper gendered and secured citizenship in order to belong. Furthermore, as trans travelers continue to enact performances of deserving subjects (such as through

adherence to the idea of the 'middle class') they remain actors in the production of their own (in)security.

Surveillance, Profiling and Types of Travel

In addition to identity documents that validate the authorization of travelers, security at borders and airports use surveillance and profiling techniques to identify potential threats. Racial profiling has been a common topic in relation to security, but securitized spaces use other types of profiling and surveillance techniques. A 2003 memo from the Department of Homeland Security in the United States to the US TSA advised security officers to be on the look out for men who dressed as women claiming that terrorists were known for using cross dressing as a means to travel undetected.⁹² Such a claim clearly creates the potential for trans people to become vulnerable in such spaces, and links gender performativity to security.

While the memo was in the United States, Canada is not immune to policing gender performance and appearance as a mechanism for security. In January of 2012, changes to the *Identity Screening Regulations* were made public, and trans activists called attention to the requirement that someone's appearance must match the gender that appears on their photo ID. This speaks to the presumed ways that gender can be read off the body. Additionally, the use of full body scanners has raised concerns about policing gendered bodies, and questions about what types of bodies are seen as threatening.

⁹² Department of Homeland Security, "DHS advisory to security personnel; no change in threat level," http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/press_release_0238.shtm (September 4th 2003), (Accessed on March 24 2010).

Additionally, surveillance and profiling is done on a micro-political level, as individuals interact with each other both in and outside of those securitized spaces. These processes are enacted in each interaction we have, casting citizens as "foot soldiers in the war on terrorism."⁹³ Consider an Ottawa Transportation (OC Transpo) campaign that sought to increase safety on buses with posters that proclaimed "If you see something, say something."⁹⁴ These vague notions of what might be threatening are intentional, and citizens minds become constantly alert for anything out of the ordinary, creating a panoptic situation in which we are all but spying on each other. This downloaded labour of surveillance is not only enacted by the majority on the minority, we are all implicated in it. It tells us to watch others, and to modify our behaviours lest we be watched.

With so many people watching and looking, I assumed early in my project that trans travelers would experience significant difficulties at the border, especially given the state of identity documents in Canada. This was largely not the case with the people I interviewed, with only Charlie and Johnny discussing specific cases of discrimination during travel. In the difficulties that they discussed, the unifying factor was the fact that they travelled into the United States on a Greyhound bus. Those who traveled by air or who had not crossed a border on a bus described few or no explicitly discriminatory experiences. Furthermore, they both described that they were early in transition, and were not really 'passing' at this point. This speaks to the way that security is governed through class as well as through gender. The bus, as a generally more economical method of

⁹³ Amoore, "Biometric Borders," 346.

⁹⁴ OC Transpo, "Transit Secure Campaign," http://www.octranspo1.com/travel-tips/transit_secure_campaign

travel than flight, is more likely to be used by those with a limited income, whereas air travel attracts more upwardly mobile travelers (and has been marketed that way since the 1960s although change is occurring more recently with efforts by airlines to offer more economical class travel). Given the increasing criminalization of poverty, those who travel by bus are more likely to be scrutinized and seen as threatening than those who travel by air. Furthermore, ground transport may have an increased stigma due to its role in 'illegal' migration. This is especially true for travel into the United States where concerns about 'illegal' immigrants crossing the border is an important social narrative that shapes policies about border control. While those with US and Western European passports likely have an easier time traveling into the US than those countries where trade in immigrant labour is documented, each of the participants who traveled by land across the border into the U.S. described a far more rigorous process than re-entering Canada.

In recounting his experiences crossing the border by bus, Johnny spoke of his perception at the way others responded to his difficulties. He noted that being stopped by the border guards meant that he caused everyone else to be delayed, and that they were annoyed or upset with him. This is interesting given Johnny's assertion that he did not appear normative at the time, opting for a punk aesthetic and either representing as a butch dyke or being early in transition. This indicates the Johnny was aware that he not only had to pass in the eyes of the border guards, but that he was being judged by his fellow travelers. Likewise, Johnny articulated that when he began to dress more normatively he was aware that other passengers, and he specifically noted a racialized

woman traveling along with her children, were the cause of the delay and that negative attention shifted away from him onto someone else.

The profiling aspect of security is related not only to who the traveller is and what they look like, but who they might know as well. Since 9/11, Muslim and Arab activists have made it clear that many of the questions posed to those deemed suspicious by state authorities relate to who they may (or may not have) spent time with. Charlie noted he received similar questions when he experienced difficulties crossing the border by car. Specifically he noted that the border official was asking about his relationship to and a previous trip with his former brother law. These types questions are less about 'who are you', or even 'are you authorized,' but 'should you belong.'

Not everyone had a difficult time. For August, travel came with almost no difficulties. August is still relatively young compared to the other participants and they traveled most often with their family. Traveling as part of a (white) family unit carries privileges for August which likely contributes to the lack of attention that they receive. Whiteness remains a key part of the narrative of the middle class, and by traveling as a family this serves to announce adherence to particular values and behaviours that mark those individuals as secure. Furthermore, August noted that they have relative privilege given that their embodied gender performance raises few alarms. They are most often read as female.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ As previously discussed, this has important affective dimensions, but August does point out that they move through securitized spaces with relative ease when it comes to validation from others, even if their identity is being made invisible

Passing as Man, Passing as Safe

Many of the participants mentioned their ability to pass, or to be read in their gendered identity. The importance of passing in securitized spaces cannot be overlooked. It is not simply a question of passing in a particular gender, but about passing as a proper neoliberal citizen, one worthy and deserving of authorization to exist in material and categorical spaces. Both Johnny and Charlie tied their difficulties at the border to issues of passing, not only gendered passing, but class passing as well. For August and Rory, questions of passing speak to the invisibility and subsequent erasure of their identities within a system that is determined to read them as female/women. Performances of security rely on individuals understanding and internalizing scripts of proper citizenship. Each of the participants articulated that they understood these norms, and that they either purposely enacted them, or did not fight them, in these spaces to ease the process. I do not mean to imply that the actions of trans individuals reproduce such dynamics, however I want to call attention to the *few* instances that the participants indicated that they knew the scripts and they made a concerted effort to follow them *for the purpose of minimizing hassle* while traveling.

The stories that the participants shared shed a light on difficulties that trans travelers experience on a day-to-day basis. Though air travel or crossing national borders is unlikely to be a daily occurrence, travel is a daily activity in which border crossed. Sandy Stone raises questions about what it would mean for trans people to *really* speak, or to engage in producing counter-discourses "from outside the boundaries of gender beyond the constructed operational nodes, which have been predefined as the only

position from which discourse is possible."⁹⁶ Stone's call relies heavily on the idea that trans subjectivities would - and provocatively should - "generate a narrative that resists the cultural imperative to pass." However, as Riley C. Snorton notes, what trans people would say is influenced by "broader matrices of identity and desire."⁹⁷ That is to say that perhaps Stone's work does not account for the productive force of the affective, of the psychic life.

Engaging in an autobiographical account of themselves entitled *A New Hope: the Psychic Life of Passing*, Snorton effectively demonstrates how emphasis on a corporeal materiality does not adequately characterize the lived experiences of some trans people who may be not easily characterized as passing.⁹⁸ This is of particular importance for non-operative trans identified people. This speaks to an important aspect of constructing the narratives presented in this thesis, that trans travelers are constructing their identities within broader matrices, but that these identities are particularly affective. Some of the discomfort expressed by the participants spoke to a disconnect between the way they understood themselves, and the way the world interpreted their physical representation.

While there was acknowledgement that traveling through securitized spaces (both physical and ontologically constructed) was fraught with particular anxieties, the participants expressed that difficulties were most evident when identities needed to be translated into biometric security features. Given this, participants expressed that they, and the system, were less concerned with identity, and more concerned with

⁹⁶ Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A post transsexual manifesto," *Camera Obscura* 29, 1994, 164.

⁹⁷ Riley Snorton, "A New Hope: The Psychic Life of Passing," *Hypatia* 24 (3) 2009, 78.

⁹⁸ Snorton, "A New Hope," 81.

documentation and action. In their work on Northern Mexican Border towns, Vek Lewis argues that legislation in border towns is not concerned with identity per se, but rather “the regulation of socially sanctioned forms of public conduct and presence in/movement through space.”⁹⁹ In Lewis’s work, and in Canadian border and airport spaces, *the sense of conduct is underlined*, perhaps more so than identity.

Narratives about the behaviours of a proper citizen are intricately linked with gender, class and race. The proper neoliberal citizen is by default male¹⁰⁰, one who embodies the entrepreneurial spirit of the middle class, and who is invested in the ways that their image is perceived. In a post-recession Canada, the neoliberal citizen-subject recognizes that their social location requires performative labour.¹⁰¹ This performative labour then further legitimizes governing techniques that maintain the necessity for the privatized neoliberal citizen. This script, and its subsequent performances, are enacted perhaps without recognition on the part of the subject, and they pervade even the most mundane everyday interactions. This was reflected by the research participants in my earlier discussion about their hesitancy to identify as anything except middle class.

This passing, as a process of security, is of course predicated on external validation from others. Our performances must be approved by those others who also work at belonging to the group. It is important to note that this not a case of those on the inside policing the boundaries for those on the outside. These bordered distinctions are a

⁹⁹ Vek Lewis, “Forging ‘Moral Geographies:’ Law, Sexual Minorities and Internal Tensions in Northern Mexico Border Towns” in *Transgender Migrations*, 34.

¹⁰⁰ Young, “The Logic of Masculinist Protection,” 16.

¹⁰¹ Irving and Baker, “Taking Out the Trash”

fallacy. We are all vulnerable to being cast out from belonging, of having our performances rendered insecure.

I was surprised at the number of participants who had little or no tangible difficulties passing through securitized spaces. Particularly, Rory, who identifies as poor, fat and Metis made no mention of problems when traveling either domestically or internationally. Rory also noted that they do not intentionally alter their usual style or dress or their behaviours when they are traveling. Rory attributed their ease of travel to the fact that they dress androgynously and speculated that security personnel were likely to assume female/feminine by default because that is what their passport states. In this case then, Rory's invisibility as genderqueer may be a helpful factor in the process of security, although it does cause emotional discomfort for them. Bob also mentioned that he had few issues with discrimination, which could be attributed to his ease of passing as a man, combined with the fact that he is white and likely to be seen as middle class. That said, Bob expressed the most anxiety about traveling of all of the participants.

The experiences of Bob and Rory make evident the ways in which passing denotes hiding, but also movement. They both accept a certain degree of hiding who they are, and yet their self-determined gender identity haunts them as they traverse terrains not of their own making. Their movement through these terrains is fleeting though. They do not remain in those spaces, but move through them - with authorization. This movement is controlled, but the trans individual, the "trans-monster" described by Stryker, is dangerous because they have already moved beyond binary fictions.

Only Johnny and Charlie expressed that they had negative or discriminatory experiences during their travels. In each case, the participants attributed the difficulties to their relative degree of passing or their clothing choices at the time. In both cases, the participants went out of their way to describe the clothing they were wearing. Interestingly, Johnny was slightly dismissive about the negative comments he received that were homophobic in nature. He excused gender and sexual based harassment on the basis that the agents were eighteen year old boys who were “jerks.” Johnny was uninterested in discussing these experiences despite my probing and he wanted to shift discussion to the treatment he received as someone who embodied a punk aesthetic and often smelled like marijuana. Charlie was less sure of the reasons for his difficulties, but he specifically pointed out that he had tattoos and noted that it was early in transition when he was less likely passing. These stories are indicative of the ways that adherence to gendered norms becomes a marker for safety. Both Charlie and Johnny’s difference from gendered norms becomes a marker of their potential risk, but they also embraced aesthetics that denote working class, tattoos in Charlie’s case and clothing in Johnny’s.

Johnny’s case was particularly interesting because of his location in regards to gender, class and whiteness. Pre transition, Johnny was perhaps easily read as ‘white trash.’ He described his punk aesthetic, the fact that he traveled by bus and regularly smelled liked and carried drugs. Given that at the time Johnny says he was presenting as a butch lesbian, how people perceived him would have been tied up with feminine gendered expectations (which he was decidedly not adhering to). Importantly though, despite that he was using a form of travel commonly associated with the lower class,

Johnny traveled frequently, a fact which points to a relative degree of access to finances to accommodate that travel.

When speaking about his previous experiences, especially about his drug use and his relationship with authority figures, Johnny was quick to point out that the increased scrutiny he received, especially pertaining to his drug use and other issues of criminalization, was “fair” from the perspective of the security officials he interacted with. This is contrasted with the ease of travel that Johnny experiences now, where he does not stand out in a way so as to attract attention.

Johnny’s interpretation of his younger self as a rebel and a drug user who perhaps may have deserved the scrutiny he received is indicative of the way that neoliberalism and security combine to encourage citizens to secure their private lives to remain recognizable but also worthy and deserving. Travelers know the scripts that they need to follow, and Johnny demonstrates the ways in which the scripts have a “psychic life”¹⁰² and are performed repeatedly for others.

Johnny also characterized his movement away from drugs as one of becoming more comfortable with himself. Having identified that his drug use was largely related to his lack of “fit(ting) in to society,” his transition to the normative becomes a narrative of self love, of finding his true self. Here, Johnny takes personal responsibility for his shift from a traveler with difficulties to the jet-setting man he is now. Despite thoughtful and calculated responses about the role of the state in creating difficulties for trans people, he

¹⁰² Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, (Stanford: University of Stanford Press), 1997.

could not divorce himself from an emotional response that indicated a deeply internalized adherence to a (masculine) neoliberal script.¹⁰³

Each of the participants made clear that they understood the precarity of their authorization as safe. For both Bob and Johnny, significant concern about anonymity reflected a fear of being identified. The risk of being identified can have devastating effects for trans people, but it is also indicative of the way that they understood how their carefully crafted narratives in security spaces are dependent on particular performances, performances which necessitate the approval of others. Just as Puar argues that the belonging afforded to white gay men in the aftermath of 9/11 is precarious and dependent on adherence to a particular set of homonormative values, the authorization granted to trans travelers depends on adherence to and performance of particular scripts of security.

¹⁰³ Dan Irving, "Self Made Trans Man As Risky Business," *Temple Political and Civil Rights Law Review* 2009, 375-395.

Conclusion

This project examined the experiences of trans masculine travelers at airports and border checkpoints as they related to processes of securitization. I considered the way in which gender has become a mode of governance regulating each of us, as well as the way its symbiotic relationship with security is upheld through our individual daily labour of maintaining proper gendered performances. In this, I have argued that gender itself is a site of securitization that depends on externally validated performances of security. This implicates each of us in reproducing particular narratives that serve to strengthen the relationship between gender and security.

To make this argument I have worked to stitch together the areas of trans theory, queer theory, critical political economy and security studies. In particular I have adapted Butler's theory of performativity to consider the ways in which security is performative. This type of performance is an important aspect of the contemporary neoliberal citizen, as it is a key component in the self-regulation that is necessary to ensure one's continued acceptance as citizen.

An important and original aspect of this research is the emphasis placed on the stories by trans people. In the work on trans travelers and airports/borders that has come out, much has focused on the potential implications of policies, or theoretically engaged with the relationship between gender and security. Instead of thinking through the policies, my thesis focused on presenting the stories that trans people are telling about their experiences of travel. This is vital to understanding the ways the different knowledge about (in)security is co-produced. The participants in this project do not

perform security in a vacuum, but rather the performance is crafted on conscious and unconscious registers through the narratives they hear and in response to their interactions with others. Sometimes I disagreed with the participant's interpretation of a situation, and sometimes the participants felt strongly that the theoretical work was not always helpful or reflective of their experience.

To make this argument, I engaged with both trans and queer methodology, as well as narrative as a method. In interviews with five trans identified people who had traveled within the last five years, I crafted together narratives that spoke to a number of themes that emerged from the conversations we had. The use of narrative as a method was important to me because I wanted to use a method that that included participants not only as objects of study, but as full partners in the process. Furthermore, the method(ologies) I employed allowed for significant self reflection, as well as served as a case study in the types of self-regulation that I was discussing theoretically.

When I first undertook this project, I expected to hear specific instances of discrimination that the participants had experienced at the border. Given the vulnerability of trans people to both physical and systemic violence, I had originally hypothesized that trans people would be more likely to experience difficulties at the border, especially when they experienced biometric technologies such as body scanners. Instead, I heard few stories of easily identifiable discrimination and more *emotionally reflective responses* about how the participants felt moving through spaces where their identities were either rendered invisible or seen as requiring extra justification.

Emotional responses that the participants had to passing, through the space, as trans, as men or as safe were the most predominant themes to come out of the interviews. While not all of the participants had the same experiences, and some differed wildly in their interpretation of those feelings, the general consensus was that moving through these spaces felt unwelcoming, and created an atmosphere in which trans travelers may feel like they do not belong.

There were two factors that contributed to this culture: first, the actions of the people the travelers interacted with. Second were thoughts, feelings and actions of the travelers themselves. External actions included the way that security officials treated the travelers (such as with kindness, or rudeness, or hostility), and the personal actions included the ways that travelers dressed, behaved, and justified their identities in these spaces.

Some of the difficulties faced by the participants were linked to issues of class. For those who experienced problems at the border, a common issue was their travel by bus, a type of transportation that is tied to the working class. Furthermore, policies around ground transport in and out of the United States are shaped by fears about illegal immigration, which has distinct racial and economic elements. For those who appear non normative, either because of their gender, clothes, language or race which is problematically read off the body, traveling by bus across the border poses more challenges than traveling by air.

Radical Opportunities?

The findings in my thesis are not intended to be reflective of the experiences of all trans travelers. Indeed, that the participants are able to travel at all speaks to a particular privilege that not all trans people have access to. This project was also not created with intention of considering policies or making policy recommendations. Nevertheless, this is a necessary direction to take, and I would recommend that those who do undertake this in a concrete way ensure that trans voices be included as an integral part of this process.

However, even this involvement would be a replication of the systemic governing technologies that continue to render each of us vulnerable. This project served as a case study that illuminates the ways in which all members of society are all implicated in the regulation of self and others through everyday interactions. These types of self regulation are reflective of the proper neoliberal citizen, one who takes responsibility for herself and who - in these times of economic crisis - is encouraged to be constantly on the look out for potential risk. Additionally, she must constantly be performing her own security for evaluation by others, and gender plays a significant role in this type of performativity.

The stories shared by the participants highlight a tension between queer and trans theoretical work and the practical dimensions of the material lives of (trans) travelers. Calls for acts of resistance feature prominently in the queer academic world, and focuses on resistance that seeks to dismantle a system that actively oppresses more citizens than it helps. The resistance called upon in this area often ignores the material lives of the people it seeks to help, and fails to consider the way in which we are each implicated in the institutions and processes that govern us. However, participants in this study demonstrate

the ways in which our integration as actors into a process of securitization shape our perceptions and daily interactions.

As individuals, we hope to move through our lives, through spaces and places, with as little difficulty as possible. We innately understand those scripts and performances that grant us access to those spaces, although not everyone has access to economic or social capital to do so, and we perform them as best we can in a given location. Audre Lourde tells us that the master's house can never be dismantled with the master's tools.¹⁰⁴ How then do we account for the fact that we, actors in a process of securitization through micro-political processes, are the master's tools? Anxiety and neuroses become ways in which we are not only governed by external governmental and institutional forces but inform the ways we govern ourselves and others. In an increasingly unstable society dealing with violence, economic instability, drastic environmental change and technological advances it can be easy to feel alone. Faced with a society that tells us to trust no one, we turn those anxieties inwards and soothe ourselves with the idea that we are responsible for our own future. We are all governed this way. We are all gendered subjects, and the stories of trans travelers only help to illuminate that which haunts each of us - the specter of our shared vulnerability.

¹⁰⁴ Audre Lourde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," *Sister Outsider*, (Berkeley: Crossing Press), 1984.

Appendices

Appendix A

List of Interview Questions

I used semi-structured interviews, so while these questions were my base questions, there were others that came up during the interviews that are not catalogued here.

- 1) Tell me about yourself.
- 2) Where are you from?
- 3) When was the last time you traveled? Where to? Why?
- 4) Do you often travel alone, or with other people? Is there anyone you travel with regularly?
- 5) Tell me about your last travel experience.
- 6) Have you had a 'difficult' travel experience?
- 7) Tell me about a travel experience that you enjoyed.
- 8) Tell me about some of the security protocols you experienced while traveling. Did you have personal experience with any? How did you feel about them?

Appendix B

Writing Safe Bodies: Transgender Travelers, Security and Subject Formation (Working Title)

Call for Participants

About the Project:

My name is Alicia Baker and I am a Master's student at the Institute of Political Economy at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. My thesis examines what the experiences of transgender identified travelers tell us about how security discourses mediate subject formation. This letter is intended to inform you about this project and how you can help my research.

About the Research:

The research focuses on different experiences that transgender identified individuals have had traveling in spaces such as airports or border checkpoints, and how these experiences are received by, processed and understood by the travelers. I am reviewing Canadian travel and safety policies to determine what gendered criteria exist in policies in order to pass through travel security points without complication. I am seeking interview participants who are interested in sharing their experiences of travel, so that I can evaluate how transgender travelers in Canada are assessed by security officials in practice.

The immediate goal of this work is to support my Master's thesis, to be completed by August, 2012. I also intend to publish articles in academic journals and share my findings at conferences.

Invitation to Participate:

For this research, I am interviewing people who identify as trans* who have traveled by air or across borders in the past five years. Interviews will centre around your understanding of travel related security practices as they pertain to trans identified individuals, and how you have experienced travel security in relation to your trans identity.

If you would like to participate, have any questions or would like further information. Please contact me:

Alicia Baker
Institute of Political Economy
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6

Email: abakerfu@connect.carleton.ca

Phone:

This project has been reviewed for ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board Committee. Should have you any concerns or questions regarding my involvement in this study or any complaint concerning the manner this research is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact:

Antonio Gualtieri
Chair, Research Ethics Committee
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2517
E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Thank you for your consideration.

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