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Summary Statement of the Studies and/or Research:

In January of 1792, ships carrying 1,196 Black residents of Nova Scotia departed Halifax Harbour to begin new lives in Sierra Leone, on the western coast of Africa. Among the residents who left were formerly enslaved Black women Abby Roger (who travelled with five children), Mary Brown (with one child), and Dinah Jones (with two children) (Gilbert, 2012). I encountered these women while crafting an essay for class in graduate school and was confronted quickly by the lack of details available about their lives. I could not know their thoughts and feelings, nor what happened after they arrived in Sierra Leone. What I did know for certain was that in the 1970s, Sierra Leoneans were among the waves of arrivals who entered Canada after a points-based immigration system began granting entry to previously excluded Black populations (Mensah 2014). I wondered if Mary, Abby, and Dinah's descendants were among these new Black immigrants who had crossed the Atlantic Ocean from continental Africa, in pursuit of new lives more than a century later. The fragments of these women's stories I had access to were not simply traces of the past but a manifestation of the present we now shared. Knowing of their existence allowed me to ask how the journey they embarked on 231 years ago, might still matter today. I decided to forgo searching for Mary, Abby, and Dinah in official historical records where "Black women usually appear as property or victims" (Farmer, 2018). Instead, with their names in mind and heart, my dissertation project considers how memories of migration shape practices of Black diasporic place-making for Black participants in Canada, who have commemorated the 1792 Black Loyalist Departure for Sierra Leone.

Formerly enslaved people known as Black Loyalists departed Nova Scotia because of abject living conditions and unfulfilled promises for land and better lives from the British Crown after their service during the American Revolution (Walker, J.W.S.G., 1972). Such disappointment was a common experience for Black people and reflected a "fraught relationship with the colonial state," which persisted despite the hard-won status of legal freedom (Walker B., 2012). In response, some Black residents went in search of a "province of freedom" in what is now Freetown, Sierra Leone (Ojukutu-Macauley & Rashid, 2013). Their departure was not the end of this story.

Those in Sierra Leone who descended from the 1792 migration of the Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia eventually became known as Krios, having blended with other waves of migrants who settled in Freetown. Constituent groups included the descendants of other formerly enslaved people who arrived from the New World such as Maroons deported from Jamaica, along with the Liberated Africans. The Liberated Africans were also known as the re-captives. These people were forcibly relocated to Freetown by the Royal Navy [which intercepted ships bound for the Americas] after Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807 (Schwarz, 2012). Today, a Krio diaspora resides in Canada among other Sierra Leonean immigrants. My dissertation engages members of two Krio community heritage organizations: Krio Diaspora United Southern Ontario (KDUSO) and Krio Diaspora United Alberta (KDUA) to ask four main questions.

First, how are desires to commemorate the 1792 Black Loyalist Departure for Sierra Leone linked to participants' own memories of migration? Second, in what ways do these memories of migration occur in and through place? Third, how do these memories of migration help participants understand and re-imagine the relevance of transatlantic slavery to their lives today? Fourth, how do participants use these memories to understand differences within and between Black communities? I pose these questions to help illuminate how Canada's legacies of slavery and freedom reverberate in our present while shaping

the futures Black people dare to create for themselves. Interviews with participants from KDUSO and KDUA will make up my primary data set. In addition, a secondary data set will come from interviews with participants and organizers of the #1792 project, alongside staff at the Black Cultural Center for Nova Scotia and the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre because they have all been involved in public commemorations regarding the 1792 migration. This component is necessary to respect the continued existence of Black communities who remained in Nova Scotia.

This study aims to expand current understandings of how migration shapes the politics of knowing Blackness, working through difference, and building resistance across the diverse histories and genealogies of Black/African diaspora. Bringing research questions directly to study participants is an ethical position that prioritizes “how a project best serves a marginalized community and reflects their lived experience” (Hamilton, 2020). As such, the method I rely on is “semi structured life world interviews, which attempt to understand themes from the lived everyday world from the subjects’ own perspectives” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). Black feminist scholars also teach that a focus on participants’ life worlds is beneficial because it attends to Black women’s’ unique perspectives and explores the deliberate creativity required to navigate institutions that deprive them of opportunities based on gender, race, and class (Brewer, 1983).

Overall, this study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge about Black/African descended populations in Canada. As these populations continue to challenge the distortions of anti-Black racism and discrimination, I bring together insights from communities located in three distinct regions to explore how they learn from the past, strategize in the present, and envision their futures in geographic terms. Ultimately, I hope these efforts will lead to fuller renderings of how Black communities in Southern Ontario, Alberta, and Nova Scotia experience the beauty and struggle of remembering in diaspora, while building a true sense of place in the cities, towns, and neighbourhoods where they live.