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A Plural and Uneven World: Queer Migrations and the Politics of Race and Sexuality in Sydney, Australia

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A PLURAL AND UNEVEN WORLD:
QUEER MIGRATIONS AND THE POLITICS OF RACE
AND SEXUALITY IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, KY

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Lexington, KY

2016

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A PLURAL AND UNEVEN WORLD: QUEER MIGRATIONS AND THE POLITICS OF RACE AND SEXUALITY IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

This dissertation examines how the geographies of sexuality and race shape queer migrants' experiences of settlement and citizenship in Sydney, Australia. Against a backdrop of economic shifts in the Asia Pacific and Australia's long history of racialized exclusion, I conducted 43 in-depth interviews with queer migrants and '2nd generation' adult children of migrants who reflect the diversity of Australia's migration streams, including historically important migration from Southern and Eastern Europe and increasingly significant movements from South, Southeast, and East Asia. Through those interviews, I examined participants' migration histories, everyday spatial trajectories in the city, and involvement with queer and ethnic communities in and beyond the city. This was supplemented by an additional 23 interviews with policy-makers and advocates whose work intersected with these issues, as well as the analysis of archival materials related to the politics of race and sexuality in Sydney. In contrast with a depoliticizing 'torn between two worlds' frame that imagines queer migrants as being torn between ethnic or religious communities on the one hand, and LGBTQ communities on the other, I showed—in dialogue with Hannah Arendt's writing on plurality in a single, unevenly shared world—how participants cultivated opportunities to appear and to act politically as they worked to make a place for themselves in Sydney.

This dissertation collects three articles, which speak to both the quotidian politics of everyday life and participants' organized political projects in Sydney. The first article examines the politics of race and multiculturalism in the context of a city council-sponsored project working to raise awareness about 'sex, sexuality, and gender diversity' within Sydney's migrant and ethnic communities. The second contributes to literatures on encounters across difference by showing how experiences of sexual racism worked as an obstacle to participants' sense of belonging and citizenship, even as these 'bad encounters' also provided an impetus to political organizing. The third article examines the publically intimate nature of debates around migrant integration and explores the intimate geopolitics through which participants made a place for themselves in Sydney, which entailed assertions of 'privacy' as much as more immediately recognizable forms of 'public' politics.

KEYWORDS: Diversity and encounter, Migrant reception and citizenship, Urban politics,
Geographies of sexualities, Race and multiculturalism, Hannah Arendt

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November 1, 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION: TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS?

To live as a “minority within a minority” is to face multiple dimensions of discrimination from both GLBT and ethnic communities as well as the broader society (City of Sydney, 2010a: 6).

Thus concludes a ‘needs analysis’ report prepared by staff at the City of Sydney council in 2010. Entitled, ‘Torn between Two Worlds,’ the report examines the situation of queer people from ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ backgrounds and, in the tradition of Australian state multiculturalism discourse and practice, considers what ‘unique needs’ this population might have generally and in relation to council services specifically.¹ Based on a review of the academic literatures and consultations with queer and/or ethnic community organizations, the document describes the obstacles and difficulties that culturally and linguistically diverse queer people may encounter at the ‘intersection of racism and homophobia,’ and discusses numerous examples of homophobia within families and ethnic communities, on the one hand, and racism or ‘cultural misunderstanding’ in mainstream queer organizations and spaces, on the other. It summarizes the results of being torn between these two worlds this way:

Life for CALD GLBT people can feel like an endless struggle to belong and find acceptance across multiple communities and societies. Living in *two rigid, independent and conflicting communities* contributes to a sense of isolation, depression and anger... (City of Sydney, 2010a: 6; my emphasis).

What emerges from the report is a clear sense that ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ queers are straddling two distinct worlds—that of their ethnicity/culture/family on the one side and that of queer communities on the other. In the first article, I will return to this

¹ Culturally and linguistically diverse, often abbreviated as CALD, is the Australian state’s currently preferred term for the country’s non-Anglo-Celtic and, often, non-indigenous inhabitants.

report and some of the projects that emerged in response, but I begin by highlighting the implications of the dual world discourse at work here. This is a framing that influences how queer people from ethnic and migrant communities are understood in a broad range of contexts in and beyond Australia. We can see it, for example, in work within normative political theory addressing the intersection of sexuality and multiculturalism. Writing in a Canadian context, Jacob Levy (2006) discusses queer people from minoritized cultural or religious backgrounds in an edited collection on the problems faced by ‘minorities within minorities’ in the context of frameworks for multicultural accommodation. He highlights dilemmas and tensions that can result if the cultural and religious groups being accommodated are themselves homophobic and discusses the difficult situations in which this could leave sexual minorities within those groups.²

Imagining culturally and linguistically diverse queers as being torn between two distinct worlds is, in some important ways, a special case of a long tradition of thinking about difference and migration in liberal-settler receiving societies. For example, Robert Park’s (1928) influential and problematic essay on “Human Migration and the Marginal Man” describes migrants as psychologically straddling two worlds without being fully a part of either. A similar kind of dual world framing is also frequently used in understanding the lives of "second generation" migrants who, whether queer or not, are often understood to be inhabiting a different world than their migrant parents (Kasinitz et al., 2004; Poynting et al., 2003). We can see it as well in political conflicts regulating the clothing choices of Muslim

² Levy’s chapter imagines problems that might exist without doing much to empirically substantiate the existence of those problems. As such, it is a kind of speculative thought experiment, which is not uncommon or necessarily problematic in that branch of political philosophy, but it exemplifies quite clearly the logic of dual world thinking without providing much help in understanding what is actually going on in any particular context.

communities in and beyond Europe, where young Muslim women, in particular, are imagined as being torn between the traditional, patriarchal culture of their families and the more ‘modern’, ‘secular’, or ‘liberal’ society in which they live (as described in Meer et al., 2010; Scott, 2009). This last example illustrates most clearly, I think, both how this dual world logic is always in danger of slipping into a ‘clash of civilizations’ mode, and how important a role sexual and gender norms play in these logics (Abraham, 2009; Ho, 2007; Puar, 2007). This danger needs to be noted even, or perhaps especially, when the those developing policy and analyses along these lines have nearly or entirely the opposite intention, as I think was clearly the case in the opening example from Sydney.

More broadly, the difficulty with this dual world discourse is that it simultaneously names something important in many people’s experiences, even as it also tends to occlude the mutually constitutive nature of these worlds and to elide the politics through which these imagined and experienced geographies are constructed. This project is an attempt to respond to those complexities by examining the experiences and narratives of 1st and 2nd generation racialized queer migrants living in Sydney, Australia. Through in-depth interviews conducted with 43 such individuals, I examined the normative orderings governing the geographies of participants’ everyday lives and both the quotidian practices and organized projects through which they negotiated and contested regimes of racialization and sexual normativity that inform state projects, intimate possibilities, and the politics of migrant integration. Shaped, with varying degrees of explicitness by Hannah Arendt’s thinking on plurality as a condition of politics in a shared world, the three articles collected here each, in different ways, seek to carve out some space for a *plural* approach to the politics of race, sexuality, and migration in and beyond Sydney.

In the rest of this introduction, I outline the implications of this plural approach in terms of both an attunement to plurality as a condition of politics in a shared world and as a pluralistic analytical orientation that I find helpful for approaching the simultaneously singular nature of the world and the plural nature of its inhabitants (thus critiquing the dual world framing from two angles). Doing so entails supplementing Arendt's thinking on plurality with feminist, queer, and postcolonial insights into the unevenness of that plural world. I then briefly introduce the empirical work on which this project is based and preview each of the three articles collected here.

Plurality and the World-in-between

Without taking any once-and-for-all position on the *politics* of articulating claims through this dual world discourse, which, from my perspective, is a matter of contingent and contextual strategy, I have found Arendt's writing on plurality in a single, shared world of plurality to offer a compelling *analytical* alternative more attuned to the complicated geographies of queer migrants' lives and projects (see, in particular, Arendt, 1958). Focusing on a single world shared in between a plurality of people who are equally distinct and distinctly equal as political actors, offers some critical leverage on the reified frames of identity and difference at work in the dual world framing and contributes a more politicizing approach to the complicated and ambivalent subjectivities and projects that emerge in its wake. However, this Arendtian understanding of a singular shared world of plurality first needs to be contextualized in relation to queer, queer of color, and intersectional approaches that highlight the mutually constitutive force of regimes of race and sexuality *and* in relation to postcolonial and feminist work that call into question understandings of distinct 'cultures' implicit in 'dual world/clashing civilization' discourses. Taken together, these literatures help

to highlight, more clearly than Arendt does herself, how the geographies of this single, plural world are unevenly and differentially shared.

Writing against a framing that would separate sexuality and race into two distinct realms, a rich set of literatures have highlighted the intersectional or mutually constitutive relationship between sexuality and race, and thus they offer a powerful set of frameworks through which to understand the world as unevenly and differentially shared (Brah, 2005; M. Brown, 2012; Cohen, 1997; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; McWhorter, 2009).³ For example, Siobhan Somerville's (2000) important work questioning the framing of studies of race and sexuality as parallel investigations illustrates the analytical value of treating race and sexuality as mutually constitutive forces by showing how hetero- and homosexual classifications emerge in relation to the solidification and intensification of 'black' and 'white' racial distinctions in the United States. Important roots for much of this work are in women of color feminism (Combahee River Collective, 1977; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 2015), and Gloria Anzaldúa's writing (1987) on a world simultaneously riven and produced by borders of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation continues to offer valuable insights. Queer of color work has usefully built on this foundation to examine the sexual and raced coordinates of state power and liberal citizenship (Reddy, 2011) and to examine the racialized and sexualized epistemologies shaping capitalist social formations (Ferguson, 2004; 2012) in the context of an ostensibly multicultural and LGBT-inclusive present. Though the center of gravity of much of this work is the North American context, it is nevertheless suggestive for

³ There is some debate about whether those writing about the *intersection* of sexuality and race are suggesting that same thing as those writing about a *mutually constitutive relationship* between sexuality and race (see Oswin, 2008). My sense—particularly with the explosion of interest of in intersectionality, including its appearance in presidential election campaigns in the United States—is that sometimes they are, and sometimes they are not. I hope it is sufficient to say that I think there is enough alignment to use them together here.

understanding the experiences and narratives of racialized queer migrants in Australia who navigate a social matrix and political field that, while not identical, is intimately interconnected.

The separation of race and sexuality into two distinct realms is only one part of what is happening with the dual world framing. The other interconnected piece is the imagination of distinct 'cultures' as distinct realms. Uma Narayan (1997) argues that this sort of essentializing understanding of culture fails to account for its 'dislocated' character, and highlights how an uneven geographical imagination of culture emerges in a postcolonial world in which some people and places are more likely to be portrayed as 'trapped' by their culture than others. Anne Phillips (2007) builds on Narayan's account to develop what amounts to an immanent critique of liberal multiculturalism that responds to the problem of 'culture' by highlighting individual autonomy across cultures and the failures of culture to fully determine anyone. Taking a different tack toward critiquing the uneven geographies of 'culture' that Narayan identified, Wendy Brown (2006) and Elizabeth Povinelli (2006) turn the tables on understandings of culture prevailing in a liberal field by emphasizing how 'Western' liberal subjects, who like to imagine themselves otherwise, are as much as anyone else, determined by the fields in which they emerge. Povinelli's account, which informs, in particular, the third article, is important in the way that it shows how these figurations of cultural autonomy and determination are structured by the imagination and regulation of sexuality, intimacy, and genealogy.⁴

⁴ Though generally responding to a different set of concerns, debates about the meaning and significance of 'culture' within cultural geography have a productive history (Schein, 2004), and they raise some similar issues about the power of culture to shape the world (see in particular Mitchell, 1995).

The literatures reviewed above can help us understand the experiences of queer migrants as less torn between two worlds and more living in a world that situates them unevenly in relation to regimes of racialization and sexual normativity, and in the midst of liberal-colonial geographies of imagined and produced difference. In that context, turning to the work of Hannah Arendt might seem an odd move to take. The analytical acuity of the literatures just mentioned—in the sense of diagnosing the effects of mutually constitutive regimes of sexuality, race, class, and gender in an uneven world—generally exceeds Arendt’s.⁵ Further her critiques of the emergence of the ‘social’ and her tendency to install unsustainable borders between public and private worlds have tended to be understood to support an image of a public life partitioned from bodies, intimacies, and material inequalities.⁶ Here the work of feminist political theorists has been particularly influential in opening up the political implication of Arendt’s work in directions that Arendt may not have

⁵ Of course, it is hardly fair to compare the work of a single thinker with entire bodies of work, much of which postdates her own contributions, and I have no interest in joining in what Seyla Benhabib (2003: 3) calls “the self-righteous dogmatism of latecomers” in reading Arendt. Nevertheless, feminist work has often been quite critical of Arendt (see Dietz, 2002 for a review). Adrienne Rich’s (1979: 212) suggestion that Arendt “embodies the tragedy of the female mind nourished by male ideologies” is one particularly influential assessment (and actually the main target of Benhabib’s line about self-righteous dogmatism). Arendt’s problematic analyses of racism in the United States, while sometimes misunderstood or taken out of context, do seem to betray, at best, a lack of familiarity with the workings of race in the United States (Norton, 1995). Further, her critiques of Marxism, which in the context of a Cold War United States undoubtedly account for part of the reach her work achieved across a wide range of political positions (King, 2015), are insightful in their own terms, but they often miss what continues to make Marxist thought an indispensable part of many critical diagnoses of the present.

⁶ One part of the problem here is with Arendt’s theorizing, which as a project of identifying and preserving the specificity of politics does tend to unhelpfully segregate politics from a variety of other realms (Dikeç, 2015), and the other part is with how Arendt has been read, which has tended to overlook the nuances and the lines of flight within her writing that point toward alternative interpretations. Patchen Markell’s (2011; 2015) work is exemplary in pointing this out and pulling out some of those other possibilities.

been inclined to go herself, and rendering Arendt's frameworks more amenable to this kind of work I do here (Bickford, 1996; Dietz, 2002; Honig, 1995). The gambit of my engagement with Arendt is that it will allow a clearer understanding of the *politics* of queer migrants' everyday lives and organized projects to emerge. Arendt's approach to politics, understood in terms of speech and action in an irreducibly plural world, is also an explicitly spatial one, making it especially amenable to critical geographic engagement with migrants' experiences and narratives (Dikeç, 2015).

For Arendt (1970: 4), the world is that which "lies between people" and this "irreplaceable in-between" is simultaneously the site, condition, and outcome of politics. This is not, in the main, a world that is inside our heads, but rather it is something that takes us outside of ourselves and into an engagement with a plurality of distinctly equal and equally distinct others.⁷ The combination of equality and distinctness is the hallmark of Arendt's thinking of plurality. Lisa Disch (1997) provides a useful reading of Arendt's thinking on how this world-in-between simultaneously connects and separates this plurality of others:

Although this between can be a 'common ground'... it is not a communitarian common good that in some way expresses the authentic needs or beliefs of disparate participants and harmonizes their wills. Rather... 'it always fulfills the double function of binding men together and separating them in an articulate way'... In turn, this common ground is not discovered but constructed, determined by a process of disputation that links and separates people, thus accomplishing the double function of uniting individuals and separating them... (Disch, 1997: 142).

⁷ While I emphasize the outward-directed nature of Arendt's thought, there is, nevertheless, a kind of topological relation at work (cf. Martin and Secor, 2014), where the world, at once outside us, is also inside us in the form of a 'common sense' that "is co-original with the common world. Common sense both presupposes a common world and fits human beings into it" (Borren, 2010: 12).

Thus, this in-between *can* be a sort of common ground through which political actors meet, but, just as much as it may connect people, it also separates them. Refusing any kind of communitarian fullness, Arendt's in-between world is the space through which politics takes place. For example, in the first article, I write about the dynamics of racialization and sexual normativity as aspects of this common world that became shared objects of concern, even as they were not concerns with which each actor has an identical relationship. Instead, Arendt's thinking on plurality in the world-in-between highlights concerns in common *and* marks the distance between actors in relation to those concerns.

The use of spatial language (world, together, separation, distance, in-between) in Arendt's account of plurality is not, I think, accidental. As Mustafa Dikeç (2015) has shown, there is a generative and relational approach to space at work in Arendt's thinking.⁸ Plurality itself depends on space, and one, of course, always acts in the world in and through particular spaces. This relationship between space and plurality coincides with Doreen Massey's (2005) account in *For Space*. There she describes one of the central propositions to her approach to space as being about the importance of understanding:

space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality (Massey, 2005: 9).

Massey's relational and plural account of space is also one structured by the kinds of 'power geometries' implicit in the feminist, queer, and postcolonial critiques just discussed (Massey, 2005: 100). Centering these understandings of difference, inequality, and unevenness is, in

⁸ That there is also a less generative and more territorializing account of space at work in Arendt's writing, particularly when she attempts to cordon off a separate realm for politics, is also true (Dikeç 2015).

my mind, crucial to my use of Arendt and her thinking of plurality and politics because, without it, we risk forgetting that the equality that Arendt assumes in her understanding of plurality is of a rather limited and formal kind.⁹

I want to suggest that understanding this world marked by unevenness and plurality is enabled by a certain sort of pluralism in our analytical orientations. To be clear, this is not meant as normative call for any particular kind of politics, although I am generally attracted to the kinds of pluralist political orientations advocated by William Connolly (2005), for example, or the plural politics of cohabitation developed by Judith Butler (2012) in her own reading of Arendt focusing on the importance of refusing attempts to control with whom one shares the world. Rather, what I have in mind here is an analytical orientation based on the intuition that a plural world necessitates plural modes of analysis. This builds on strategies of ‘reading for difference’—exemplified in J.K. Gibson-Graham’s (1996; 2006) work to de-totalize critical understandings of capitalism by pointing to the wide range of non-capitalist practices and processes that make up economic life as it is actually lived—but it also goes further in a direction suggested by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013). They point out that, while it is useful to understand the diversity of non-capitalist economic practices that exist within an ostensibly ‘capitalist’ economy, this only tells us whether those practices are identical to capitalist ones, not the extent to which such practices may, precisely through their difference, sustain capitalist relations. To use a different and more immediately relevant example, it is useful for critics of state power to ‘read for difference’ in relation to

⁹ Here, Susan Bickford’s (1996) reminder that although we may be equal as ‘speaking beings’ in Arendt’s terms, we are not all *heard* in some way is useful. Also, without papering over some significant differences, I want to suggest that the role of this formal equality in Arendt is actually not so different from Jacques Rancière’s (2004) writing about equality as a necessary assumption and ever present possibility (for more on Rancière’s ‘method of equality’, see Davidson and Iveson, 2015).

the state, by pointing out the wide variety of practices that states engage—much of which would not be objectionable and even beneficial. That, however, does not in itself tell us how those diverse sets of practices articulate with one another in terms of making state power, and thus its violences and exclusions, possible. In that context, reading for difference is one piece of an analysis, but reading for power remains indispensable. A plural approach would aim toward inhabiting these modes without necessarily attempting to reconcile their contradictions, and the same logic would apply to debates in queer studies around ‘paranoid’ and ‘reparative’ styles of critique (see Berlant and Edelman, 2014; Sedgwick, 2003; Seitz, 2015).

The Project

Responding to the challenges posed by this dual world discourse and the broader discourse and project of multiculturalism in Australia out of which it emerges, this dissertation examines the everyday geographies of racialized queer migrants’ experiences of citizenship and exclusion in Sydney. I approach citizenship, here, as a relationally produced form of membership and belonging that includes but also exceeds state regimes of national citizenship (Staeheli et al., 2012), and I include under the label queer migrants individuals who have migrated to Australia themselves from another country and ‘2nd generation’ adult children of migrants and who identified as lesbian, gay and/or queer.¹⁰ Existing work on

¹⁰ State regimes of citizenship, in the end, play only a minimal role in the accounts I share in this dissertation. This is because most participants in the project possessed either Australian citizenship or permanent residency. There are, of course, important distinctions in the rights of citizens and permanent residents (primarily in terms of voting and undergoing a different process when travelling outside the country, for example), but this did not come across as particularly meaningful in the interviews. For some being granted citizenship did hold some symbolic importance, and for the smaller number of participants who were on temporary visas, there was some anxiety about their status going forward.

queer migrants in and beyond geography has tended to focus on the construction of borders and state regulation, including how sexual minority migrants have been excluded from access to formal status or citizenship (Luibhéid, 2002; Coleman, 2008), the political organizing of undocumented queer migrants or queer refugees (Chávez, 2013; Rouhani, 2016), and the transnational and diasporic politics of sexual and ethnic identities and communities (Manalansan, 20003; Rouhani, 2007).¹¹ This project builds upon that work to inquire into the ordinary and more organized ways that queer migrants negotiate societal terms of membership, create spaces of belonging, and appear as political subjects in Sydney. This broadens existing works on queer migrants by including attention to how migrants navigated projects of multicultural *inclusion* (cf. Yue, 2016), as well as attention the geographies of more everyday forms exclusion in the city.

Sydney, and Australia more broadly, is an especially auspicious context in which to examine these issues. The legacies of ‘white Australia’ policies remain powerfully embedded in the fabric of Australian life (Hage, 1998), but much has also changed from the era in which non-white migrants were effectively and, more or less, entirely excluded from entering Australia. From the loosening of these exclusionary policies after the second world war through to the ‘official’ demise of racialized exclusions in law in the 1970s, multiculturalism, as the empirical fact of coexistence, has been an increasingly if unevenly experienced state of affairs in Australia (Jupp, 2002). In anticipation and response to those changes, multiculturalism, as a political project of remaking national identity beyond its Anglo-Celtic coordinates and supporting the partial and differentiated inclusion of those located at a distance from the center of Anglo-Celtic whiteness, has emerged at a complicated

¹¹ A fuller account of the literatures on queer migration can be found in the third article.

intersection of political organizing by migrant and ethnic communities and state imperatives to govern difference (Hage, 2011; Jakubowicz and Ho, 2013). The emergence of LGBTQ movements onto the political scene largely coincides with these shifts, though, as far as I can tell, a full account of this particular coincidence remains to be written. These movements, over what is, in a historical sense, a relatively short time, won numerous victories for LGBTQ communities. One early change, which is particularly notable for this project, is that the state made allowances for the migration of lesbian and gay partners starting in 1985, first in a discretionary way through the compassionate and humanitarian visa program, then through interdependency and later de facto partner visas—although even today not on entirely equal footing with straight married couples (Yue, 2008a).¹²

Sydney has been at the center of these shifts, as ‘gateway’ city for migrants (Hugo, 2008), an early and important center for LGBTQ organizing (Wotherspoon, 2016), and as an entrepreneurially competitive ‘global city’ (McNeill et al., 2005). As such, the sexually and culturally diverse spaces of Sydney are frequently understood as a boon for global and national ambitions, as political and economic actors seek to harness Australia’s ‘multicultural advantage’ or to reimagine Australia as a part of Asia, all while developing draconian ‘deterrence’ policies meant to stop ‘irregular’ migrants (mostly from Asia) from ever arriving in the country (Markwell, 2002; Mountz, 2011; Murphy et al., 2003; Walsh, 2011). In that context, conducting this project in Sydney opens up an important vantage point on this shifting landscapes of differential inclusion for some queer migrants in Australia and the vicissitudes of multiculturalism, more broadly. Toward those ends, this project has been asking:

¹² Compare that, for example to the United States, where a gay or lesbian partner could only migrate as a partner (and still only if they are married) after the Supreme Court overturned section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013.

- 1) How does sexuality, broadly understood, inform the urban and political geographies of multiculturalism and migrant citizenship in Sydney?
- 2) How do the geographies of racialization and sexual normativity shape queer migrants' everyday experiences of inclusion and exclusion in Sydney?
- 3) How do queer migrants respond, politically, to their differential inclusion and navigate the terms of societal membership in both quotidian and more organized ways?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted fieldwork in Sydney, Australia between August and December 2012 and between June and August 2013. While in Sydney, I conducted 43 in-depth interviews with lesbian and gay migrants and '2nd generation' adult children of migrants who reflect the diversity of Australia's migration streams—including historically important migration from Southern and Eastern Europe and increasingly significant streams from South, Southeast, and East Asia. This was supplemented by 23 interviews with policy-makers and advocates whose work intersected with these issues, as well as the analysis of archival materials related to the politics of race and sexuality—including policy documents, media accounts, and traces of the political projects of racialized queer people in Sydney—and participant observation in a variety of LGBTQ, migrant, and CALD spaces and events.¹³

The Articles

Each of the articles collected here emerge out of that broader project and questions, but they do so in slightly different ways. The first article focuses on those interviewees who were involved in a particular set of political projects organized by the City of Sydney council, and so includes participants across the queer migrant and policy/advocacy interviews. The

¹³ A more substantive account of research methods is available in the methodological appendix.

second article focuses explicitly on the narratives and political projects of gay Asian men around the issue of sexual racism. The third article draws broadly on the interviews with 1st and 2nd generation queer migrants in order to speak to broader literatures on queer migrations and the politics of integration.

In the first article, which has been published in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, I examine a series of projects convened by the City of Sydney council that were intended to explore and address challenges faced by queer people from ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ communities. Focusing on ‘raising awareness’, promoting visibility, and building connections and relationships between queer, ethnic, and multicultural groups, these efforts represent an important moment in the development of the project of multiculturalism in Australia as it incorporates consideration of ‘sexual and gender diversity’. Drawing on interviews with participants, as well as archival materials, I argue that these efforts did, in important ways, carve out spaces in which racialized queer people in Sydney could appear as political actors and in which the uneven geographies produced by regimes of sexuality and race could appear as part of a shared world of political concern. At the same time, these projects were themselves necessarily shaped by the very dynamics of racialization and normativity to which they responded, and calls for more and different forms of organizing emerged from participants.

Engaging with an Arendtian understanding of appearance, this article seeks to complicate and, in some sense, move behind and beyond a dichotomous framing that would situate political action as only *either* disruptive of dominant norms, relations of power, and aesthetic coordinates *or* as seeking recognition within dominant norms, relations, or coordinates. In that context, the kind of appearances facilitated and pursued in these projects could veer in either direction but are not immediately or entirely reducible to either. This is

meant as a contribution to queer studies and queer geography, where a series of related binaries—around state/non-state projects, radical/assimilationist politics, and normative/anti-normative analyses—still linger in the background (Brown et al., 2011; Wiegman and Wilson, 2015). It is also meant to contribute to debates in critical urban and political geography around the specificity of politics, which turn on whether politics should be conceived as necessarily disruptive to established orders or whether analyses of politics need to also include the everyday construction, maintenance, and shifts with existing orders (Davidson and Martin, 2014). In that context, this article contributes to an emerging set of arguments about the value of developing contextually-sensitive understandings of politics that can account for more modest forms of political engagement with existing orders, without, thereby devaluing more disruptive forms of politics (Leitner and Strunk, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2015).

The second article, which has been accepted at *Environment and Planning A*, situates gay Asian men's experiences of 'sexual racism' in the context of literatures on encounters across difference, which have been concerned with both the challenge of 'living with difference' and the promise of multicultural conviviality that inhere in the super-diversity of many cities (Valentine, 2008). At the intersection of race, sexuality, and gender, participants describe encounters with racializing language in online dating and hook up app profiles, specific instances of aggression and exclusion in queer scene and sex spaces, and a broader sense of devaluation in the face of aesthetic coordinates that privilege particular forms of white masculinity. Then, I conclude by tracing some of the political projects that emerge in the aftermath of sexual racism as interventions into those aesthetic and erotic hierarchies.

Expanding on approaches that focus on analyzing the conditions of a good or 'meaningful' encounter that can reduce prejudice or promote intercultural understanding,

this article brings those narratives of sexual racism into dialogue with Sara Ahmed's (2010) reevaluation of the 'bad encounter'. It shows how research on encounters can more productively engage with how negative encounters can become meaningful political occasions in their own right, and highlights dating and sex as important moments through which the aesthetic orderings of race, gender, and sexuality shape the unevenly shared spaces of citizenship and urban life.

Expanding on that project, the third article takes up a broader problematic around sexuality and migration that focuses on developing a *queer-political* approach to the geographies of migrant integration. Working with Elizabeth Povinelli's (2006) writing on sexuality, intimacy, and genealogy, I offer a queer critique of research on integration that has tended to occlude the experiences of queer migrants and, more broadly, reinforced a liberal-colonial 'common sense' in which migrant groups are portrayed as shaped and constrained by their culture, family, religion, and communities in ways that members of dominant groups in receiving societies are not.

I bring this queer critique into conversation with ongoing work to politicize research on integration that suggests the value of approaching integration "as a series of possibilities and predicaments rather than as a pre-determined trajectory" (Nagel and Ehrkamp, 2016: 1056). Focusing initially on participants' narratives about 'coming out', I show how that liberal imagining of autonomy and constraint shape some of those possibilities and predicaments that queer migrants face, and I examine the intimate geopolitics through which migrants make a place for themselves in Sydney, which can entail assertions of 'privacy' as much as more immediately recognizable forms of 'public' politics.

The Politics of Queer Migration

Taken together, these articles, I hope, illuminate some of the complicated experiences and narratives of queer migrants as they navigate and respond to normative orderings and make a place for themselves in Sydney. I hope, as well, that they offer some resources for thinking through the vicissitudes of state multiculturalism, particularly as sexuality and minoritized sexual identities enter into its ambit in new ways. I want to end this introduction by offering the reader two related thoughts to take forward into reading the dissertation.

The people who spoke with me for this project encountered many exclusions and obstacles—as migrants, as queer, as racialized, and at the intersections of these and other dimensions of socio-spatial differentiation. Many, though by no means all, were also relatively privileged in economic, professional, and/or educational terms—even as a post-migration downward mobility and barriers to incorporation at the higher levels of the labor market were also significant themes in a number of interviews. This should not be surprising given an, at least, two-decade long trend where skilled workers make up larger and larger proportions of Australian migration (Hawthorne, 2005; Walsh, 2011). I say this less to try to measure what Oswin (2008: 97) has critiqued as the “facile geometries of heroes and hegemons” and more to point to the multidimensional nature of queer migrants’ experiences—which is sometimes elided in accounts that focus primarily on queer migrants’ exclusion, marginalization, and resistance. This is not at all to suggest that those accounts are problematic in their own terms (indeed, the second article here follows a similar logic, up to a point). Instead, the value of the plural approach I gesture toward here is that it would encourage scholars to keep multiple different angles on queer migrants’ experiences open.

I also want to suggest that it is important to apply that same kind of plural attention to the state. Despite its violence, both routine and spectacular, the state is not everywhere, only, and in every way an oppressive presence—in the context of queer migration or more generally. While I suspect that that statement, as far as it goes, may not be particularly controversial, its implications for queer migration scholarship are not always followed through. In contrast, a rich set of literatures in political geography highlights the complicated and ambivalent spatialities of the state (Hannah, 2016; Painter, 2006; Secor, 2007), and the first article represents, among other things, an attempt, on my part, to contribute to conversations in queer and critical geography about the state in the context of projects of multicultural and queer inclusion.

The kind of pluralistic approach I am developing here is not meant as a retreat from the resolutely critical approach that characterizes much queer and critical geographical work. Least of all is it meant as an argument for a withdrawal from radical political work challenging the conditions of regimes of racialization, normativity, capital, and state violence. Nor is it, I hope, reducible to liberal pluralism of identity and interest amenable to the interests of state and capital. Instead, I have tried with uneven success, I am sure, to hold a variety of potentially contradictory positions at once—by inhabiting an analytical space where attention to an experienced sense of being “torn between worlds” can coincide with critiques of those framings, where strategies of reading for difference can coincide with reading for power, and where a variety of ‘affirmative’ and ‘reparative’ analyses can coincide with queer studies’ (and critical geography’s) anti-normative insistence that the world might yet be what it is not now (Muñoz 2009).

2. WORKING TO APPEAR: THE PLURAL AND UNEVEN GEOGRAPHIES OF RACE, SEXUALITY, AND THE LOCAL STATE IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA¹⁴

Abstract:

This article mobilizes an Arendtian understanding of politics emphasizing plurality and appearance in order to examine a series of projects convened by the City of Sydney council between 2010 and 2013 that were intended to address issues faced by queer people from “culturally and linguistically diverse” communities. Drawing on interviews with participants, as well as archival materials, I argue that these efforts carved out spaces in which racialized queer people in Sydney could appear politically and in which the uneven geographies produced by the mutually constitutive regimes of sexuality and race could become an object of differentially shared concern. Yet, these projects were themselves necessarily shaped by the very dynamics of racialization and normativity to which they responded, and the article asks how we might differently live with and beyond the fantasy of multicultural queer inclusion at work in these efforts. In doing so, this article suggests a different way of relating to the binaries (radical/ assimilationist, disruption/recognition, state/non-state) that have informed many queer analyses and also contributes to literatures in critical urban and political geography that seek to develop contextually-sensitive understandings of politics that can account for more modest forms of political engagement with existing orders.

¹⁴ Published as Ruez D (2016) Working to appear: The plural and uneven geographies of race, sexuality, and the local state in Sydney, Australia. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34(2): 282-300.

In 2010, the City of Sydney recognized queer people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as an “emerging community” potentially in need of council support. (City of Sydney, 2010a: 1). While Sydney’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities and queer communities had long been considered important but distinct groups for social planning purposes, this recognition marked an explicit effort to address issues faced by people at the intersection of sexuality and cultural difference.¹⁵ Toward that end, council staff produced a needs analysis, entitled *Torn between Two Worlds*. Drawing on academic and policy research, as well as a consultation with community groups, this report characterized queer people from ethnic and migrant communities as beset, on the one hand, by homophobia from families and communities and, on the other, by discrimination and cultural misunderstandings within queer communities. In response to this consultation, the City formed a steering committee bringing together council staff, service-providers, and representatives from community organizations.¹⁶ This committee organized a forum called *Sharing Our Stories* with more than 200 participants to “celebrate and give voice to diverse identities and experiences within GLBTIQ and multicultural communities” (City of Sydney, 2010b: 8). *Pride in Colour*—a semi-independent working group—was later established to carry on the work of raising awareness and facilitating dialogue around “sex, sexuality, and

¹⁵ While many people were involved, it should be noted that much of the initiative for these efforts can be attributed to then university student, Maria Chan, who was on a placement with the City of Sydney during the planning of the *Sharing Our Stories* forum.

¹⁶ Groups represented on the steering committee included the City of Sydney, AIDS Council of New South Wales, The ALLY program at the University of New South Wales, Asian Marching Boys, Australian GLBTIQ Multiculturalism Council, Dayenu, Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales, Family Planning NSW, International Day Against Homophobia Sydney, ISANA NSW, Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, Trikone Australasia, and Twenty10.

gender diversity within Sydney’s multicultural communities”.¹⁷ Between 2010 and 2013, this group pursued a number of projects, including producing educational materials, planning social events, supporting arts-based programs, and conducting outreach at community events, such as Mardi Gras and the city’s Living in Harmony festival.

These efforts were targeted toward “culturally and linguistically diverse” communities, who continue to face racialized exclusions in a context shaped by the legacies of “White Australia” (Hage, 1998). This racialization has a mutually constitutive relationship with heteronormative and homonormative formations in which understandings of Australian national identity and culture are increasingly and contradictorily linked to “inclusive” sexual and gender politics (Nicoll, 2001)—often set against orientalized others, imagined to be illiberal or even essentially homophobic (Abraham, 2009; Yue, 2012). As programs of inclusion focused specifically on issues faced by racialized queer people, these state-convened efforts in Sydney are uncommon, if not unique, and examining them is important as anti-racist queer political organizing continues to stake new ground (Tauqir et al., 2011) and as the relationships between state power and sexual minorities becomes increasingly polyvalent (Oswin, 2012; Puar, 2007).¹⁸ Based on interviews with participants, as well as the

¹⁷ That these efforts arose in Sydney can, in part, be explained in the context of the approximately 42.4% of residents in the City of Sydney born outside Australia as of the 2011 census—compared to 32.2% in the Greater Sydney region and 24.6% nationally (City of Sydney, 2015). Also, even though the geographies of queer residents are shifting, the council area of the City of Sydney contains the Oxford Street district and a number of suburbs that have been central to the political histories of queer communities in Sydney (Gorman-Murray and Nash, 2014).

¹⁸ I use the phrase “racialized queer” people or subjects to refer to the individuals and communities at the center of these efforts and this article. I use queer of color, a relatively uncommon term in the Australian context, when it is used by interviewees, as well as to identify participants who claim the term and to draw connections to broader movements or literatures. I use the term “culturally and linguistic diverse”, a ubiquitous phrase in and beyond Australian multiculturalism discourse, when discussing texts that invoke it.

analysis of archival materials, I argue that these projects have opened up important spaces in which racialized queer people in Sydney could appear politically. In doing so, I bring the political categories of Hannah Arendt's (1958) *The Human Condition* and Arendtian-inflected political thought more broadly into conversation with queer and queer of color scholarship to develop an approach that allows us to trouble the boundaries between "assimilationist" and "radical" queer spaces (Browne and Bakshi, 2013a) as well as between state and non-state politics.

Resisting easy categorization as assimilationist or radical, these efforts operate largely within a frame provided by Australian multiculturalism, which figures simultaneously as, a precarious infrastructure for political appearance in the context of the unevenness created by regimes of racialization and sexual normativity and, following Lauren Berlant (in Berlant and Edelman, 2014: 13), as a structuring fantasy that produces multicultural/queer inclusion as ambivalent "objects of desire that crack you open and give you back to yourself in a way about which you might feel many ways". These are not fantasies that could simply be debunked, but, rather, they call for a pluralistic mode of reading that engages with the complicated questions, complicities, and possibilities that arise from "staying bound to the possibility of staying bound to a world whose terms of reciprocity... are not entirely in anyone's control"—particularly not those disadvantaged in the radically uneven landscapes produced by regimes of sexuality and race (Berlant and Edelman, 2014: 20). Arendtian thought, here, provides a way to navigate this complicated terrain so as to locate politics in appearance, rather than only disruption (of norm or identity) or recognition (of identity or by norm). This is not to suggest that disruption, of various kinds, is not needed, nor that recognition is not important in particular contexts. Instead, a focus on appearance orients

our attention toward plurality—in terms of both the conditions of political action and our analytical stances in understanding queer politics.

Queer Geographies of Appearance and Plurality

Pushing queer critique beyond identity politics and a search for a pure/radical queer subject, Oswin (2008: 26) compellingly argues for the need to instead attend to “how norms and categories are deployed” within broader constellations of power. Through sensitizing us to the *appearance* of identities and shared objects of concern, Arendtian political thought—which has largely been bypassed in queer geographic scholarship—allows a spatial approach to politics that can productively supplement such a project (Dikeç, 2012). Instead of privileging recognition or disruption—which have been the traditional poles of queer thought and politics—an Arendtian focus on appearance responds to Wiegman and Wilson’s (2015: 2) invitation “to think queer theory without assuming a position of antinormativity from the outset” and pushes us to engage with the complicated and contingent political spaces in which actors find themselves. This is an approach that has significant affinities with critiques that have pointed to the limits of homonormativity when mobilized, acontextually, as an overarching conceptual frame (Brown, 2012; Podmore, 2013), as well as with Jason Lim’s (2010) immanent perspective on anti-racist politics and Kath Browne and Leela Bakshi’s (2013b) work on ordinary inclusion beyond the analytics of normalization. It also joins with other efforts by urban and political geographers to broaden our understanding of politics, “as a form of activity concerned with addressing problems of living together in a shared world of plurality and difference” that needs to be analyzed in terms of its contextual emergence (Barnett, 2012: 679; Bond et al., 2015; Fincher and Iveson, 2012; Häkli and Kallio, 2014; Leitner and Strunk, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2014).

For Arendt, political action is best understood as a never entirely predictable intervention into a web of relationships and actions whose effects inevitably extend beyond the intentions of their authors. Out of this complicated web, spaces of appearance can emerge in which people are together “in speech and action” (Arendt, 1958: 207). Such spaces are characterized and conditioned by plurality—defined here as a combination of equality and distinctness. As a speaking and acting subject everyone is equal and yet, no one individual is exactly the same as another. Plurality, then, names an important part of the context in which appearance takes place, and yet we must also attend to the radically uneven landscapes produced by regimes of differentiation—in this case, race and sexuality in particular—as they affect the conditions of speech and action in the world. While it is true that we are all individually distinctly equal and equally distinct as political actors—and that this is an important insight in itself—we are also all interpellated into regimes of differentiation and differential valuation that shape the resources available to us and the ways that our political claims are understood by others.

In that context, the Sharing Our Stories forum and the Pride in Colour working group are important for the way that they allowed racialized queer subjects to appear as bearers of political claims and for the intersection of sexuality and “cultural” difference to appear as a matter of public importance. Such spaces of appearance, according to Arendt, are inherently fragile, and I suggest that this is especially true for racialized queer people, whose situation in regimes of valuation place obstacles in the way of appearance. As such, this article examines the conditions of appearance—including the way that multiculturalist frameworks shaped these efforts—and draws attention to the collective work required to maintain the possibility of appearance in the face of the radically uneven landscapes of race and sexuality.

Encountering the Local State in Sydney

The steering committee and Pride in Colour depended on the financial and logistical support provided by the City of Sydney council, and this article also speaks to literatures examining the complex and contingent relationships between multiple scales of governance and queer political organizing (Browne and Bakshi, 2013a; Doan, 2015; Dubrow et al., 2015; Gorman- Murray, 2011; Hubbard, 2013). Local councils within Australia are governed by individual State (as opposed to federal) legislation, and within this system the City of Sydney is a relatively powerful local state actor within and beyond its formal boundaries that has access to more resources than most local governments because of the property values of the area within its rate base, significant investment income, and the special position accorded to the council by State legislation.

While the intersection of sexuality and race has been a productive avenue for critical research (Brown, 2012), states have only sporadically addressed this in their own attempts at recognition or inclusion (Monro, 2010). One of the legislative requirements of local councils in New South Wales is to plan for the needs of particular groups—including culturally and linguistically diverse communities—and, as a part of this planning process, councils are able to voluntarily create plans for other group, such as LGBTI populations. As such, the City of Sydney had incorporated both CALD and LGBTI communities into its social planning efforts for some time, and these projects marked a unique attempt to address an intersection of, in legislative terms, compulsory and voluntary categories.

While the recognition of sexual minorities by states is often implicated in processes of normalization and depoliticization (Richardson, 2005), such an emphasis risks occluding the multiplicity of rationales for state involvement in queer politics (Browne and Bakshi, 2013a). These rationales include attempts to create diverse, cosmopolitan spaces capable of

attracting skilled labor, tourism, and investment (Bell and Binnie, 2004; Oswin, 2012), but they also include the local state's "pastoral" imperative to care for vulnerable community members (Cooper and Monro, 2003), as well as a more general implication in biopolitical governmentalities around health promotion (Brown and Knopp, 2010). In the Australian context, local councils have been at the forefront of implementing state commitments to multiculturalism, and the meanings and implications of those commitments have been the subject of considerable debate (Fincher et al., 2014; Walsh, 2014). This multiplicity of rationales and logics can offer considerable, if often contradictory, resources for 'progressive' or 'radical' projects (Staeheli, 2013; Martin and Pierce, 2013; McGuirk and O'Neill, 2012).

Thus, I treat the local state not so much as a distinct institutional realm, but instead as a diffuse set of actors whose prosaic practices have been a key part of these efforts (Painter, 2006). In any case, distinguishing state and non-state actors becomes difficult as these projects are simultaneously embedded in the local council, ethnic and multicultural queer activist networks, and a broader "shadow state" of state-funded community sector organization (see also Andrucki and Elder, 2007). This article, then, examines the work of the steering committee and Pride in Colour—and the multiple logics invoked and the prosaic interactions through which they are enacted—for the ways they may both open up and foreclose possibilities for political engagement with the forces of racialization and sexual normativity.

Multiculturalism, Unevenness, and the Work of Politics

Queer of color and other modes of anti-racist queer scholarship have highlighted the mutually constitutive forces of race and sexuality in a context where a normative queerness has so often been implicitly understood in terms of whiteness (Ferguson, 2004; Puar, 2007).

In such contexts, emerging tendencies toward the inclusion or recognition of some lesbian and gay individuals and communities can themselves be implicated in regimes of valuation that unevenly extend exclusion in gendered, classed, and racialized ways (Haritaworn, 2007; Nast, 2002). In Sydney, there have been important moves toward including sexual minorities in state policy and planning (Gorman-Murray, 2011) and deploying queer places and events in place marketing and city promotion (Markwell, 2002). This inclusion and normalization comes at the risk of being bound up with certain exclusions—as shown in Caluya’s (2008) analysis of the racialization of gay Asian sexualities in ostensibly liberatory queer spaces (see also Waitt, 2006). Similarly, Abraham (2009) highlights the erasure of queer Muslim experiences where a “clash of sexual civilizations” discourse sets up an imagined opposition between a purportedly conservative and homophobic ‘Muslim’ culture and an ostensibly liberal and tolerant ‘Australian’ culture.

Understanding this context requires an engagement with the specificities of Australian multiculturalism, which emerges from a liberal, settler colonial racial formation privileging whiteness and constraining anti-racist politics (Anderson and Taylor, 2005; Hage, 1998). I have in mind here state multiculturalism policies, but also the broader discursive formations through which ideas about cultural difference are formulated and their political implications are understood. Literatures at the intersection of queer, queer of color, and critical ethnic studies offer a useful critique of this kind of multiculturalism as an official anti-racism that nevertheless reinforces the material conditions of racialized (de)valuations (Melamed, 2011). That is to say, multiculturalism’s valuation of difference—when it does not engage with the conditions that produce those differences—reduces racial hierarchies to a problem of misunderstanding to be solved through better knowledge about and recognition of cultural differences (Reddy, 2011). These critiques of multiculturalism join a range of

others who have pointed to multiculturalism's implications in capitalist processes (Mitchell, 2004; Walsh, 2014), its limits as in relation to feminist and anti-racist politics (Lentin and Titley, 2012), and its investment in a kind of humanist rationalism that celebrates 'diversity' while impoverishing our capacities to understand the psycho-socio-spatial processes through which we become differentiated as racialized subjects (Thomas, 2011).¹⁹

Without losing sight of the critical orientation to normative orderings that motivates these analyses, it remains important to approach multicultural formations as spatially contingent and relationally produced so as to better see the fissures within existing orders that might be obscured by a more "top-heavy" critique (Mitchell, 2004: 219). In the face of the uneven landscapes produced by regimes of racialization and sexual normativity, it is important to take seriously the kinds of appearance that may negotiate more space within existing orderings (Ruez, 2013), as well as the work that enables political action, big and small (Stacheli, 2012). Approached through an analytic trained on appearance, as opposed to disruption or recognition, these projects' strategies of "raising awareness" and "promoting understanding" become potentially important moments of politics, although they remain moments that are necessarily shaped by the regimes of racialization and normativity to which they respond. In them, we can see the work required to create spaces of appearance for

¹⁹ Many queer of color critiques of multiculturalism and racialized queer politics have emerged in North America and require careful use in the Australian context. This is not because those critiques are not applicable, but because the context for such analytical interventions is different. Distinct histories of settlement, migration regulation, urban development, and social movements have left important differences across these Anglo-settler colonies (cf. Jackson and Sullivan, 1999; Johnston and Longhurst, 2008; Weller and O'Neill, 2014). This can help explain the different political valences attached to particular terminologies. In the North American context, for example, an emphasis on cultural difference is often read to imply an inattention to the dynamics of racialization. While that is also frequently true in the Australian context, there are also many instances in which the dynamics of racialization are critically apprehended—rather than necessarily occluded—through a language of cultural difference (as in discussions of white cultural hegemony).

racialized queer people in the context of white supremacy and heteronormative and homonormative formations. At the same time, this article asks, along with some of the participants, how we might differently live with and beyond the fantasy of multicultural queer inclusion animating these projects.

Methods and Data

This article draws on a broader research project conducted during two periods of fieldwork in Sydney (August–December 2012 and June–August 2013). During that time, I completed 43 in-depth interviews with queer migrants and ‘2nd generation’ adult children of those who had migrated.²⁰ Participants were recruited from a range of countries—differentially racialized against a normative whiteness—in order to examine queer migrants’ experiences of citizenship at the intersection of racialization and sexual normativity.²¹ These interviews were supplemented with 23 interviews with service-providers, community advocates, and State- and council-level government workers. The City of Sydney council and Pride in Colour have been an important entry point for my research, and at least 24 of the individuals interviewed had been directly involved with these projects. This includes those

²⁰ While queer can be a problematic term in the context of the diverse understandings and practices around sexuality globally, all of those interviewed for this project maintained some identification with the terms gay, lesbian, and/or queer and had some relationship with broader LGBTQI communities and spaces in Sydney—even when these were relationships characterized by degrees of alienation or exclusion. The use of the ‘2nd generation’ designation here should not be read to imply any commitment to a generational model of immigrant incorporation. Rather these individuals were included because they are necessarily implicated—albeit differentially—in the same processes of racialization as migrants and in the long-term politics of belonging and citizenship for (im)migrant groups.

²¹ This included individuals from Albania, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Fiji, Malaysia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam, as well as Australian-born individuals.

actively involved in organizing these groups, as well as individuals who attended the *Sharing Our Stories* forum. The analysis of documents produced by the steering committee and Pride in Colour—including the needs analysis referenced above, forum proceedings, and educational materials supplement the interview data. The themes discussed below were developed in response to tensions that emerged within these political projects as they intersected with analytical debates in queer urban and political geography. Responding to those debates entailed interpreting interview and archival materials simultaneously through a discursive frame emphasizing the construction of particular subjects and objects of concern and their implications in broader racialized and sexualized discourses and relations of power (Secor, 2010) and a phenomenological frame emphasizing the spatial contingencies of political action (Barnett, 2012).

In what follows, I explain the logics through which these efforts worked and highlight the *work* required to sustain spaces of appearance in the context of irreducible plurality and radical unevenness. Then, working with critiques voiced by participants, I show how the dynamics of racialization continued to shape these projects and discuss queer multicultural inclusion as an ambivalent fantasy of belonging that calls for a pluralistic analysis.

The Uneven Geographies of Shared Stories

These projects pursued a politics based on sharing stories, raising awareness, facilitating dialogue, and building relationships across differences. Such efforts are difficult to situate within the alternatives of disruption or recognition that mark much queer scholarship. There is relatively little, or, at least, only very circumscribed disruption here, but neither are these efforts reducible to an appeal for recognition. There is, of course, a moment of

recognition (i.e. the City of Sydney council staff recognizing queer people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as an “emerging community”), but that was precisely the beginning rather than the end or goal of these projects. Instead, my argument is that we can see a variety of attempts to create spaces in which racialized queer people could *appear* as political actors and in which the intersecting dynamics of racialization and sexual normativity could be engaged as a differentially shared matter of public importance.

Negotiating the relationship between projects of queer *and* multicultural inclusion—understood, at times, as distinct and potentially in tension—was seen to be an important part of the work of the steering committee and Pride in Colour (also see Low and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2014). This was encapsulated in the title of the needs analysis that launched these efforts, *Torn Between Two Worlds*. The concern about this tension echoes the treatment of the relationships between sexual minorities and multiculturalism in normative political theory, which has operated from a “minority within a minority” framework that assumes a conflict between group-based multicultural recognition and the rights of individual sexual minorities within those groups (Levy, 2005). We can see a similar tension in these efforts here as Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, a speaker at the *Sharing Our Stories* forum, describes a reactionary tendency to deploy “concepts like multiculturalism and religious freedom” to avoid having to address issues faced by queer people:

We do not need to use the rhetoric of multicultural and multi-faith communities to bolster the ambitions of certain community leaders who want this view upheld to stop our work... we can't use concepts like multiculturalism and religious freedom to deflect internal criticism (City of Sydney, 2010b: 26).

This tendency is associated with leaders of ethnic, cultural, or religious groups who attempt to deploy discourses of multiculturalism or religious freedom to justify commitments to

heteronormative arrangements.²² Concerns about these exclusions marked a significant theme in interviews, as well as in the needs analysis that launched the steering committee's work. Specifically, the needs analysis interprets homophobia within ethnic communities as a significant problem:

Multicultural GLBTIQ people often face homophobia from their own families and ethnic communities as:

- Homosexuality is perceived as “sinful” leading to isolation and alienation.
- Sex is a taboo subject. Therefore, families tend to presume a heterosexual orientation and remain silent on issues of sexual diversity.
- Homosexuality is seen as a result of Western influence, creating the widespread perception that being GLBTIQ is in direct opposition to one's cultural identity.
- Homosexuality is seen as shaming the family and deviating from gender roles. Those who are “out” are often ostracized from their families and communities. As a result, many refrain from coming out in fear of jeopardizing their support networks (City of Sydney, 2010b: 4).

These, of course, name very real problems. Yet, without devaluing the importance of these experiences and the violence and exclusion they entail, attributions of homophobia need also to be critically interrogated for the work that they can do in creating hierarchies of value in racialized societies. Following Manalansan (2009: 35), I suggest that these deployments of homophobia can work to “obfuscate racial, class, and other social hierarchies” as groups become singled out as particularly homophobic in a context where overt homophobia or ‘intolerance’ is devalued. In this case, the deployment of ‘cultural’ and ‘religious’ difference as a marker for an assumed homophobic orientation risks contributing to the ongoing processes of racialization.

Nevertheless, even as this multicultural/queer divide shaped the work of the steering committee and Pride in Colour, other possibilities also emerged—including direct

²² While I use this quote to substantiate the perception of a conflict between multicultural and queer recognition, the notion of *internal* criticism is important, as it implicitly acknowledges some of the problems with external criticisms of ethnic or cultural groups' homophobia that I discuss below.

engagements with the dynamics of racialization. In particular, another speaker at the *Sharing Our Stories* forum, Sekneh Beckett, noted the difficulty of finding a way to open space for work around “sexual diversity” within Muslim communities without opening up those communities to racism or Islamophobia:

Also given the current socio-political context affecting Muslims, I deliberated to find ways to advocate for sexual diversity within Muslim communities without imposing a racist or Islamophobic discourse (City of Sydney, 2010b: 37).

Here, Beckett sets out the problem of how the group could pursue their goals of advocating for queer people within Muslim communities without contributing to the ongoing racialization of Muslims in Australia on the basis of their imagined conservative orientation toward gender and sexuality (Abraham, 2009; Beckett et al., 2014). Though phrased here in relation to Muslims, this concern echoes the broader point about homophobia in migrant or ethnic communities—understood as “traditional” and essentially homophobic.

Discussing this difficulty, a council worker involved in the project suggested a model of encounter and sharing stories that could challenge “myths” about homophobia in racialized communities:

A lot of multicultural community... may be more accepting than some of the generic stereotypes. I thought it would be good to highlight some of the good examples of acceptance within different communities. It's overcome some of the myths that suggest that all of the multicultural community, that they're homophobic.

The logic here is that encountering “examples”, whether in the actual political work of Pride in Colour or through consciously showcasing particular examples in their educational materials, would lead to a process of overcoming “myths” and “stereotypes” and help to combat the perception of monolithic homophobia within particular communities:

It's through the discussion we feel that giving people a voice so people can connect and understand in a very personal level is really important. Sometimes I think through the project involvement—some of the people from even the GLBT/CALD [culturally and linguistically diverse] background themselves, they may have some preconception about how the community will receive it, but then we actually

attracted some community leaders. They are very accepting as well. It was quite interesting.

Participants described a kind of learning by encounter that happened in the course of their work. Working on a common political project laid the groundwork for learning and for building alliances across a range of differences—including encounters between nominally state and non-state actors, among members of differentially racialized groups, and across sexual differences and norms (Matejskova and Leitner, 2011; Sziarto and Leitner, 2010). However, these were not spaces in which everyone simply “got on” without conflict. Meetings were not infrequently described as being “contentious spaces”—with the source of contention being attributed to, alternately, the wide range of “cultural differences” encompassed by the culturally and linguistically diverse remit of these efforts, the differential positions that participants occupied in the local state or state-funded community organizations, as well as the different positions that members occupied in relation to dominant norms and regimes of racialization.

Speaking in relation to the dynamics around race within the group, one of the participants in the steering committee offered this account:

I tried to raise awareness of the unique experiences of queer people of colour in the group to those with white privilege—by encouraging everyone to share stories and understandings of sexual identity in their community. That way, I hoped to create mutual understanding and a space where these hidden stories are honored and form the framework to conceptualize the forum.

Rather than approaching “mutual understanding” here as a state of intersubjective connection unproblematically shared among participants—a state which may be neither desirable nor possible to achieve (Thomas, 2011)—I approach it as the construction of an imperfectly shared framework for engaging an *inter-est*. “*Inter-est*”, here, names an object in common between political actors—in this case, these are the dynamics of racialization, sexual normativity, and cultural difference (Arendt, 1958: 81). These are shared concerns,

but they are not concerns with which each actor has an identical relationship. Instead, the term indicates an in-common/in-between realm, which highlights concerns in common and marks the distance between actors in relation to those concerns. In that context, practices of sharing stories and raising awareness become an avenue through which particular kinds of relations and narratives could be politically constructed around this unevenly shared world. As such, these stories are central to the process of articulating political claims, cultivating particular kinds of relations, and engaging wider publics (Cavarero, 2000; Pratt, 2012). These efforts created a space—through telling stories and providing examples of experiences—that allowed participants to, always partially, imagine and engage these concerns from a “plurality of perspectives... and [to] map the terrain of a dispute to ascertain where I or we stand in relation to you” (Disch, 1997: 145–146). Moving beyond plurality, these efforts facilitated an engagement with the unevenness of the world—as an effect of differential relations to dominant norms and the unequal possibilities that these engender.

The Work of Appearance

The instrumental and infrastructural conditions of political action sometimes escape notice in many radical accounts of politics (Barnett, 2007), but, in contrast, a persistent strand in Arendtian thought has dealt with how the capacities for political action can be promoted or preserved (Calhoun, 2002). This was necessary because Arendt saw appearance as fragile in the face of the administrative power of the state and tendencies toward what might, in the current context, be called a kind of post-political managerialism that would foreclose the nonsovereignty of action in a plural world. In fact, I would, following Markell (2011), argue that the importance of the distinction between work and action in *The Human Condition*, which contrasts the sovereignty of an individual “maker” with the nonsovereignty

of action in a plural world, lies less in partitioning different spheres of life and instead comes from challenging ways of thinking that would reduce politics to work—on the model of the individual sovereign maker. Central to these concerns is Arendt’s sometimes overlooked hostility to relations of rule that would “involve some as participants and make others as instruments of whatever happens” (Arendt, 1950: 67–68, as translated in Markell, 2015). It is here that the radically uneven geographies produced by regimes of racialization and sexual normativity call for our attention. These uneven landscapes produce obstacles to appearance for migrants, queer people of color, and others who must navigate political action in and through racialized regimes of (in)visibility (El-Tayeb, 2012), differential economies of attention (Bickford, 1996), and unequal access to “public sphere” and institutional spaces (Staheli et al., 2009; Winders, 2012). Building on Arendt’s (1958) point that spaces of appearance are dependent on human artifice, I suggest that these efforts illustrate the collective work required to sustain spaces of appearance for racialized queer people. This would demand a different model of work—one that is collective, as opposed to individual, and, as such, nonsovereign.²³

One example of this kind of work is the necessity of creating the right conditions for appearance. Several organizers discussed this in terms of creating safe spaces in which people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences would be able to participate. This point arose in a discussion about the organizers’ decision to limit recording at the *Sharing Our Stories* forum:

²³ Whether or not this usage of work is reconcilable with Arendt’s is, I think, open for debate. What is more important here is the attention to practices—whether considered through the lens of work or action—that seek to address the *conditions* of appearance in the context of plurality and unevenness.

Some of the issues that came up were, do we record the forum? And then some people were concerned that, wait a minute, if you record it, in my community that's not really safe. It's not safe for people to come out.

The decision not to record portions of the *Sharing Our Stories* forum is understood here as a lesson learned that would lead to a better understanding of the needs for safe spaces for queer multicultural organizing in a context where being 'outed' is understood to be a problem of particular importance to queers from 'culturally and linguistically diverse' communities. Another participant in the forum described its relative success along these lines:

I've been part of the queer community and was invited on occasion to speak at different forums about being gay and ethnic or Muslim... These days I have to check and cross check everything— Will it be shown anywhere? Will there be camera? Will there be posts online about this? It makes it hard to share our experiences. People are hungry to know our experiences, but then they silence people like me by not providing a safe forum... Last year, I went along to a council forum for queer culturally and religiously diverse communities to come together. They considered things like ensuring the space was genuinely safe for us to have conversations. I think this was the first I'd ever seen something facilitated with an attempt to truly consult and accommodate non-out gay people.

Of course, appearance necessarily involves risk in the sense of entering into an unpredictable web of others' actions and receptions in the context of plurality. At the same time, risk and safety are contextually and relationally produced (Roestone Collective, 2014), and risk is unequally experienced given normative regimes of valuation that disadvantage some. At their best, these efforts opened up spaces in which a broader set of individuals could participate, share their experiences, and articulate political claims. These spaces shared characteristics with the "safe houses" that John Paul Catungal (2013) highlights in his work on ethno-specific HIV organizations in Toronto in that they allowed individuals and groups to find mutual support and the resources with which to respond to the effects of racialization and regimes of sexual normativity.

These spaces nevertheless also maintained characteristics of what Catungal (2013) calls “liberal contact zones” in which people bring their intersecting histories and differential relations to norms and regimes of racialization into their interactions. The steering committee and Pride in Colour were about creating explicitly *multicultural* spaces, which, while presenting opportunities for collaboration, also presented challenges in the sense of including a range of participants with widely varying relationships to regimes of racialization and other prevailing social and economic hierarchies. Looking back on the projects, one participant offered this account:

But it’s also something to look at how a collective voice can be harnessed in terms of in getting this conversation started... It worked well because it was one of the first. It was a vacuum and a space that needed to be filled, and it was the right time. It didn’t really work well because it was a collective, and with that, you know, the ebb and flow of people’s commitment and time, leadership and all that stuff. And it might have done really well, if there were very clear terms of reference to what this is about. Is it just collective voices or, is it something that is almost like an organization, something that we are accountable to the people that we represent—accountable to the cause if you may call it that way, and accountable to some kind of output.

Within what might be read as an organizational critique of the efforts, there are important substantive concerns about the “terms of reference” and “accountability” that speak to the difficult but necessary work that is in the background of efforts to create spaces of appearance for racialized queer people. Clarifying terms of reference speak to both the goals of the projects and the language through which they would be articulated. Participants described the often difficult work of clarifying the language with which to refer to the various communities involved—from the language of cultural diversity prominent within Australian multiculturalism to what some saw, either positively or negatively, as a more politicizing critique of racism. There were also tensions and debates around the appropriate language to use in relation to sexual identities, from LGBTQI identities to terms that would acknowledge forms of sexual and gender diversity existing beyond these categories. Getting

this language “right” required a significant amount of work and was understood to be important precisely because it shaped the terms through which these efforts would appear. Once the terms of reference were settled, however provisionally, there was still the work of ensuring that these projects continued to function to the benefit of the communities that they were intended to represent. There were, for example, significant concerns voiced about groups who were underrepresented in these projects, including trans and indigenous communities. I suggest that these narratives point to the importance of considering the work that goes into making politics possible, as well as to move beyond Arendt’s individualistic understanding of work and to consider the collective nature of the work that goes into creating spaces and capacities for political engagement in a world that is irreducibly plural and radically uneven.

Race and the Fantasy of Queer Multicultural Inclusion

The appearance of racialized queer subjects as political actors and of the intersecting dynamics of race and sexuality as matters of public importance was shaped in significant ways by projects of multicultural and queer inclusion that have influenced Australian politics and life in Sydney for several decades. These formations can be understood as a resource in the sense that they provide an infrastructure through which these efforts could develop. At the same time, they can also be understood as fantasies of belonging and citizenship—highlighting how affective investments are made in particular objects and particular ways of relating to those objects (see Berlant, 1997). Even as the fantasies of queer multicultural inclusion allows queer members of “culturally and linguistically diverse” communities to negotiate their participation in a context in which they were, at best, differentially included,

there is the danger that this kind of incorporation into existing orders may work to sustain relations of domination (Ferguson, 2012; Hage, 1998).

Participants in these projects raised a number of concerns that touch on these issues. Lacking a language with which to approach the dynamics of racialization critically, as some participants suggested, Pride in Colour's attempts to "celebrate diversity"—even "diversity within diversity"—lacked critical leverage vis-a-vis structural aspects of racialization and normativity. Speaking in broader terms about understandings of race in Sydney, one participant—a queer of color activist, who would later extend this analysis to Pride in Colour specifically, noted that there seemed to lack of a language with which to discuss race:

They don't really talk about racism. They don't feel that they are racist, and there's this kind of contact actually, without any sort of discussion or political framework, and I've found the same thing in the gay community...

This is not to suggest that all or even most of the individuals involved necessarily lacked a critical orientation to the dynamics of race in Australia. Indeed, as Ahmed (2012: 175) suggests, "speaking in the happier languages of diversity does not necessarily mean an identification with the institution but can be understood as a form of practical knowledge of the difficulty of getting through". Thus, the dominant frames for understanding the stories shared in these forums may make some messages more likely to be articulated or more likely to be received. It was easier within these frameworks to address issues that could be more readily understood in terms of cultural difference (i.e. the need for cultural sensitivity in services, the acknowledgement of culturally distinct understandings of sexual identities and practices, cultural pressures to "come out" or not, etc.). Such issues are not unimportant and, depending on the context, addressing them can and did lead to asking more critical questions about racial formation and the uneven possibilities that it generates, but this is not necessarily or always the case. A focus on culture can also, potentially, become an obstacle to

addressing race to the extent that ‘cultural’ difference becomes an alibi for racialization (Razack, 2008) or that culture becomes understood as overly determining some, but not others’ identities and practices (Brown, 2006).

In a different register, a queer of color artist and activist involved in *Pride in Colour* describes shifting dynamics as the group evolved:

What I initially saw were many people of color, many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds coming together, looking at issues of discrimination... looking at the multiplicity of our lives, and how they’re affected... and that was exciting... So it started as a forum or a platform to discuss these things and give us emotional solidarity—political, physical— seeing other people like yourself, and people who weren’t us could be there in support. And that’s what I saw initially, and I thought that was really great. So the problem comes in, and of course we’re trying to build bridges, but as things went along, more and more of us dropped off for a variety of reasons. And what’s happened now is that there’s been a shift. There’s fewer of us and much more of the other. So it’s a big problem.

While never as directly articulated as it was above, this concern was hinted at in a number of other interviews. For some this represented a practical problem related to “recruitment” that could be addressed by changing meeting times, for example, but for others, it seemed to offer an indication that the group was no longer speaking to the desires or goals of many former participants.

Another of the participants—a community health worker—suggests that the lack of a political framework to address race and a certain kind of exhaustion with this type of organizing is, in part, a consequence of the limited options for queer of color organizing in a context dominated by state actors and state-supported community sector organizations.

Without discounting the importance of work with the state, he suggests the need for alternative spaces beyond the state and its dominant ways of understanding cultural difference:

I think it’s really, really excellent that there are local governments that do things like this. So the issue isn’t that they are doing things like this. It’s that there’s no alternative. I would like a lot more local governments to start doing things like this.

That would be awesome. And I would also like even for the individuals who are involved in that, to be able to go back to places where we or they can be materially sustained by being able to continue to have those kinds of conversations outside of the purview of dominant decision-makers.

These are places in which alternative languages can be developed and new worlds imagined—spaces in which ideas and frameworks do not have to be “immediately translated for bureaucratic consumption”, and are allowed time to develop.

The multicultural queer inclusion represented in these efforts, clearly afforded certain possibilities that many participants found valuable, but there is also need to think otherwise—to construct different kinds of fantasies and imagine different kinds of futures. Following Berlant (in Berlant and Seitz, 2013: np), “it’s never about shaming people’s objects, it’s always about creating better and better objects. It’s always about creating better worlds, making it possible for us to think in more and different kinds of ways about how we relationally can move through life”. An analytic based on appearance and plurality moves in just such a direction by focusing less on exposing these projects’ contradictions or incoherence, and instead working to understand what these contradictions and incoherencies may show us about the world and about the limits of different modes of relating to it.

Politics in Plural and Uneven Worlds

Though Pride in Colour disbanded in 2013, the work of these groups marks an important moment in both multicultural queer organizing in Sydney and in state involvement in queer of color politics more broadly. This work helped to carve out a space of appearance for queer people from ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ communities, as well as space in which to respond to regimes of sexual normativity and racialization. For people disadvantaged in these regimes, the accomplishments of these projects could matter a great deal. They brought people and groups together in new ways and served as an

experiment in the construction of spaces of appearance for racialized queer people. Yet the need for more and different kinds of fantasies is also clear. There are more and different kinds of politics to be enacted in the context of a migration regime that continues to block access to many of the most vulnerable—including offshore detention programs that force people seeking asylum to reside in unsafe conditions, excluded from any kind of multicultural queer inclusion (Mountz, 2011; Raj, 2014). There are more and different kinds of politics to be enacted, as well, in the context a country experiencing widening economic inequality (Oxfam Australia, 2014), ongoing settler colonial violence (Povinelli, 2011), and a state thoroughly implicated in the geopolitical violence and global inequality that forms the background against which a city like Sydney becomes a privileged destination for migrants (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013).

Yet, people have to find some way to live in the worlds in which they find themselves—particularly when those worlds are, in some sense, organized against them. This need not entail resignation to that world, but it does mean using resources that are at hand to craft spaces in which to appear and act politically. Beyond a search for “heroes and hegemons” (Oswin, 2008: 97) and beyond easy oppositions between radical and assimilationist politics (Browne and Bakshi, 2013a) is a world of plurality and unevenness, and it is just such a world in which these projects operated. Within urban political geography more broadly, this research highlights the importance of attending to a variety of forms of political engagement, even if they are seeking only modest changes or incorporation into existing formations (Bond et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2014). To be clear, this is not a political argument in favor of such goals over others, but an analytical point about the need to acknowledge the importance of politics that may negotiate more space within existing orderings and to remain curious about the possibilities of such forms of political action as

experiments that may develop in unpredictable ways. Privileging an Arendtian moment of appearance, which may well lead to disruption or to recognition, but which is not immediately reducible to either, opens up just such a conceptual space. From that space, we can more effectively engage with the complex and multifaceted work required to build more just cities and enact more livable worlds.

3. 'I NEVER FELT TARGETED AS AN ASIAN... UNTIL I WENT TO A GAY PUB': SEXUAL RACISM AND THE AESTHETIC GEOGRAPHIES OF THE BAD ENCOUNTER²⁴

Abstract:

Encounters across difference—in city spaces marked by diverse migration trajectories, cultural differences, and racialized hierarchies—have captured the attention of urban scholars concerned with both the challenge of 'living with difference' and the promise of multicultural conviviality that inhere in the super-diversity of many cities. Expanding on approaches that focus on analyzing the conditions of a good or 'meaningful' encounter that can reduce prejudice or promote intercultural understanding, this article brings interviews with queer Asian men in Sydney, Australia into dialogue with Sara Ahmed's reevaluation of the 'bad encounter'. It shows how research on encounters can more productively engage with how negative encounters can become meaningful political occasions in their own right. Focusing on the problem of sexual racism as it emerges in accounts shared by participants, the article highlights dating and sex as important moments through which the aesthetic orderings of race, gender, and sexuality shape the unevenly shared spaces of citizenship and urban life.

²⁴ Forthcoming in *Environment and Planning A*.

Encounters across difference—in urban spaces marked by diverse migration trajectories, cultural differences, and racialized hierarchies—have captured the attention of many scholars concerned with both the challenge of ‘living with difference’ and the promise of multicultural conviviality that inhere in the super-diversity of contemporary urban life (Amin, 2002; Nagel and Hopkins, 2010; Valentine, 2008; Vertovec, 2007). Drawing on interviews with queer Asian men in Sydney, as well as archival evidence of political projects and cultural production, this article contributes to these literatures through examining accounts of dating and sex as important moments of encounter through which the aesthetic orderings of race, gender, citizenship, and belonging are constituted. However, in distinction—but not opposition—to approaches that focus on analyzing or clarifying the conditions of a ‘good’ or ‘meaningful’ encounter that can reduce prejudice or promote intercultural understanding (Matejskova and Leitner, 2011; Mayblin et al., 2015; Wilson, 2013), I mobilize Sara Ahmed’s (2010) reevaluation of the ‘bad encounter’ by attending specifically to the problem of sexual racism as it emerges in the accounts shared by participants.

To be sure, sexual encounters certainly can produce spaces in which prejudices can be challenged and relationships across difference forged (Delaney, 1999), but more common, in this research, were accounts of racialized exclusion and (micro)aggression, or what a number of participants identified as sexual racism, where racialized sexual ‘preferences’ devalued participants and limited their erotic options (Callander et al., 2012; Caluya, 2006). Adopting an aesthetic approach to the politics of sexual racism, this article focuses on the *sense* that is made of encounters with racializing dispositions and practices. Thus, I am concerned with “forms of perceiving the world and modes of relating to it” as they shape and are shaped by intimate encounters with sexual racism and their aftermaths and

elsewheres (Dikeç, 2015: 1). This aesthetic approach to politics is one in which the sharing and partitioning of space are central (Rancière, 2010), even as aesthetics' conventional reference to beauty and taste are not irrelevant to the problem of sexual racism and the gendered and racialized experiences of attractiveness at work there (cf. La Fountain-Stokes, 2011).

This particular focus on the 'bad encounter' of sexual racism—distinct from the important work that has been done to challenge overly optimistic readings of encounters across difference (Valentine, 2008; Hopkins, 2014)—is about opening up the literatures on spaces of encounters to understanding “how bad feelings are not simply reactive; they are creative responses to histories that are unfinished” (Ahmed, 2010: 217). That is to say, bad encounters are not only counterfactuals to be posed to more optimistic accounts, nor are they simply negative moments to be overcome in the search for 'meaningful' encounters. Instead, bad encounters have a life and a politics of their own. Approaching the intertwining of sex and sense in accounts sexual racism can help push literatures on urban encounters across difference beyond a moral lens of reducing prejudice and toward an engagement with the ambivalent politics of encounter in the unevenly shared spaces of urban life.

Before turning to the study and its findings, I first outline some of the key contributions of literatures on encounters across difference and suggest how attending to the politics of 'bad encounters' can productively extend that work. Next, I highlight the importance of sex and dating as sites of encounters and as moments through which the geographies of race, gender, and sexuality are constituted in everyday urban life. Finally, I elaborate the aesthetic approach to politics developed in this article, with its emphasis on making sense and sharing space across the plural and uneven geographies of contemporary cities.

Opening up the 'Bad Encounter'

Cities are frequently understood as important sites in the coming-together of difference (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Sandercock, 2003). Indeed, in the everyday conviviality of multicultural urban life, a number of scholars have found a hopeful model of engagement across difference and suggest that such interactions can provide a foundation for creating more inclusive social relations (Amin, 2002; Laurier and Philo, 2006; Wise, 2005). Raising some critical questions about the idea that encounters across difference will tend to erode prejudice or exclusion, Gill Valentine (2008) makes a compelling case for a more complicated understanding of encounters across difference that takes seriously the ways that encounters may reinforce prejudice and other exclusionary tendencies. This involved a critical geographic engagement with the 'contact hypothesis' and challenging simplistic understandings that contact across difference would necessarily lead to reducing the prejudices of those involved (also see Matejskova and Leitner, 2011).²⁵ Much additional work has gone into examining the spatialities of encounters and the conditions under which these encounters could have meaningful effects in challenging prejudices or promoting intercultural understanding (Leitner, 2012; Mayblin et al., 2015; Wilson, 2013). Thus, while significant threads of this work have sought to show the promise of encounters for reducing prejudice and achieving better relations (variously defined), others remind that there is nothing necessarily liberating about encounters, and that these encounters may work to

²⁵ Prejudice and its relationship to categorical thinking is clearly an important aspect of sexual racism (Allport, 1954), and it has been an important aspect of the encounter literatures more broadly (cf. Valentine, 2010). My interest in this article is in the broader aesthetic orders out of which the categories and prejudices of sexual racism emerge insofar as they connect to "race as an embodied and structural system of difference" (Winders and Schein, 2014: 221) that articulates power and difference through the "displacement of difference into hierarchies" (Gilmore, 2002: 16).

reinforce prejudices and reinscribe exclusion (Hopkins, 2014; Noble and Poynting, 2010). In one sense, then, the possibility of bad encounters has been central to these literatures for some time. Yet, the goal, even in work that emphasizes the potential downsides of encounter, has generally remained oriented toward the pursuit of better encounters that could more effectively reduce prejudice. In the process, the productivity of negative encounters has remained underexamined.

It is here that Sara Ahmed's (2010) reevaluation of the 'bad encounter' offers a useful framework for extending urban scholarship on encounters across difference. In the conclusion to *The Promise of Happiness*, Ahmed mounts a critical reading of what she calls the 'affirmative turn' in philosophy and social theory. Ahmed develops her argument in relation to a lecture on Spinoza delivered by Gilles Deleuze (1978) where he contrasts a 'good encounter', exemplified by eating something pleasurable, with a 'bad encounter', exemplified by eating something poisonous: "For Deleuze the good encounter increases the capacity for action: we could describe the good encounter as the agreeable effects of agreement" (Ahmed, 2010: 211). For scholars working in the affirmative mode, such good encounters are purposefully privileged as generative sites and openings into new futures. Bad encounters, in contrast, are often understood as "black holes," blockages that close off possibility (Braidotti, 2006: 247). It is this association of the good encounter with generativity and openness and of the bad encounter with passivity and closure that draws Ahmed's critique. The point here is not to attack this 'affirmative turn' *tout court*, but to argue that bad encounters are not necessarily passive moments of closure: "we cannot know in advance what different affects will do to the body before we are affected in this or that way" (Ahmed, 2010: 215).

As an intervention in social theory and philosophy, revaluing the ‘bad encounter’ has important insights to offer to our understandings of sexual racism and empirical scholarship on encounters across difference. Building on Helen Wilson’s (2016) argument about the importance of understanding the multifaceted ways that encounters may be ‘meaningful’, I examine the bad encounter of sexual racism in order to show how participants “learn from blockages” (Ahmed, 2010: 215) and develop response—both quotidian and more organized—to encounters with racializing dispositions and practices.

Sex as Site of Encounter

Researchers have examined encounters across difference in a number of different spatial contexts, including urban public spaces like city streets (Wise, 2005) and public transport (Lobo, 2014a; Wilson, 2011), as well as schools (Hemming, 2011; Wilson, 2014), university campuses (Andersson, et al., 2012), places of worship (Ehrkamp and Nagel, 2012), within families (Valentine et al., 2015), in homes (Schuermans, 2013), and in organized activities and community projects (Matejskova and Leitner, 2011; Mayblin et al., 2016; Wilson, 2013). Further, literatures on spaces of encounter have expanded beyond a focus on encounters across ethnic, racial, and/or cultural difference in diverse urban spaces of migrant settlement to a broader range of differences, including work on cross-class encounters (Lawson and Elwood, 2014), calls for more intersectional approaches to encounter (Valentine and Waite, 2012), and accounts of encounter beyond the dynamics of ‘Western’ cities that highlight the necessarily situated character of encounters and their study (Ye, 2016a).

However, there remains a need to better understand dating and sex as significant moments of encounter across racialized difference in context of urban diversity and migrant

settlement. To be sure, there has been important research both on encounters across sexual identities—as in Andersson and colleagues’ (2011) examination of encounter between straight-identified members of a New York City church and the city’s LGBT communities (also see Gorman-Murray and Waitt, 2009)—and, more generally, a productive proliferation of scholarship on the intersection of sexuality and race in and beyond geography (for a review, see Brown, 2012), but dating and sex as sites of encounter remain relatively underexplored. Thus, this article extends Noble and Tabar’s (2014) argument about the importance of sex in the process of migrant settlement by highlighting the particular experiences of queer migrants in Sydney and what can be learned about the aesthetic coordinates of citizenship through participants’ experiences with dating and sex in Sydney.

That these experiences are racialized and inflected with hegemonic masculinities is not surprising. Gilbert Caluya (2006; 2008) and Senthoran Raj (2011) have both offered powerful ethnographic accounts of sexual racism in Australia that have explored how racialized sexual preferences and discriminatory actions during potential encounters have shaped queer scene and online spaces, and the widespread presence of racially discriminatory language on dating sites and hook-up apps has also been well documented (Callander, et al, 2012; Riggs, 2013). Discussions of sexual racism in Sydney are necessarily bound up with political and economic shifts in Australia’s relationship to ‘Asia’ (Ang, 2016) and racializing orderings through which white settler Australia experienced itself in opposition to their proximate neighbors (Hage, 1998). For queer Asian men in Sydney, these dynamics intersect with a partial and uneven valorization of otherwise marginalized queer identities (Nicoll, 2002) and the continuing power of normative masculinities to shape identities and organize encounters across difference (Berg and Longhurst, 2003; Gorman-Murray and Hopkins, 2014; Hopkins and Noble, 2009). This is important not just because sexual racism is itself

pernicious and an obstacle to belonging and participation—although it is—but also because these coordinates have broader effects that shape intersecting processes of racialization, migrant settlement, and urban life.

The Aesthetic Politics of Encounter

Encounters have attracted attention, in part, because of their potential to exceed or complicate the coordinates of dominant discourses. So for example, in the contexts of public debates dominated by pronouncements of the failures of multiculturalism, attention to everyday multicultural conviviality provided a more complex counterpoint. (Nagel and Hopkins, 2010; Wise and Velayutham, 2009). Moments of encounter have also been investigated by scholars interested in the affective and material nature of sociality (Brown, 2008; Nayak, 2010). In this vein, researchers have approached encounters as sites of emergence through which, for example, race—rather than only being a set of symbolic coordinates shaping encounters in advance—actually emerge out of the encounter itself (Lim, 2010; Saldanha, 2007; Slocum, 2008). This opens up attention to race as an assemblage that exceeds the a priori coordinates of skin color or cultural racism, attends to multiple materialities of encounter, and highlights the non- or pre-conscious operations of differentiation (Swanton, 2010a). Read in this way, encounters are events through which people, spaces, categories, and materials stick together in particular ways.

Despite this productive emphasis on the moment of encounter itself, it is also important to note that encounters have a history (Swanton, 2010b) and a future, in the sense of orienting action and movement toward future encounters (Ahmed, 2006). In exploring the openings of the ‘bad encounter’, my approach is indebted to Valentine and Sadgrove’s (2012, 2014) exploration of how participants narrate and explain encounter after the fact.

However, rather than focusing on individuals' moral dispositions toward difference, as they do, I develop an account of how participants made sense of experiences of sexual racism that locates the question of encounters across difference within an explicitly *political* framework that understands the city as an unevenly shared space—simultaneously riven and ordered by the material and normative force of race, sexuality, and gender. This approach builds on the work that has sought to carve out an aesthetic account of politics, where the aesthetic reference is extended from questions of beauty or taste to broader questions of sense and space (Dikeç, 2015; Kallio, 2012; Marshall, 2013).

Productive work has explored how sensations experienced within queer spaces “produce embodied emotions of attraction, disgust, arousal, identity, (dis)connectivity and belonging” (Taylor and Falconer, 2015: 45; Nash and Bain, 2007; Waitt and Johnson, 2013) and recent work has highlighted the sensuousness of migrant settlement (Lobo, 2014b; Wise, 2010). These aesthetic forms and modes of relation give space to encounters, even as encounters themselves can shift, disrupt, or reinforce these coordinates. Here, Jacques Rancière's (2010: 36) writing on the ‘partition of the sensible’ offers a suggestive way to understand how encounters take place within an aesthetic ordering that shapes “the relationship between a shared common and the distribution of exclusive parts... in sensory experience”. What I take from Rancière here, is less his conception of politics per se, and more his focus on the dual nature of this partitioning (*partage*) involving both the sharing of space and its division—partitioning and partaking in (cf. Panagia 2010).

The simultaneously shared and divided spaces of the city represent an important political site, and sex is one important aspect of the unevenly shared spaces of urban life. To say that space is shared is not to subscribe to a communitarian imagining of commonality nor to endorse a falsely universalized public sphere, but instead to emphasize how the co-

presence of plural projects and actors together in the city necessitate politics (cf. Ferguson, 2012; Ruez, 2016). Further, as John Paul Catungal (2013) reminds us, underneath the promise of the ‘global-multicultural city’ are exclusions and violence that create an uneven geography of belonging and citizenship (also see Manalansan 2005). These uneven geographies can be understood, following Ahmed (2006), to orient people and spaces in certain ways and to produce particular kinds of trajectories and, thus, particular kinds of encounter in the city. It is my hope that attending to the aesthetic orderings of sexual racism can help to nudge literatures on urban diversity and encounter toward a more explicitly political engagement with these uneven geographies and differentiated trajectories.

Study and Methods

This article emerges from a broader research project examining the mutually constitutive relationship of sexuality and race in the urban politics of migration and citizenship in Sydney, where over 32% of Greater Sydney’s population were born outside Australia, and nearly 57% of population report having one or more parents who were born outside Australia (ABS, 2011). This project draws on a set of interviews with 43 queer migrants and Australian-born adult children of migrants—conducted between 2012-2013.²⁶ While eschewing a generational model of immigrant incorporation, examining the experiences of those who themselves had migrated (some recently, some long settled) as well

²⁶ This included participants from Albania, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Fiji, Malaysia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam, as well as Australian-born individuals. An initial group of participants were recruited from making contact with a variety of queer, multicultural, and queer ethnic organizations in Sydney. Using a process of snowballing (cf. Browne, 2005) from those initial participants expanded the sample to include a broader range of participants—including those not already involved with such organizations.

as those whose parents had migrated allowed an exploration of these longer-term politics of migration and citizenship (cf. Kobayashi and Preston, 2014). These were semi-structured conversations that explored participants' histories of migration and settlement, the spatialities of everyday life in Sydney, and relationships with queer and ethnic communities in the city. Focusing on a subset of these interviews, this article examines the accounts that emerged from interviews with queer Asian men in order to better understand the complicated intersection of sexuality, race, and gender at work in discussions of sexual racism.²⁷ In-depth interviews provided the opportunity—following Valentine and Sadgrove (2012, 2014)—to examine how participants narrate these encounters in the sense of integrating them into their accounts of themselves, their relationships, and their political projects. During the course of my fieldwork, I also collected and analyzed an archive of materials related to the politics of race and sexuality in Sydney—some of which supplements the analysis here. Interview transcripts and other materials were analyzed through a formal process of coding and theme-building to help identify categories and patterns in the data (Cope, 2010), and I approached this analysis with both a phenomenological attention to the textures of everyday life in participants' accounts (Hitchings, 2012) and an attention to participants' statements as discourse (Secor, 2010).

Even as this article intervenes in discussions about migration-led diversification of city spaces and the social and political possibilities that ensue, it is important to note that, for

²⁷ My decision to focus on the experiences and narratives of queer Asian men in this article emerges from both my analysis of the interviews, which showed particular patterns in how queer Asian men were discussing sexual racism in comparison to others (i.e., queer Asian men were, on the whole, much more likely to raise the issue of 'sexual racism' and to discuss their encounters with others' racialized sexual 'preferences' as being particularly damaging to their sense of belonging in Sydney), as well as my encounter with a variety of political projects that engaged with the problem of sexual racism as it affected queer Asian men specifically.

those who have at one point migrated from one country to another, as well as those born in Australia whose parents had migrated—being understood as a ‘migrant’ is not necessarily always the most salient feature of their identities (Rogaly, 2015), and, in a racializing context, the label of migrant may cling more resolutely to some than others and may work to place one’s citizenship or belonging in question. Thus, this article follows recent efforts to recontextualize migration—away from seeing migrants as disruptions to otherwise static politics and toward a broader understanding of society as constituted through and by a variety of movements and mobilities (Hall, 2015). Such an approach is necessary for understanding how “the everyday translocal and inter-cultural experience of Asian-heritage migrants in Australia—which constitutes Australian social life as translocal and inter-cultural—underlines the fallacy of conceiving of ‘Asia’ and ‘Australia’ as radically separate or separable entities” (Martin, et al., 2015: 6). In the analysis that follows, I employ the categories, such as Asian, or, for that matter, queer or gay, that have shaped aesthetic orderings in Australia and, more importantly, that participants used as self-identifiers (cf. Wong, 2015). However, rather than demographic descriptions, these terms and their sense should be seen as the contingent and provisional outcome of relational processes of becoming such as those described by participants as they recount encounters (Slocum, 2008).

Making Sense of Sexual Racism

Participants’ accounts of sexual racism echoed many of the kinds of experiences that have been examined elsewhere (Ayers, 1999; Caluya 2006; Raj, 2011; Ridge et al., 1999). They noted encounters with racist language on hook-up apps like Grindr, as well as micro and macro aggressions when on dates, when attempting to flirt in a bar, or when seeking a partner in a sex-on-premises venue. These were encounters—either by virtue of their

exceptionality in comparison to other experiences in Sydney or because of their persisting frequency and regularity—that participants frequently described as important to their sense of who they were, where they were at, and where they did or did not belong. They described these experiences as obstacles to particular desired encounters, as an affront to participants’ ‘self-image’, and as a barrier to inclusion within queer spaces. This article launches off from those concerns in order to develop a *political* analysis of what happens elsewhere and after these encounters with racializing dispositions and practices. Given the importance of sexuality to public life and the importance of sex to queer public cultures in particular, this particular manifestation of racialized devaluation raises important political questions about how spaces of the city are shared and divided, and it points to the intimate, embodied, and sensuous politics of urban encounters. To tease out these questions, I turn to a story shared by Mark, a gay Malaysian Australian man in his late twenties:

I was at a foam party, and I was making out with some guy and having a good time and his friends had been looking for him and, they came back to find him and... they basically looked at me—so, they found him and saw that he was making out with someone and, then they decided to make quite horrible racist remarks about me—to the effect of ‘why on earth are you making out with him, you know...the Asian guy... couldn’t you do better?’

What is described as a pleasurable encounter, “making out... and having a good time,” is interrupted in a way that shocks and, ultimately, shames with the overheard questions:

“couldn’t you do better?”:

I was so shocked, and he actually didn’t say anything—now, I don’t know how drunk or whatever he was but he didn’t say anything— and I was just so shocked. I just pulled away, and I disappeared into the back of the crowd, and I actually felt, apart from the shock, I actually felt ashamed to be there at that point, and I was like, my God, I can’t believe someone actually said that, and I actually feel horrible to the point where I need to hide now. And I actually felt shame at that point, and it was just the most strange and yucky feeling...so that was pretty shocking to me and painful and hurtful.

That sense of shock and shame at experiences of sexual racism was shared in a number of interviews, and it has been pointed to Caluya's (2006) work on sexual racism. Mark would further explain the 'shock' he experienced in relation to having "never felt targeted as an Asian... ever... until I went to a gay pub." This clashed with the expectations he would articulate of gay spaces where individuals, by virtue of their disadvantaged place in normative hierarchies of sexuality, ought to have been more attuned to the damaging effects of such exclusions and devaluations:

I thought this was a gay club and, you know, if anyone should understand discrimination, it should be here... evidently no.

It should be noted that these are queer spaces that were also not infrequently discussed as havens from heteronormative expectations elsewhere in their lives, and, for some, the ability to openly access such spaces figured as an important element in their decisions to migrate to or remain in Australia. Precisely for those reasons, the disappointment and exclusions occasioned by sexual racism may be all the more keenly felt.

Mark's story is exemplary, in many ways, of the kinds of experiences that participants described. More broadly, in the context of dominant forms of gay racialized masculinity, many of those interviewed expressed feeling disadvantaged in the erotic economies of queer spaces. Marvin, a student in his early twenties from the Philippines, discussed his take on the problem:

There are so many stereotypes. The way they see Asians as feminine, passive, always a bottom. It can really limit you. Even if you're those things... People don't see you outside of those things. So they either like you or they don't, you know, but not for who you really are.

Not being seen for "who you really are", was a not uncommon trope for describing the damage of encounters with sexual racism. Others discussed the related problem of being 'fetishized' as Asian in similar terms, where, even to the extent that one identified as

feminine or a bottom and where those qualities were sought out by others, there was a danger of being reduced to those qualities and being understood only through those qualities.

Reflecting on the aesthetic orderings that shaped these encounters, a Malaysian Australian man in his 50s who migrated to Australia in the early 1980s, Jun described what he came to understand as a hierarchy of attractiveness tied to one's position in broader social hierarchies:

I think another mark of status is whether you come from that country that's progressive in terms of its gay politics. So you come from a country where the gay politics are not progressive then your status is lower.

This implies the existence of a *sensed* geography of 'progressiveness' in relation to sexuality that is necessarily implicated in a racializing aesthetic order. This racializing order, of course, makes unnecessary much substantive knowledge about the state of 'gay politics' in a variety of countries that would seem to be presumed by that statement, and it also renders superfluous concrete knowledge of a particular person's country of origin or migration trajectory. Instead this is a sensed status that emerged out of a complicated and spatially contingent collision of categories, subjectivities, and materialities.

The cumulative effects of bumping up against these orderings over time could be significant, as Jun discussed:

I had been traumatized by it you know like over a period of 30 years. It's a slow sort of trauma, like you get rejected bit-by-bit you know, month after month, slowly and then you try to reconcile that, and you can never do that. And then, yeah I find I built a kind of resistance to it. But I'm aware that, for example, out in the gay scene, there will be some people who will never be interested in me because they are very white, and they're very into whatever they are into... I think it's very traumatizing.... And we're not talking like just a few people. It's like most of the people.

Here, rather than the shock and surprise of Mark's account, we see a 'bit-by-bit' rejection described by someone who had migrated to Sydney as a young adult in the early 1980s. He

was not the only interviewee to invoke a language of trauma to describe experiences with sexual racism, and that these experiences are detrimental, and, for some, exceedingly so, was borne out time and again in participants' narratives.

Of course, encounters necessarily take on spatially contingent forms (Leitner, 2012) and the contingencies of sharing space with others can lead to unexpected outcomes (Caluya, 2008). Participants explained important differences in spatial contexts where, for example, the distanced and partially anonymous spaces of hook-up apps seemed to facilitate particularly open forms of racism or, where, in the face-to-face intimacy of sex-on-premises venues, sensed sexual attraction seemed to overpower social conventions of conviviality that marked more diverse-use leisure spaces. Some interviewees described scene spaces on Oxford Street, the center of Sydney's traditional 'gayborhood', as suspect in fairly general terms, while others noted a complicated geography of welcoming and unwelcoming spaces there (cf. Waitt, 2006). For some interviewees, these spaces were seen as sites of exclusion or violence. Participants also identified particular bars that were known as places where gay Asian men and their admirers were likely to congregate. While some described them as comfortable or pleasurable sites, others discussed them as places to avoid—to avoid being fetishized or, for some, to assert their difference from other gay Asian men. Some also expressed feeling more comfortable in queer-friendly, but mixed venues—often associated with Sydney's inner west. Others tended not to 'go out' in inner Sydney at all, and their social and sexual lives revolved around parts of Sydney's western suburbs. These complicated geographies are necessarily bound up with the mobile and shifting urban geographies of queer life in Sydney more broadly (Gorman-Murray and Nash, 2014). At the same time, I think we can also see something like what Dai Kojima (2014) identifies as the *basue* (outskirts) space-making practices of queer Asian diasporic communities in Vancouver,

where queer Asian men's presence on the outskirts of mainstream queer public culture represents, simultaneously, the effects of marginalization and tactical responses to that marginalization. Though participants detailed a range of issues that contributed to a sense of exclusion—from normalizing discourses of 'coming out', which some saw as a product of 'Western' culture and insufficiently attuned to the complexities of their lives, to economic constraints that limited some participants' access to scene spaces to underrepresentation in queer community organizations—sexual racism was a frequently cited as a cause for a felt sense of marginalization and exclusion, and it motivated a variety of responses with complicated relationships to the centers and margins of queer urban life in Sydney.

Encountering Politics

Thus, the bad encounter with racializing dispositions and practices is not the end of the story. Sara Ahmed encourages us to see such encounters as, at least potentially, an opening for politics rather than something to be read over in search of a better encounter, and participants' responses to experiences of sexual racism bear this out. Similarly, Gilbert Caluya (2006) argues for the importance of attending to the productivity of the shame produced through sexual racism. Specifically, Caluya is interested in understanding what the shame of sexual racism produces at the level of subjectivity. Extending Caluya's point, in the following section, I trace out some of the ways—both quotidian and more organized—that participants responded politically to experiences of sexual racism. The point is not that these bad encounters necessarily produce a political response in some kind of automatic way, nor that encounters need be read in a prescriptive manner (cf. Ye, 2016b) but rather, to show how the bad encounter of sexual racism *can* lead to new openings and orientations.

Mark, whose experience at the foam party opened the previous section, credits that incident with heightening his awareness of anti-Asian sentiment in scene spaces:

So then I began to pick up--going to other clubs with other friends and, I pick up other things--people walk into a club and, give remarks just in general, like oh my gosh, "why did you bring me here," you know, "there's so many Asians, can we go somewhere else?" That was... I had never heard that before. So I guess, my eyes did open a little bit and made me be a bit more street savvy I guess, which was disappointing.

In response to the experience, Mark describes how his "eyes did open a little bit", and he began to notice times and places where the racializing orders shaping queer life were manifested. The disappointment mentioned here, I would suggest, registers as a lack of happiness with these orders and a refusal to accept their coordinates. Mark continues:

At the same time, I met some of the most wonderful people. You know, I think I, like any community, I've met the best of the crowd and maybe—hopefully not—the worst, and, dare I say some of them are my friends; you know like they might say something inadvertently and they don't see me as Asian particularly but, they might say something and, then I'd be like "really did you just say that? I can't believe you just said", and I picked them up on it.

Here, we see the encounter with sexual racism at the foam party, necessarily embodied and affective, that is assigned particular kinds of meaning and becomes the basis for noticing different things, acting in different ways, and bringing others around to noticing and responding differently to racialized orderings.

This process of making sense often led beyond the immediate context of the encounter itself. Here, John, another gay man who migrated to Sydney from Malaysia, points to media representations that shaped the aesthetic coordinates that gave form to the kinds of encounters that participants described:

I place a lot of blame on the gay media here.... Not so much the *SSO* [*Sydney Star Observer*] because they're more of the newspaper, but with *SX*, I do. They're the one that always have a hot model on the cover. They're always Caucasian... We asked him [the editor], why don't you ever have Asian models, and not just Asian models, but black models, or whatever. He said it just didn't sell. People wouldn't pick it up.

And to a certain extent, ok, I can see that, but I just feel that you are forming public opinion and therefore you have a responsibility to do something about it.

Participants articulated critiques of the local gay media, but also of national and international media—both gay and mainstream. They discussed the relative invisibility of gay Asian men and of the limited or ‘stereotypical’ visibility of Asian people more broadly (cf. Eng, 2001; Fung, 1991). Implicitly or explicitly, a number of participants articulated political claims that media outlets and gatekeepers “have a responsibility to do something about” problematic or absent representations that contribute to creating an aesthetic order that devalues gay Asian men.

A number of people I interviewed were involved in projects seeking to challenge sexual racism, particularly in forms of online writing and social media work. A project called Sexual Racism Sux, led by Andy Quan and Tim Mansfield, is one particularly important example, and its web and social media presence should be credited with helping to popularize the term sexual racism in Australia. Conceived as an opportunity to confront “racist behaviour and speech in gay men”, it encouraged people “to reflect on patterns in your own behaviour and what that might reveal to you about what’s going on inside you”, and start conversations about the impact of openly expressed racial preferences and racist language on gay dating profiles (Sexual Racism Sux, nd):

Sexual behaviour is no more justified a place for racial prejudice than any other area of life. We don’t consider it racist to not want to sleep with men of specific races. Boring, perhaps, but not racist. But people can express that preference in racist and unwelcoming ways. That’s what we’re against (Sexual Racism Sux, nd).

As Quan suggests in a published interview: “We weren’t focused on getting rid of all sexual racism in the world. We really just focused on: ‘How can we get the gay internet sites... to be less racist and more open?’” (Woo, 2008: np) Much of the focus on challenging sexual racism has shifted to social media and to the racism visible on hook-up apps like Grindr, but

I cite Quan's quote to highlight the modest but important goals of creating a "less racist and more open" online dating environment.

Another project, centered on creating a glossy magazine called *A-Men*, takes the response to sexual racism in a slightly different direction. Published by the AIDS Council of New South Wales and edited by Min Fu Teh (2012), the magazine features interviews, essays, poetry, and photographs of gay Asian men. Beyond the stance of encouraging people to reflect on their preferences and change their public expression that characterized Sexual Racism Sux, *A-Men* is, among other things, meant more directly as an intervention into the aesthetic orders that devalue gay Asian men. Specifically, the photographs, featuring shirtless, 'active', 'gym-toned' bodies were intended to show that gay Asian men can be 'masculine' and attractive in the same ways as anybody else.²⁸ This was meant, at least in part, as a corrective to the problem of invisibility noted earlier, and as a way for gay Asian men to be able to see themselves reflected back positively within the confines of existing aesthetic orders. Those involved with the project also hoped that the images would catch potential readers' attention to a broader range of issues, including sexual racism, but also discussions of 'coming out', identity and migration, and sexual health. Caluya (2006) and Nguyen Tan Hoang (2014), among others, have raised important questions about the viability of a 'politics of visibility' seeking to reassert a masculine Asian identity within the confines of existing aesthetic orders, and participants in the project themselves raised some similar issues, including skepticism about whether the images would have the desired impact and concerns that they could reinforce problematic forms of masculinity. At the same time, the A-men project can also be understood as part and parcel of a "racialized body aesthetics"

²⁸ The *A-Men* magazine is available online, and I would encourage readers to examine the images there (see Fu Teh 2012).

among gay Asian men in Australia analyzed by Audrey Yue (2008: 237-238) that “does not simply valorize identity politics; it problematizes how individual and group identities are produced by the dominant and regulatory processes of homogenization, exoticization and incorporation.” There are, of course, strategic and political debates about any project, but my point here is to illustrate the unsurprising but also underexamined point, at least in the encounter literatures, that political projects can and do emerge in response to the ‘bad encounter’.

These political projects represent one way that that impact of encounters with racializing dispositions and practices extends beyond the moment of encounter itself in the way that they reorient participants’ attention, trajectories, and projects. This reorientation can itself lead to other encounters. As projects like A-Men and Sexual Racism Sux have brought attention to the problem of sexual racism, this has provoked responses from those who object to problematizing racialized sexual preferences. A frequent objection to the critique of sexual racism is that attraction is something simultaneously personal and immutable. As an exemplar of the kind of response engendered by the naming and critique of sexual racism, Jesse Matheson (2012) penned an opinion piece headlined, ‘I’m a sexual racist’ in the *Sydney Star Observer*. Defending racialized sexual preferences and those who hold them, he writes:

I need to ask though, is that so bad? I mean, I won’t have sex with women because I’m gay, but does that make me sexist or a misogynist? It’s fair to say that those who put “NO AZNS” on their Grindr profile are being quite antagonistic, insensitive, and should maybe find more articulate ways to express their sexual preferences, but sexual preference of any way, shape or form, is something quite personal (Matheson, 2012: np).

Matheson's explanation seeks to re-naturalize sexual racism against its politicization by projects like Sexual Racism Sux.²⁹ Specifically, the invocation of the personal here works to remove sexual racism from the realm of shared political engagement. According to this logic, one is simply naturally attracted to whom one is attracted to, and "creating this very negative idea of sexual racism... infringes on our ability to choose who we sleep with without having to feel bad about it" (Matheson, 2012: np). Here we have a demand for a 'happier' encounter, hearkening to long-struggled-for freedoms for queer people, that situates critics of sexual racism as 'killjoys' (Ahmed, 2010). This may be one area where sexual racism may differ from some of the other kinds of prejudice that the encounter literatures have addressed. To put it a different way, my point is that perhaps these different kinds of prejudice are *not* actually so different, but that the prejudices of sexual racism may *feel* differently by virtue of being associated with what is variously understood as the personal, private, or inherent realm of sexual desire. Yet, orientations and attractions are mediated by particular aesthetic orders, and these forms naturalize particular patterns of perception that devalue some as potential sexual partners (and in a host other ways). It is precisely the aesthetic orderings that underlie those 'personal preferences' that demand our attention, and, at their best, projects like Sexual Racism Sex and A-Men were able to identify and respond to those orderings.

²⁹ Matheson has since distanced himself from the argument offered in his article. I use it, not with the intention of indicting Matheson personally, but because it is an exemplary articulation of the logics that one encounters when challenging the orderings producing sexual racism.

Following the Bad Encounter

This article's focus on sexual racism was intended to allow an exploration of the aesthetic geographies of sexuality, race, and gender and to facilitate an intervention in the literatures on urban encounters that have tended to overlook the openness of the 'bad encounter'. It is not meant to suggest that all participants' experiences of sex or dating were uniformly 'bad', nor is it a critique of affirmative modes of reading, except in the very specific sense outlined by Ahmed. Instead, it has been an attempt to follow the bad encounter of sexual racism where it leads—to shame and exclusion, but also to quotidian responses and organized political projects. Given the central place of sex in a racializing queer public culture, this has particular implications for the queer Asian men I spoke with, but the point raises broader questions about sexual citizenship for others who find themselves devalued in the erotic economies of race (cf. Holland, 2012).

As such, this article makes a case for the benefits of foregrounding sexuality in discussions of urban diversity and encounters across race and cultural difference. Though questions around sexual *identity* remain important, the point about sexuality is a broader one, incorporating both sex itself and its *politics* at the intersection of gender, race, and class (Cohen, 1997; Oswin, 2010). Here, scholarship like Martin Manalansan's (2005) work on the neoliberal politics of queer displacement in New York City, Jin Haritaworn's (2015) exploration of the complicated intersection of racializing xenophobia and queer inclusion in Berlin, Bobby Benedicto's (2014) examination of the classed nature of gay life in Manila, and John Paul Catungal's (2013) focus on the forms of racialized violence endemic to global-multicultural Toronto, implicitly or explicitly, presents a challenge for work on encounter to more fully engage with the unevenness that characterizes the shared spaces of diverse urban life.

Staying with the 'bad encounter' and examining where it leads offers, simultaneously, a critique of the aesthetic orderings shaping encounters and a way to hold out hope for different kinds of encounters, different kinds of cities, and different kinds of worlds. This is not a hope predicated on figuring out how to facilitate particular kinds of good encounters, but instead on the hope implicit in participants' refusal to accept the world as it is (Muñoz, 2009) and grounded in the possibilities and dangers of politics in an unevenly shared world. The quotidian and organized responses to sexual racism recounted by participants here do not overturn dominant orderings in any complete or once-and-for-all way, but they are partial and provisional responses to the bad encounter that deserve our attention. Specifically, they point beyond a focus on multicultural conviviality or on the challenge of living with difference and toward highlighting the differentiated and differentiating effects of encounters across the uneven geographies of urban life and the always provisional possibility of politics in response.

4. QUEER MIGRATIONS AND THE INTIMATELY POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF INTEGRATION

Abstract:

This article examines the publically intimate nature of debates around migrant integration in the context of a liberal-colonial common sense in which racialized migrant groups are understood to be constrained by their culture, family, or religion in ways that members of dominant groups in liberal-settler receiving societies frequently are not. Drawing on interviews with 43 queer migrants living in Sydney, I show how these dynamics shape queer migrants' experiences of settlement and reception, and I contribute to ongoing work seeking to politicize integration research by showing how the terms of societal membership for queer migrants are informed by this liberal-colonial common sense and by examining how participants navigate their lives in, against, and around these normative orderings. Specifically, I analyze participants' narratives of 'coming out', 'dating while Muslim', and 'making a home', and, in dialogue with the feminist geopolitics literatures, I highlight the complicated and ambivalent politics through which migrants make a place for themselves in Sydney, which can entail assertions of 'privacy' as much as more immediately recognizable forms of 'public' politics.

Anxieties around migration continue to mark liberal-settler societies like the United States and Australia. States experiment with ever more elaborate and fraught mechanisms for controlling borders and excluding some migrants deemed dangerous or ‘irregular’ (Lloyd et al., 2012; Mountz, 2010; Mountz and Hiemstra, 2014). Once within the receiving society, many migrants still face marginalization and exclusion, particularly insofar as they are racialized in relation to dominant groups (Caluya, 2011; Dunn et al., 2007). All of that happens, even as powerful economic and political actors often celebrate the benefits of skilled-worker migration and a more amorphous understanding of the value of diversity (Mitchell, 2004; Walsh, 2014). In such contexts, the perceived extent of a migrant groups’ integration into the receiving society often becomes a fraught sight of politics. In Australia, concerns with integration have, as of late, tended to appear through the language of social cohesion (Ho, 2013). These concerns with social cohesion may display an ambivalent concern for migrants’ well-being or a concern to maintain the relatively smooth working of an economy dependent on migration. Just as often, they are, less ambivalently and more breathlessly framed in terms of the potential threat of ‘unassimilated’ communities to a national body politic or perceived crisis of multiculturalism as a national project (Lentin and Titley, 2012). In response, others, including migrants themselves, may assert the successful integration of migrants (Nagel and Staeheli, 2005) or offer critiques of the implications of assimilationist demands that tend to erase the complicated geographies that motivate migration and place responsibility for integration on migrants while ignoring the reception that migrants receive (Anthias, 2013; Ehrkamp, 2006).

Across liberal-settler societies, sexual norms have been increasingly recognized as an important part of these debates where, for example, the traditional ‘family values’ of some migrant groups are opportunistically celebrated by some, even as they are, at other times,

used as evidence of a group's incompatibility with a receiving society's 'modern' norms (Honig, 2001; Puar, 2007) or where imagined notions of 'Muslim values' around gender and sexuality are contrasted with supposed 'liberal values' in public debate about Muslim migrants' integration (Butler, 2008; Ehrkamp, 2010; Ho, 2007; Razack, 2008). The conservative editorial board of *The Australian*, for example, recently called on the newspaper's readers to "face the truth on radical Islam" and criticized a number of "prominent Muslim leaders" for their "disdain for homosexuals" (*Australian* editorial board, 2016: np). This kind of thinking can filter into integration scholarship in some problematic ways, for example with scholars seeking to measure migrant groups' attitudes toward homosexuality as a proxy for the extent of their 'acculturation' (e.g., Röder, 2014). Among a number of other issues, such discourses tend to occlude the experiences of queer migrants (Abraham, 2009). In response to this and to a broader elision of queer migrants in the integration literatures, I draw on interviews with 43 queer migrants living in Sydney, Australia in order to examine some of the particular experiences of queer migrants vis-à-vis the implicitly 'straight' migrant of much integration discourse, but I also go further to develop a broader queer critique of integration discourse that draws on Elizabeth Povinelli's (2006) approach to the normative orderings of intimacy and genealogy in order to show how discussions of migrant integration remain bound up with a liberal-colonial imaginary that differentially locates capacities for individual autonomy and social constraint across the geographies of race, culture, and civilization.

In that context, this article argues for the value of a queer-political approach that does not refuse the problem of integration, but instead builds on scholarship that has sought to *politicize* research on migrant integration and 'assimilation' by critically examining 'societal understandings of sameness', rather than reproducing them in the literatures (Nagel, 2002;

2009), and approaching integration as the “active negotiation of asymmetrical power relationships that unfolds in the spaces of everyday life” (Nagel and Ehrkamp, 2016: 1055-56; also see Ehrkamp, 2006; Leitner, 2012; Nagel and Staeheli, 2005). As such I examine both how the normative orderings of sexuality, intimacy, and genealogy shape societal understandings of sameness and difference, as well as how queer migrants live in, against, and through these orderings in the everyday contexts of settlement and reception.

In what follows, I situate this project in relation to research on queer migrations, which, for reasons I will discuss, has tended to sidestep the question of integration and in relation to some of the broader integration literatures, which have, as I have already suggested, tended to ignore or elide the experiences of queer migrants. I then engage with Elizabeth Povinelli’s work on the normative governance of intimacy and genealogy in liberal-settler societies in order to raise questions about the imagined thickness of migrants’ connections to their families, cultures, communities, or religions and to tease out some of the implications that follow from imagining migrants as being more constrained than dominant members of the receiving society by genealogy. Then after a brief discussion of methods and context, I turn to the experiences and narratives of queer migrants living in Sydney and the practices through which they make a place for themselves in the intimate and public worlds in which they find themselves. Focusing on migrants’ narratives around coming out, ‘dating while Muslim’, and making a home in Sydney, I highlight both the effects of racialized orderings of intimacy and genealogy on settlement and reception experiences and highlight the everyday geopolitics of publicity and privacy through which migrants make places for themselves in Sydney.

Queer Migrations and the *Politics* of Integration

This article's focus on a queer-political approach to integration contributes to broader scholarly conversations around sexuality and migration generally (for reviews, see Mai and King, 2009; Yue, 2013), and it speaks specifically to scholarship on queer migration, which has tended to avoid integration as a problematic, and to the literatures on integration which have tended to occlude the experiences of queer migrants by approaching sexuality and intimacy in relatively circumscribed and heteronormative ways (although see Ocampo, 2014).³⁰ A proliferation of work on queer migrations has attended to the experiences of LGBTQ migrants at the intersection of race, gender, disability, and class and moved toward developing queer perspectives on migration more broadly (Cantú et al., 2009; Fassin and Salcedo, 2015; Luibhéid, 2002; 2004; 2008; Manalansan, 2006; Quero et al., 2014; Yue, 2008a; 2016). Here the focus has tended to be on the state production of borders and exclusions, including how sexual minority migrants have been excluded from access to formal status or citizenship (Luibhéid, 2002; Coleman, 2008), the political organizing of queer migrants in response to marginalization or exclusion (Chávez, 2013; Rouhani, 2016), and the diasporic or transnational politics of sexual and ethnic identities and communities (Manalansan, 20003; Rouhani, 2007).

The literatures on queer migrations are shaped by their co-emergence with broader 'transnational turns' in both queer and migration studies. For migration studies, this meant challenging simplistic, unidirectional assumptions about migration trajectories and paying increased attention to the relations that migrants maintain with 'sending' societies and

³⁰ I do not mean to assert that the queer migrations literatures have avoided concerns with migrant settlement and reception. They clearly have not. Manalansan (2003) and Decena (2011) are two particularly insightful works here. Yet, there has not been much work oriented around the question of integration, per se, for reasons which I will discuss.

diasporic communities (Datta, 2013; Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Ong, 1999; Vertovec, 2004). For queer studies, this meant critical engagement with ‘the global gay’, as minoritized sexual identities enter in the logics of globalization or empire (Altman, 2002; Benedicto, 2014; Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan, 2002; Oswin, 2007; Puar, 2007), an increased attention to the experiences of ‘Non-western’ queers whose experiences and identities may not be best approached through ‘Western’ categories (Boellstorff, 2007; Jackson, 2000; Kulpa and Mizielinska, 2012), and the increasing centrality of diasporic and transnational relations and identifications, more generally, to queer subjectivities and communities (Eng et al., 2005; Grewal and Kaplan, 2001; Gopinath, 2005; Povinelli and Chauncey, 1999). Perhaps because of the centrality of the global, transnational, and diasporic, integration has been less central to queer migration research agendas. There are also exceptionally good reasons to resist discourses about ‘integration’ or ‘assimilation’ as they are mobilized in public debates and as they are then overtly, or more subtly, reinforced in much of the research literature. Such discourses frequently reproduce racializing categories and frameworks (Anthias, 2013; Jung, 2009), reinforce problematic ‘host/guest’ understandings of migration that elide histories of colonialism (Anderson and Taylor, 2005), and place the locus of responsibility for integration onto migrant communities themselves (Ehrkamp, 2006).

Even as the problematic of integration is deemphasized in queer migration work, the broad body of work on integration, even where it touches on sexuality or intimacy, has tended to elide the experiences of queer migrants. For example, attention to partner relationships, as an element or measure of migrant integration at a societal level has a long history (Alba and Foner, 2015; Gordon, 1964; Khoo, 2011; Price and Zubrzycki, 1962), but this has frequently been limited to an examination of marriage and, particularly, to rates of intermarriage—where intermarriage becomes a proxy for how integrated a migrant group is

in the intimate social networks of the receiving society (Qian and Lichter, 2007; Rodríguez-García, 2015). For my project, the focus on *intermarriage* is both politically and empirically problematic in the context of societies where queer migrants' access to marriage has been or remains limited and where lives and households are, more and more, organized outside of marriage in any case.

Work on household location and partnering in the 'spatial assimilation' literatures also offers some productive insights, even as the specific experiences of queer migrants tend to be elided, and the broader implications of these literatures to the politics of integration too often goes unquestioned. Reversing what had become the standard view—that there is a negative relationship between residential clustering and partnering with someone outside one's ethnic group at least in part because residential location is an important part of the 'opportunity structure' that shapes partner choices (Peach, 1980)—Ellis, Wright, and Parks (2006) analyze data on household composition to argue that partner choice can itself lead to different decisions and possibilities regarding residential location. They further argue that "scholarship on spatial assimilation should move away from the (literal and figurative) mapping and modeling of immigrant bodies in neighborhoods (which serves to amplify the notion of immigrant distinctiveness from others) toward approaches that foreground more the measurement of how the lives of newcomers intertwine with those of other nativities in their households" (Ellis et al., 2006: 17). While I am less interested here in the measurement of integration than in its politics, these literatures are productive for the *queer-political* approach I am developing in their explicit spatialization of the discussion of partnering and their attention to intimate dynamics with households.

Despite its obvious baggage, integration as a problematic, I argue, remains vital to understanding both migrants' everyday experiences of settlement and reception and the

broader politics of citizenship in receiving societies (cf. Nagel, 2009; Nagel and Ehrkamp, 2016). The queer-political approach I develop here is intended to accomplish two things: first, to bring into view aspects of the settlement and reception experiences of queer migrants that have tended to be overlooked—by both ‘straight’ integration scholarship’s relative lack engagement with queer experiences and the queer migrations literatures’ relative lack of engagement with integration—and second, to contribute to the broader set of efforts seeking to politicize understandings of integration by showing how societal understandings of sameness and difference are shaped by a liberal-colonial orderings of intimacy and genealogy, as well as how examining how queer migrants live in, against, and through these orderings in the everyday contexts of settlement and reception. This approach follows Caroline Nagel’s (2009) argument that integration researchers need to engage with societal terms of membership and the uneven power relations that shape migrants’ lives, or else they risk reinforcing those normative ideals in their work. (also see Ehrkamp, 2006). With that in mind, integration scholarship’s interest in the ‘intertwining’ of lives together in households is suggestive, so long as the politics of these intimate orderings are not lost. Thus, this article builds on the insight that integration “presents itself as a series of possibilities and predicaments rather than as a pre-determined trajectory” (Nagel and Ehrkamp, 2016: 1056), and suggest that these possibilities and predicaments cannot be fully grasped without attending to sexuality and the broader normative orderings of intimacy and genealogy that shape liberal imaginaries and migrants’ everyday experiences.

Liberal-Colonial Geographies of Intimacy and Genealogy

In order to better understand the intersection of sexuality and the politics of migrant integration, I build on Povinelli’s (2006: 13) “more robust model of ‘sexuality’” that attempts

to step behind given orderings and their critique in order to examine how identities, sexual or otherwise (and at this level, that distinction itself cannot be assumed) come to be. This allows an exploration of how intimacy, genealogy, sex, and a multiplicity of bodies get configured, patterned, and related in particular ways, and, ultimately how the imagination and governance of intimacy and genealogy constitute liberal political fields, civilizational discourses, and the identities (cultural, ethnic, racial, and sexual) that enact and inhabit them.

As Povinelli describes her project in *The Empire of Love*:

“This book is not interested in the study of identities so much as it is interested in the social matrix out of which these identities emerge, including: where and what sexuality is; where and when a person is a token of a type of social identity, for instance, an indigenous person or an “indigenous person”; which forms of intimate dependency count as freedom and which count as undue social constraint; which forms of intimacy involve moral judgment rather than mere choice; and which forms of intimate sociality distribute life and material goods and evoke moral certainty, if not moral sanctimoniousness (Povinelli, 2006: 3).

Povinelli develops her account in relation to her experiences living and working with indigenous people in Australia and radical queers in the United States, but it nevertheless names an unevenly shared political field and social matrix in which I and the queer migrants in Sydney that I spoke to are also enmeshed. One could for example, just as productively ask, when is a person a migrant or a “migrant”?

For Povinelli, this liberal field is simultaneously riven and enlivened by a tension between the ‘autological subject’ and ‘genealogical society’. This tension, between individual autonomy and social constraint is seemingly unresolvable within liberalism’s own terms. That is to say, however much liberal subjects may imagine themselves as self-authored, one inevitably runs up against the conditions of one’s production. Povinelli draws a number of implications from this basic tension, but the most important, for my purposes, is the way this tension is imaginatively displaced in the context of colonial geographies that

differentially distribute imagined capacities for autonomy and degrees of constraint. What, in the end, distinguishes the ‘West’, in the imagination of the West, if not that it is the site of individual autonomy and its elsewhere the site of cultural, communal, or religious constraint. Uma Narayan’s (1998) writing on the differential way dowry murders in India are understood as a cultural problem, while domestic violence murders in the United States are treated as an individual or a ‘structural’ problem illustrates this difference well, as does Saba Mahmood’s (2008) similar comparison between so called ‘honor killings’ imagined as a product of culture or religion and ‘crimes of passion’ imagined as the product of individual emotion. This, to me, suggests the need for a queer critique of integration to go beyond simply including LGBTQI migrants or even critiquing integration’s heteronormative assumptions about couples and families, and toward a broader engagement with understandings of racial, civilizational, and culture difference as they are produced through normative orderings and imaginings of sexuality, intimacy, and genealogy in a liberal field.

Some of this, of course, appears as the worst kind of ‘clashing civilization’ discourse (e.g. Inglehart and Norris, 2003), and some if it appears in integration debate and scholarship in subtler ways. Public debate about migration is awash in assumptions about racialized migrants’ sexual values and the particular thickness of migrants’ connections with families, religions, communities, and cultures. The ‘immigrant family’ is a powerful figure in the discourses of migration politics where, even in ostensibly pro-migrant narratives, the trope of the conservative ‘family values’ of immigrants are contrasted with the individualistic or ‘modern’ values of receiving societies in ways that are celebrated or pathologized depending on the context (Honig, 2001). Such narratives can be seen in discussions of Latino immigrants in the United States or Asian immigrants in Australia, to name just a few examples (Chavez, 2008; Millbank, 1997). These discussions can reach a peculiar and

particularly problematic apogee in discussions of Muslim migrants' supposed conservative attitudes around sexuality and gender (Ho, 2007; Razack, 2008).

Too often integration scholars have reproduced these liberal-colonial understandings of constraint and autonomy in their work. Indeed, some of this is deeply embedded the basic frames and language that much integration scholarship relies on, from the language of ethnicity, to the generational models of incorporation, to integration scholarship's persistent 'groupism' (Brubaker, 2004). While there is influential work on ethnicity, in sociology in particular, that explores how ethnicity is constructed and lived (e.g. Waters, 1990), ethnicity is too often deployed in relatively unthought ways that simply attach individuals to particular genealogies while leaving societal process of 'ethnicization' and their complicated relations to class, gender, race, and sexuality undertheorized (Chow, 2002). A similar critique can be leveled against generational understandings of integration, which track incorporation or 'assimilation' over the course of multiple generations—with the driving assumption being that in most cases, everything else being equal, communities, with some bumps along the way, will become more 'assimilated' through each subsequent generation (Alba and Nee, 2003). While the *politics* of integration certainly extend beyond a single generation (hence my inclusion of '2nd generation' participants in this project), I do think it is important to not use these generational models uncritically. Both of these examples, I think, relate to a broader problem that Brubaker has critiqued as the 'groupism' of much integration scholarship which tends to posit "bounded groups," such as ethnic groups or 'cultures', as fundamental units of analysis" (Brubaker, 2004: 2). While I basically agree with Brubaker's theoretical and methodological critique of 'groupism', as well as his clear insistence that a 'methodological individualism' is no better, my main concern here is to point to how this 'groupist' thinking tends to be applied unevenly in the liberal field, such that some are seen as individuals and

others are seen only as parts determined by a larger collectivity (cf. Phillips, 2007). To be clear, my point is not necessarily to indict all uses of ethnicity, generation, or of groups, but rather to suggest the importance of attending to how these frames are embedded in a broader imaginative geography of autonomy and constraint.

Brubaker's refusal of both groupism and individualism leads him to a more relational and processual account—one that is more attuned the everyday spaces of integration as lived. This aligns with more everyday accounts of multicultural engagement (Nagel and Hopkins, 2010; Noble and Poynting, 2010; Wise and Velayutham, 2014), as well vital work in feminist geopolitics in which attention to “the embodied and the everyday works to destabilize dichotomous and hierarchical arrangements and thereby to open up possibilities for political contestation and transformation” (Gökarıksel and Secor, 2016: 5; also see Dixon and Marston, 2011; Fluri, 2009; Pain, 2009). I follow that lead here and suggest that attention to the relationship between, on the one hand, the everyday intimacies of settlement and reception and, on the other, the liberal-colonial governance of constraint and autonomy, can open new perspectives on queer migrants' (and all migrants') experiences and their ambivalent and everyday geopolitics

Context and Data

Raising these questions from Sydney, and from Australia more broadly allows a particular focus on the differential inclusion of queer migrants. Australia has long been considered, along with New Zealand and the settler societies of North America, one the ‘classical immigrant-receiving countries’ (Koopmans, 2013: 147), and, today, approximately 25% of Australia's population was born outside of Australia. In the Greater Sydney area, which has been an important center for migration, just over 32% of the population was born

outside Australia (City of Sydney, 2015). Migration to Australia today—while still including important movements from United Kingdom and New Zealand—includes increasingly significant numbers of migrants from South, Southeast, and East Asia.³¹ There has also been a shift toward an increase in the proportion of permanent migrants entering through skilled worker programs and a parallel decrease in the proportion of migrants entering through the family-based pathways (Hawthorne, 2005; Walsh, 2011).³² Thus, Australia maintains a relatively large migration programs (relative to its size) that privileges those with educational credentials, professional work experiences, and English language skills, even as it continually goes to new and horrifying lengths to stop a comparatively small number of people who seek to reach Australia by boat to seek asylum (Mountz, 2010).³³

In that context, the legal and political landscape for queer migrants bears some mentioning. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that the majority of queer migrants entering Australia today, like migrants more broadly, do so as skilled workers. However, family-based migration and the humanitarian migration program

³¹ As of 2015, China, India, the Philippines, and Vietnam were, respectively, the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th largest countries of origin for Australia's foreign-born population following the United Kingdom and New Zealand (ABS, 2016).

³² During the 2014-2015 year, the bulk of Australia's permanent migrants enter through skilled worker pathways (127,774 individuals/63% of permanent migrants), and smaller but significant numbers enter through family-based pathways (61,085/30%) and the humanitarian migration program (13,756/7%) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016). Additionally, temporary migration—is an increasingly significant part of the picture of migration to Australia, and for many migrants such temporary migration later becomes the basis for permanent migration, although there is nothing automatic or guaranteed about converting from a temporary visa to a permanent status). This included 96,084 long-stay business entrants and 299,540 overseas students in 2014-2015 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016).

³³ The Australian government recorded a peak of 26,845 irregular maritime arrival refugee status determination requests during the 2012-2013 year, with all years before and since being significantly lower (Phillips, 2015).

are also significant. In particular, Australia has recognized being in a same-sex couple as a basis for migration since 1985, first through ministerial discretion, then through dependency and, later, de facto partner visa categories (Yue, 2008a). As of this writing, Australia does not recognize same-sex marriage, but most government policies, including in immigration, account for de facto partners on equal (or near equal) terms with married partners. In terms of partner visas, the remaining difference is that de facto partners must establish their relationship for one year, while married partners are automatically eligible to apply to sponsor a partner.

This article draws on interviews conducted with 43 lesbian, gay, or queer individuals living in Sydney who had either migrated to Australia themselves or were the adult children of those who had migrated. For those who had themselves migrated, participants entered Australia through a variety of pathways—there were instances of family-based and humanitarian migration, although the majority had initially entered Australia through employment- or education-based pathways. Some were long settled, and some were more recent arrivals. Participants ranged in age from 19-72 and had a diverse range of countries of origin.³⁴ This diversity of this sample was a purposeful attempt to reflect the diversity of Australia's migration streams—including historically important movements from Southern and Eastern Europe and increasingly significant migration from South, Southeast, and East Asia—and to permit an examination of the mutually constitutive force of race and sexuality in the experiences of queer people who are differentially racialized in relation to a normative Anglo-whiteness. Queer adult children of migrants were included in order to engage with

³⁴ This included individuals whose country of origin include: Albania, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Fiji, Malaysia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam, as well as Australian-born individuals

the longer-term politics of migrant incorporation, even as those individuals' identification with that migrant heritage varied (cf. Kobayashi and Preston, 2014). In the vast majority of cases, interviews were conducted individually, but in three cases, pairs of participants with a prior connection were interviewed together—including an interview with a couple in long-term relationship analyzed at some length later in this article. When I identify people according to certain racial, ethnic, and sexuality categories below, I am generally following from how participants' described themselves, and it is important to note that, at times, categories other than 'migrant' are more significant. Given the sample and contemporary racial formation in Australia, identities like Asian or Muslim, are part of the politics of migrant integration, even as being Asian or Muslim does not, in itself, mean that one is a migrant, and the perception of 'foreignness' that attaches to those categories in a racialized imaginary is itself part of the problem analyzed here. In what follows, I first examine participants' narratives around 'coming out' as queer in relation to societal understandings of sameness and difference and the liberal-colonial frames of autonomy and constraint just discussed. I then turn to several participants' discussion of 'dating while Muslim' and later of 'making a home' in Sydney that together highlight the ordinary politics through which queer migrants navigate the intimately public politics of integration and make a place for themselves in Sydney.

The Publicly Intimate Politics of 'Coming out'

Experiences of 'coming out' as queer were frequently a key element of the participants' narratives about their lives in Sydney. This is not surprising as geographers have shown how practices of coming out are tied, in a variety of ways, to migration and mobility (Gorman-Murray, 2009; Lewis, 2014). Of course, 'coming out' can mean a great many

different things, and it is something that is spatially and temporally variegated. One can be out here and not there, and one will likely come out again and again. Here, I follow participants in discussing it primarily in relation to ‘coming out’ either *to* family or *into* certain queer spaces and communities. While scholars studying integration have acknowledged that there is, in the context of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007), no single mainstream into which migrants integrate (although the conceit that there is remains an important factor in the politics of integration), the diversity of *sexual*, as opposed to racial/ethnic communities and identities into which migrants settle has received significantly less attention. Paying attention to queer migrants’ accounts of coming out underscores the importance of queer communities and spaces as sites of settlement and reception. More critically, the discourse of ‘coming out’, and coming out to families of origin in particular, highlights the fraught politics of integration as participants navigate the tensions of individual autonomy and social constraint in a liberal-colonial field.

For some participants, ‘coming out’ to family was avoided altogether, and to the extent that they may have been ‘out’ in some (and not other) contexts, this required work to maintain barriers between different parts of their lives. This might include the careful use of privacy settings on social media, for example, or, in the case of one participant, agreeing to be profiled in an English-language publication but not in a publication that her grandparents, who were not English speakers, would potentially read. Two participants, who were both recruited through an anonymous email-list, were not out to anyone. There were also varying degrees of what Carlos Decena (2011) has called ‘tacit understanding’ around sexuality that could be developed without, as one participant put it, “coming out officially”, and range of practices that could be encompassed under what Anthony Ocampo (2014) has discussed as strategies of “moral management” in participants’ relationships with families.

For some, the ability to come out and live what more than one participant called an “honest life” was discussed as being quite important and held a central place in their narratives of their migration and integration in Australia. For example, Riya, a queer woman who had migrated with a partner discussed some of her reasons for leaving India in the late 1990s:

I knew I was gay, and I wasn't out to family, so in a way it was me running away from my family and from my country. You know, in India, it was illegal to be gay, and my then-partner, my ex-girlfriend's parents were very conservative, and she was terrified of her father, so I thought, I just need to take her as far away as possible. So I came here. We came here as students... the reason for me leaving India was because of my sexuality.

Riya's migration to Australia registers here as “running away from my family and from my country” and protective gesture in relation to her partner. This kind of narrative was not uncommon, although it was by no means universally shared. I share it here, not, I hope, to reinforce problematic narratives that would situate Sydney as a progressive center toward which oppressed queer folks from elsewhere are drawn, but to show how, even for people with such motivations or hopes, life in Sydney did not always live up to expectations. I followed up by asking: “and how have you found Australia? Has it worked out well moving here?” She responded by laughing and saying that “it's a multilayered answer to that question.” She then continued:

In terms of my sexuality, I think it's worked out very well for me. Since then, I've come out. I came out in 2001 to everyone, including my parents and my friends. And being in Sydney... that's one of the reasons... and that's why I'm always hanging out in the inner western suburbs because these are the gay-friendly suburbs, and I feel quite comfortable living and being in those spaces. Predominantly, if given a choice, I don't leave these areas. You know, especially because me and my girlfriend, it's ok to be holding hands, pashing, nobody's judging, predominantly, nobody's judging.

Riya emphasizes that, in terms of sexuality, she has been able to build relationships, find welcoming and comfortable spaces, and ultimately, she goes on to describe herself as being able to live a kind of life in Sydney that seemed out of reach before. Of course, even in the

above quote, we can start to see some of the multiple layers of her response. Implied in the “if given a chance, I don’t leave these areas” remark, is a broader geography where she would feel less safe or comfortable, and indeed, she suggested a list of such suburbs off the top of her head that she preferred to avoid, which included much of western Sydney, which are important areas of settlement for migrants, but which do not necessarily share inner Sydney’s reputation as ‘queer-friendly’ (Gorman-Murray and Waitt, 2009).³⁵ She would also later go on to detail being treated “as a second class citizen” in the workplace—being subjected to disrespect, microaggressions, and missed promotions that she attributed to racism. She also mentioned multiple episodes of “racial abuse” directed at her in public while doing her work as an architect that forced her to keep her guard up and, in a way that recalls Sara Ahmed’s (2006) writing on the way that what might seem to others as minor or isolated incidents to others, can, in their accumulation, drag one down or force a reorientation in one’s trajectory.

So even as this is clearly, as Riya noted, a “multilayered” issue, coming out was understood by a number of participants as intertwined or even identical with their experience of settling in Sydney. One participant, Victor who had recently migrated from China, explicitly discussed coming out as a part of his own adjustment and integration into his “new life and culture in Australia”:

Coming out and being a part of gay things... it helped me to find a community here in Sydney, and it gave me somewhere I felt I could belong.

Victor’s own narrative later complicates this initially more optimistic take, as he described instances of feeling discriminated against on dating sites by racist profiles advertising distaste

³⁵ As Riya’s narrative about living in Sydney’s inner west illustrates, for scholars interested in migrants’ residential choices, there are a particular set of concerns for queer migrants to be considered.

for ‘Asians’ as sexual partners, with some of this bleeding into offline experiences in gay pubs and clubs. Despite that though, he would continue to assert that living in Australia opened up new possibilities that he would have had trouble accessing “back in China”. There were also other ways that “being gay in Sydney” could disappoint. For example, Adi, a Palestinian man from Jordan, offered an account in which “being gay in Sydney” compared negatively to Jordan:

I don’t actually like being gay in Sydney. I miss being gay in Jordan if that makes sense. Here, it’s too public, it’s too political... It’s also really expensive... But really, I don’t see why everything needs to be out in the open like that. In Jordan it was more hidden... it was more fun.

Adi describes being gay in Jordan in terms of being part of a close-knit community and one that operated, largely, under the radar. Adi remembers this fondly and suggests that there was something “special” about those relationships and spaces that is absent in Sydney. In contrast, what is present and in too great a quantity in Sydney, and in Sydney gay spaces in particular, are, for him, uncomfortable public displays and discussions of sexuality and a sense that what happened in these spaces was too politicized, when who he slept with ought not be anyone’s concern but his own. He also would go on to describe and lament the costs involved with going out “all the time” and keeping up with peers he described as too materialistic.

Though there is a danger of overinterpretation here, I do think it is worth comparing aspects of Riya’s narrative with Adi’s. Riya’s overall narrative of migration and coming out, despite its ambivalences and problems, illustrates a kind of salutary trajectory from an unhappy situation to a happier one, in terms of sexuality, and it is also a story of upward social and economic mobility generally—from student to architect—despite its ambivalences and limits. In comparison, Adi’s narrative moves along a different track, where migration

took him from a situation which he remembers positively to a more uncomfortably ‘out’ and expensive one, and is accompanied by a relative stall or even decline in social and economic status, as he described an upper-middle class kind of life in Jordan in some contrast to his more middle-middle class position as a government worker in Australia. Together these narratives highlight the importance of considering queer communities, spaces, and identities as important aspects of settlement and reception, whether positive or negative, and also acknowledging how such spaces, like any other, that are shaped by race, class, and gender and are often sites of relatively ambivalent identification and differential inclusion.

If coming out is often figured as a movement *into* queer spaces and communities, the narrative of coming out *to* families of origin is also central to how scholars have examined coming out and to the broader liberal-colonial imaginaries of autonomy and constraint discussed in this article (cf. Gorman-Murray, 2008; Valentine et al., 2003). To the extent that this is a context in which ethnic and migrant families are often imagined as being particularly conservative—and, to be sure, there were numerous examples in the interviews of conservative families—I want to caution against imagining the force such families exert as more encompassing and extensive than it is, particularly in contexts where a broader liberal-colonial imagination is invested in imagining racialized migrants as thickly tied to their communities and families. This is not at all to say that culture, communities, or families are not an important influence in migrants’ experiences, but only that the assumption that these forces are, *a priori*, more constraining for migrants than for the Anglo-Celtic settler community risks further complicating queer migrants’ positioning. Coming out, after all, was something that many of those I interviewed had done and were doing to various extents, and it was also a subject toward which participants held a variety of normative positions themselves. Some thought it was important and necessary to come out—either for one’s

individual well-being or as part of a broader political project. Others held that coming out was much more a matter of preference and context and were skeptical of any normative expectation that a person *should* come out.

The politics of ‘coming out’ were not just about settlement and reception in queer spaces and communities, but also about (queer) receiving society expectations about queer migrants’ relations to their families of origin. There seemed to be a general consensus among those with whom I spoke that 1) in addition to whatever practical benefits might recommend it, there was some degree of normative pressure to come out emanating from Anglo-Celtic queer communities and that 2) coming out to families of origin would generally be harder for ethnic/migrant queers than for Australian-born Anglo-Celtic queers. Participants had a number of ways of thinking about and responding to those two points. Some participants described an imagined geography of East and West at work that contrasted the individualism of ‘Australia’ or the ‘West’ with the “family-centered” cultures in ‘Asia’, thereby explaining both the pressure from an individualistic receiving society to come out and the difficulty with meeting that expectation. In the context of describing why queer South Asians in Sydney needed a support system (that she was working to build), Riya similarly describes different cultural values around coming out to family in racial terms:

Coming from South Asia, we did not have any support systems, because, culturally... there needed to be someone who understood the cultural issues. Because if I tell a Caucasian person, oh I can’t come out to my family, they wouldn’t understand, but I would understand that, so we just wanted to provide them with a group, a support group, basically.

Riya points to cultural or racial differences here, but, of course, as she discusses elsewhere, this need for a support system can also be explained in terms of the practicalities of settling as a racialized queer migrant in a racist, heteronormative society. Coming out and cultural differences around it was a frequent topic of conversation in relation to queer Muslim

identities and communities (see Beckett et al., 2014). Sekneh Beckett has been a particular insightful voice in these conversations in Sydney, and in her work as a therapist working with queer Muslim youth, she has developed the idea of “inviting in” as a more culturally appropriate alternative to the expectation of “coming out” (Hammoud-Beckett, 2007; also see Poljski, 2011). Inviting in, here, is meant to remove the public pressure of coming out and to encourage people create intimate spaces in which they can invite those they feel they can trust into a discussion about their sexual identities and lives. This or similar versions of more culturally specific variations on or alternatives to coming were mentioned to me by participants at numerous point. I initially interpreted some of these gestures toward cultural specificity in ‘coming out’ as largely operating within, and even at times, doubling down on a liberal-colonial imagination of social constraint and individual autonomy. I still think that is a danger in some of the less nuanced framings of ‘Western individualism’ vs. ‘Asian’ familial or ‘Muslim’ collective life. However, I have come to see Beckett’s and others’ work in more explicitly political terms. What I think Beckett’s work on ‘inviting in’ does most productively is to actually bring into view how liberal-queer Anglo-Celtic Australia’s specific culture of ‘coming out’ can work as a kind of normative expectation toward which people are supposed to ‘assimilate’. In response Beckett’s work around ‘inviting in’ posits the existence of or the need for a field that would differently relate the coordinates of autonomy and constraint and public and private relationships.

‘Dating while Muslim’

Even as I think we need to be careful about some of their assumptions, the integration literatures on intermarriage and partnering in households are quite right to point in the direction of migrants’ intimate lives as important sites of settlement and reception—a

point whose relevance extends beyond queer migrants specifically. I suggest a need to broaden their focus beyond marriage or long-term partnering to include a consideration of broader range of experiences (sex and dating, for example) that may precede, or take place independently of, marriage or partnering in a household. While for Riya in the last section, sexuality was a realm where things “have worked out very well”, for many others it was this realm where expectations and possibilities were left unfulfilled as participants encountered racialized barriers to full inclusion. As I described in the preceding article, participants detailed numerous experiences of what could be understood as ‘sexual racism’, including indignities, affronts, and aggressions that happened as participants sought out partners for sex or relationships. This has been discussed in the context of racialized masculinities and queer Asian men in particular (cf. Caluya, 2006; 2008). Here, I examine accounts of dating from participants, queer women and men, who are Muslim.

‘Muslims’, along with ‘Asians’ and ‘asylum seekers’, are some of the central figures around which the politics of integration turn in Australia at the moment. Of course, there have been Muslims living in Australia since before Australia’s 1901 founding, but, in the context of the dominance of Anglo-Celtic Christianity, and a later more secular turn, the position of Muslims in Australia has an uneasy history (Kabir, 2005). Particularly after the events of September 11th and the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 88 Australians, the global circulation of Islamophobic sentiment, linked to fears of ‘terrorism’, the perceived dangers of ‘sharia law’, and an imagined conflict of values or civilizations, has left Muslim Australians, and racialized Muslim migrants in particular, in danger of being positioned as outsiders to the liberal polity (Dunn et al., 2007; Lentin and Titley, 2012). Of course, racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia are not, generally, precisely calibrated instruments, and, for example, Sydney’s Arab communities, many of whom are Christian, describe dealing with

the consequences of this Islamophobic sentiment too. Sometimes, as well, Islamophobia is translated through ethnic or racial categories. For example, Alyena Mohummadally, a queer Muslim who migrated to Australia from Pakistan, in a published interview describes this encounter:

Many years ago, at a social space in Sydney, talking to another woman, she responded to me saying, 'Nuh, sorry, don't do Leb [Lebanese] chicks.' And I was offended and angry. One, I'm not Leb - how dare you call me Leb. And then, two, poor Lebs! Why are they getting such a bad rap! But I think this was a really telling moment for me, because it actually said that just by what I looked like, because I must be Leb because I look Leb, that someone's going to decide already what or who or how I am and so that is, like Islamophobia, that ridiculous ignorance ... (Beckett et al., 2014: 98-99)

In that context, several participants in the research described the challenges of, as one of them put it, “dating while Muslim”. Participants discussed awkward interactions or explicitly negative reactions when it came to disclosing that they were Muslim to potential or actual dates. Ceren, an Australian-born queer woman whose parents had migrated from Turkey, discusses managing the disclosure of her Muslim identity in this way:

So when I'm in gay circles, I'm really proud of my Muslim identity, and I'm not afraid to drop hints about that. I mean there are times where I wouldn't. You know, if you're attracted to someone, and you don't want to have to talk about politics or anything. If it's someone I'm being arranged with or if it's an online thing, I try to drop hints that I'm Muslim before I meet them because I want to make sure that they're cool with it because that's a really huge part of who I am.

Here, unwelcome conversations about ‘politics’ with an attractive person risks a situation where that person’s politics will, in a sense, ruin the mood. She emphasizes that dropping hints about being Muslim is something that she is inclined to do in ‘gay circles’, and it is difficult to read that as anything other than a political gesture given the Islamophobia she describes encountering in queer spaces elsewhere in the interview, as well as, of course, a practical matter of vetting potential dates. Seeming to pick back up on her statement that there are times she might not drop those hints, she then said, “But if it happens

spontaneously...” Ceren pauses here, as if to consider what she would do in a hypothetical ‘spontaneous’ meeting with someone attractive before continuing:

Mind you, I’m not really attracted to people that don’t like Muslims, so, as soon as I find out that they’ve got some sort of discrimination, even slight, even if they think, you know, ‘Oh, those poor Muslims in Afghanistan,’— something like that will trigger a part of me... Are they that kind of girl?

Being ‘that kind of girl’—one who would express condescension or prejudice toward Muslims—was a deal-breaker for Ceren and one, against which she had her guard up.

A young gay man who migrated from Indonesia to Sydney to study, Andi, described the difficulties that he had in dating in Sydney—much of which he attributed to others’ reactions to his being Muslim. He described, for example, meeting a date for coffee and at some point, mentioning that he was Muslim, and the tenor of the date immediately changing:

It was just different after that. He started asking me all these questions and talking about politics. I didn’t want to have to deal with it... and he didn’t talk to me after that.

This was an account of a disappointing date, told in a somewhat exasperated tone by someone who had experienced a several such meetings. The fatigue at having to ‘talk about politics’ and respond to insulting or ignorant questions about his religion or ‘culture’ marked an important part of his embodied experience of racism in Sydney and one that seemed to stand in the way of what he had hoped to gain by coming to Sydney.

It is important to note how both Ceren and Andi discuss and regret how the disclosure of their Muslim identity can trigger these unwelcome discussions of ‘politics’ and the differential burden this places on them to defend who they are and to speak for broader communities. The refusal to go along with these discussions and an impatience with a ‘common sense’ in which their identities could only be perceived in particular ways, is itself a kind of political gesture—albeit one that, not unlike the preceding formulation of ‘inviting

in' as an alternative to coming out, that proceeds less through public assertion and more through everyday negotiations of publicity and privacy.

Making a Home in Sydney

Despite the challenges of relationships with families and of 'dating while Muslim', migrants' experiences with intimacy or relationships were not uniformly 'bad'. For many, narratives about relationships with partners or families, variously defined, were described as helpful, in terms of both the practicalities of settlement and their sense of belonging in Sydney. I move toward concluding by examining narratives from an interview with a couple, En and Am, which was conducted at their home in western Sydney. En is a gay man who had initially migrated from Malaysia to Australia to attend university, and his partner Am is a second generation Vietnamese Australian gay man. Their story is an important one in that it offers a perspective different from the kind of partnerships that much work on integration focuses on (i.e., between a migrant and a member of the dominant group in the receiving society), and because, in their discussions of home, they highlight something important about the relationship between the intimate dependencies of settlement and their relationship to a broader politics of integration. The conversation with En and Am was fairly wide ranging, but it repeatedly returned to the question of home and of what they described as their work to make a home together. It will be important, to understand their story, to know that they live in detached house immediately next to Am's parents, and that the two houses share a small yard, enclosed (not separated) by a fence.

Though it began with the same kinds of questions about relationship to migration that occurred in all the interviews, the conversation with En and Am, perhaps shaped by the location and configuration of the interview (i.e., interviewing them together at their house),

revolved around their relationship to each other, their relationship to Am's parents' next door, and what it meant for them to be making a home together (both in the sense of Am and En together and in a broader sense of a shared space between En, Am, and Am's family.

Here, Am discusses 'coming out' to his family and introducing them to En.

Am: When I told them about it, they sort of knew, but they didn't immediately accept it. What happened was for a time, En became the scapegoat to that. They got angry at me, but at the same time they loved me – it's very convoluted... So a lot of it was vented out on En. That was quite a rough period for about a year or two at least. Then afterward, my parents and my brother – after a period of perseverance and getting to know En for who he is and seeing why I loved En – he's now very much a part of the family – more so possibly than I am to be honest.

After what both Am and En discuss as a difficult period, they describe how Am's family came to terms with their relationship and even to welcome En into the family. En describes this process of 'coming out' and becoming a part of Am's family as a challenging and sometimes painful one, but one that was necessary if he and Am were going to have an "integrated" life together. They would eventually move in next door to Am's parents, and now:

Am: En's a lot more part of the family... It's because of his inquisitive nature and how he relates to my parents and how he talks to my parents – all of that. Mom said "En is just like another son." When we are talking about how mom explains things, she says "En's like my son because he lives next door and he's living with An next door, and he's a really nice guy. His parents are overseas, and he's like an adopted son." I guess that's the Asian or Vietnamese vernacular of how – it's not uncommon in an Asian context to adopt other young people who don't necessarily have their immediate family nearby.

Noting the way that Am's mom 'explains things' is important because, although En and Am might be 'out' for many intents and purposes, Am's family are not so 'out', in the normative sense, about En and Am's relationship. This had a number of implications, including Am saying that he largely avoids socializing with the Vietnamese community of his parents to make things easier for them. En says: "they have kind of taken me in as a family member,

and I love them very, very much. But this internal discourse doesn't necessarily go further than the fence line." He goes on:

En: It's a very funny paradox with mom and dad because there is so much love in the family. Within the gate right up to the fence line there, this is a sanctuary for everyone – not just the two of us. If this is the thing that we can replicate outside of this house, it would be a very beautiful, safe community. But once Am's parents walk out past the fence line there, they just can't. The truth is that they are frightened because the communities that they're a part of – they draw ire on sexuality – homosexuality. Outside of this fence line. Inside here, they have to live with this psychological and spiritual paradox that inside here we are family.

Here their home figures as a sanctuary, albeit a paradoxical and circumscribed one. Both En and Am discuss this as a relatively successful effort to make a home together, even if some of its meaning and implications were lost "past the fence line."

There was another sense though that creating this circumscribed and limited home for themselves was something that had implications in the broader geographies of their lives.

En: We hope this home that we have can be that symbol that we can always come back to this sanctuary and then go back out. And if we need to retreat, we can come back to this again.

En describes himself as being motivated by a concern with 'social justice', and he has, been involved in efforts to organize queer Asian communities in Sydney, as well as in inter-faith work and efforts to combat homophobia in religious communities. He suggests that these kinds of more public politics were enabled by having this home to return to. Here En's narrative falls broadly in line with certain strands of feminist work that highlight how political action or citizenship are embedded in and thereby, at least potentially, enabled or constrained by what takes place in the sphere of the intimate attachments and everyday relations (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). In particular, Selya Benhabib's (2003) conception of the home, which she develops in relation to Hannah Arendt's (1958) writing on the 'non-privative' aspects of privacy and the necessity of private space for public appearance, offers some important insights. Rather than a reading that would align Arendt's thought with what

Nayan Shah (2005: 283) has critiqued as “a liberal ethos that links private intimacy with respected and protected public status” while denying or rendering impossible access to that private space for many migrants, Benhabib’s account suggests that homes, when and however people make them, work as a necessary supplement to public engagement. Against the liberal antinomies of autonomy/constraint and their publically intimate spatialities, Benhabib suggests that a realm of privacy exists (or should exist) that is not simply the absence or negation of public life, but rather can be a site within which individuals’ intimate relations and attachments can develop at a necessary distance from the ‘glare’ of the public:

For, as Hannah Arendt has so well shown, without a robust private sphere, which fulfills our needs for intimacy, domesticity, and individuality, we would exist only in the glare of the light of the public that is all-consuming (Benhabib, 2003: 215-216).

This ‘all-consuming light’ of the public is of general concern for Benhabib and Arendt, but when placed in the context of racialized queer migrants’ position within normative orderings of constraint and autonomy, I think it becomes quickly clear how this publically intimate light is cast with more regularity and intensely on some than on others.

As En’s narrative highlight—and it is here, I think, that En and Am’s story joins up with Ceren’s and Andi’s refusal of an unwelcome intrusion of “politics” and with Beckett’s writing on ‘inviting in’ against the normative expectation to ‘come out’—such spaces of home, intimacy, or privacy do not just exist (cf. Gorman-Murray, 2012).³⁶ And they particularly do not just exist for those, like racialized queer migrants, problematically positioned within the liberal-colonial orders of autonomy and constraint. In fact, I suggest, following work on feminist geopolitics (Dixon and Marston, 2011; Pain, 2009) there is a kind of everyday and ambivalent geopolitics of integration at work in these efforts to carve out

³⁶ As Benhabib suggests, there is an important distinction between privacy and intimacy in Arendt’s work, but geographers tend to employ the same distinction in different ways (and Povinelli in yet a different way), and I do not try to reconcile those differences here.

spaces distanced (never completely disconnected) from liberalism's publically intimately orderings (cf. Ehrkamp, 2013; Nagel, 2002b).

Conclusion

The narratives and analysis presented here highlight, among other things, the importance of attending to queer migrants' intimate relations and dependencies, in terms of the everyday experience of settlement and reception and in the broader societal *politics* of integration. As feminist work on geopolitics suggests, these everyday intimacies and the liberal-colonial imagination of constraint and dependency through which they are understood are necessarily interlinked (Dixon and Marston, 2011; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2016). Understanding these everyday experiences can complicate problematic discourses that shape public debate and inform some scholarship (such as the 'conservative immigrant family' trope), even as it also "fleshes out" the social and material constituents of integration politics (in different ways, see Ehrkamp, 2013 and Ho and Hatfield, 2011).

Integration scholarship and policy can still do a better job in addressing the experiences of queer migrants, and I hope this research is suggestive for thinking through the importance of sexual communities to migrants' experiences of settlement and reception and some of the particular issues that queer migrants frequently face in terms of relationships with families and other intimates (see Noto et al., 2014; Poljski, 2011). More broadly, following from work on feminist geopolitics, I hope that this article can suggest the value of more ordinary and everyday perspectives to supplement critical diagnoses of sexual normativity and public debates about clashing values in integration discourses (as in Puar 2007). Against the obstacles and exclusions that racialized queer migrants face generally, and in relation to how their intimate relationships and dependencies are made into a matter of

intimately public concern, I close by suggesting that the notion of a 'non-privative' realm of everyday intimacy coming out of Arendt, via Benhabib, offers some important resources for those efforts. This would not mean a retreat into privacy defined in a dualistic way against politics in a public realm, but is meant to highlight the home or other such 'private' spaces as politically constructed in, through, and against the uneven geographies that migrants negotiate as they make a place for themselves in receiving societies.

5. CONCLUSION

Conducting this research and writing these articles has taken me across a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary terrains, and I begin to conclude by situating my work amongst a number of (inter)disciplinary currents. This project has been concerned with conversations around race, exclusion, and normativity at the intersection of the geographies of sexuality and queer studies. It also raises some specifically *political* questions about the urban geographies of integration, multiculturalism, and encounter across difference. To conversations on queer migration, which have often focused on queer migrants' marginalization, exclusion, and resistance, it aims to offer a more plural account of differential inclusion in everyday life.

In terms of research in the geographies of sexualities and queer studies, I have continued working with the now long-established themes around the critique of heteronormativity and the exploration of sexual communities and identities disadvantaged in relation to those normative orderings that has been foundational to geographic work on sexuality (Gorman-Murray, 2008; Valentine and Skelton, 2003; also see Sedgwick, 1990), and it joins with a growing chorus of others examining how racialized exclusions shape queer spaces and communities (Caluya, 2006; 2008; Catungal, 2013; Haritaworn, 2015; Manalansan, 2005; Nast, 2002; for a partial review see M. Brown, 2012). Understanding this required engaging with a broader set of normative shifts often associated with Lisa Duggan's (2002) development of the idea of homonormativity in which queer's implications with neoliberalism are highlighted and with Jasbir Puar's (2007) writing on homonationalism, which highlights the enrollment of queer subjects in nationalist exclusions, Islamophobia, and state violence (also see Eng et al., 2005).

Yet, critical work around homonormativity and homonationalism only goes so far in terms of this project's interest in the possibilities and dangers of *politics* in a plural and uneven world, which, for all the vital and necessary work they have done to illuminate the normative coordinates of that world, has a tendency to get submerged beneath these critical diagnoses of the present. While I might not go quite as far as Gavin Brown (2012) in his somewhat polemically titled commentary, 'Homonormativity: A Metropolitan Concept that Denigrates "Ordinary" Gay Lives', I think he is quite right to point out problems with how researchers have deployed the concept of homonormativity, including his point that, to the extent that "homonormativity continues to be theorized as uniform and all-encompassing, sexualities researchers risk losing any sense of the specific geographies of the social, political, and economic relations that shape gay lives, and overlooking how these processes and practices are experienced unevenly and in very different ways depending on their spatial context" (G. Brown, 2012: 1069). In response, Brown develops an alternative and explicitly geographic perspective that brings together the turn toward the 'ordinary' in urban studies (i.e. Robinson, 2006) and strategies of 'reading for difference' exemplified in the work of Gibson-Graham (2006). Against a more top heavy use of homonormativity, Brown (2012: 1071) suggests rooting analyses of shifting norms and sexual politics "in the heterogeneity of everyday social relations." Beyond geography, a not dissimilar argument is made by Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth Wilson (2015) who critique what they portray as the anti-normative orthodoxy of queer studies in favor of a more capacious and reparative set of approaches.

I have some hesitations around the edges of Brown's and Wiegman and Wilson's respective arguments, and I do want to emphasize that all, or, at least, most of their claims can be admitted without actually diminishing the invaluable work that a concept like homonormativity has done in thematizing problematic forms of sexual politics and

facilitating critical diagnoses of the current moment. Nevertheless, I find their approaches valuable for this project in that they speak to a plurality of different aims and orientations within queer work (critique of power relations, understanding the ambivalences and complexities of everyday life, etc.) that ought to be valued and preserved and because, for the purposes of this project, they help to facilitate a more plural accounting of participants' experiences and narratives—inevitably lived against, but also in, around, and through normative regimes in everyday life.

These articles, I hope, are also received as a contribution to urban and political geographies of migration and multiculturalism. As I discuss in the introduction, I think this research points to a need, within the literatures on queer migration specifically, to think beyond certain commonly accepted tropes about the state as exclusionary and about queer migrants as primarily excluded or marginalized (cf. Yue, 2008a; 2016). But this project also has implications beyond just developing a more nuanced understanding the experiences of a group of queer migrants in Sydney. Examining participants' experiences of sex, dating, and relationships raises broader questions about the role of sexuality in migrant settlement and integration that are still just beginning to be asked (cf. Noble and Tabar, 2014). As some of my own interviews with officials and service providers corroborate (a subject for a yet unwritten paper), the importance of sexuality is not always widely appreciated among those formulating policy around migrant integration or providing services to migrants—both in the sense of the unique issues faced by queer migrants and in terms of sexuality as a broader set of norms, practices, and relationships that affect the settlement experiences of all migrant (see Noto et al., 2014; Poljski, 2011).

More broadly, I hope these articles can help nudge research on multiculturalism, encounters across difference, and migrant integration, respectively, in more explicitly

political directions. The overall project's focus on *politics* represents a long-time preoccupation of mine, and one of the most rewarding parts of this work has been the opportunity to explore this in the context of some new spaces and conversation partners (in terms of both participants in this project and my engagement with Hannah Arendt's work). The political and analytical implications of thinking in terms of plurality are, I suspect, something that will stay with me and my work for some time to come. Thus, the three articles collected here are the tip of an iceberg of somewhat indeterminable size, and I finish this conclusion by reflecting on some themes that have been important so far and suggesting some directions for future work.

Queer Multiculturalism and the State

In the first article, I approached multiculturalism in Australia as simultaneously a racializing state project, an infrastructure for appearance for queer migrants, and a fantasy of belonging and citizenship. I am not entirely sure that I fully reconciled those different perspectives there (or even that one could or should attempt such a reconciliation), but I do think that each aspect captures something important about the possibilities and predicaments of multiculturalism in Australia, particularly as it extends concern toward "sexual and gender diversity." The City of Sydney council's efforts, discussed there are just one example of this. This has also included increasing attention to issues of gender and sexuality in the network of Ethnic Communities Councils that have and continue to be one of primary organizational expressions of Australian multiculturalism, as well as the formation of a Sexuality unit the multicultural Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). The formation of the Melbourne-based Australian Gay and Lesbian Multiculturalism Council with its aspirations to serve as 'peak body' representing the interests of culturally and linguistically diverse

queers, and the Victorian state government 's recent decision to start a grants program to multicultural queer organizations also demonstrate this continued evolution. It remains to be seen exactly what these efforts will achieve, but I think it will be important to understand what possibilities they open up for racialized queers, as well what alternatives they may foreclose or overshadow in terms of alternative forms of organizing.

Drawing an analogy to Gayatri Spivak's (1993: 314) line about liberalism being something one "cannot not want" and Wendy Brown's (2000) use of it to think through the paradox of liberal rights claims, I continue to think about multiculturalism, at least in the Australian context, in much the same way. This is, I think, borne out in the work of Ghassan Hage, who has produced some of the most cogent critiques of Australian multiculturalism as a project designed to govern difference without fundamentally puncturing the fantasy and structure of a white Australia (Hage, 1998) and who, nevertheless, defends institutions and policies associated with multiculturalism in his political work (Hage, 2011).³⁷ Going forward, I would like to further extend and develop the critique of the 'torn between worlds' framing in the introduction and potentially use that as an entry point back into these broader questions about multiculturalism and sexuality in a liberal field.

'Asia Pacific' Futures

At various points in this dissertation, I have asserted the value of approaching the world as singular, shared, plural, and uneven. This analysis would also apply to the world of academic knowledge production. Though it would make little sense to describe Sydney as in

³⁷ Here, Hage's (2015) recent work on a pluralist combination of an anti- and an alter-politics, which is to say both politics as opposition and politics as a search for alternatives is quite suggestive.

any sense marginalized in that context (the concentration of scholars and academic institutions there could rival most cities), it is nevertheless the case, I think, that the center of gravity for many of the ‘international’ literatures examining race, sexuality, and difference remains in North America and the United States, in particular. My tendency to relate what was happening in Australia to these developments through their similar racializing settler/migrant histories and their shared implication in a liberal-colonial field has offered one way (useful, I hope, but also limited) of situating Sydney within a broader world.

There are other ways that this could and probably should be done. During my time in Sydney, discussions of Australia’s and Sydney’s relationship to ‘Asia’ was very much in the air as, for example, the government, led by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, issued a much discussed white paper on “Australia in the Asian Century” that called for a broad scale reorientation of domestic and foreign policy toward positioning Australia to benefit from what was described as the geopolitical and economic rise of Asian nations in its backyard (Australian Government, 2012). This joins several decades of efforts by powerful economic and political actors in Australia to further integrate itself into Asia or even reimagine Australia as itself an Asian nation (Johnson et al., 2010). These efforts, of course, join up uneasily with an even longer term tendency for white settler Australia to imagine itself as an isolated outpost of the ‘West’, defined against and imperiled by its more geographically proximate neighbors in the region (Schech and Haggis, 1998; Walker and Sobocinska, 2012).³⁸ The relationship between ‘Australia’ and ‘Asia’ was, of course, not just a subject of public debate and abstract policy papers, but it also entered into the interviews for this project in which a number of queer Asian migrants developed their own accounts of this

³⁸ While there are important contradictions between this Asia-philía and Asia-phobia, it might also make sense to think about them as two sides of a very similar coin (Ang, 2016; Martin et al., 2015).

relationship in the context of transnational connections they maintained with people and movements in Asia.

Though I hint at this briefly in the second article, that yet to be written article will represent an experiment with the urban ‘Asia Pacific’ as a creative regionalization that analytically relocates Sydney and the work I did there into a shared conceptual and political space with cities like Singapore or Kuala Lumpur. These cities are connected via migration and migrants’ transnational relations, as will be the focus of the paper, but they are also brought together through a broader set of connections, including global queer politics, international human rights organizing, and transnationally circulating discourses of ‘diversity’ as they shape a wide range of urban economic and political agendas. Such a regionalization would, necessarily, bring certain possibilities and connections into view, while also occluding others (see Dirlik, 1998), and part of my interest is precisely in understanding how these different ways of demarcating a multiplicitous world mutually constitute the everyday geographies through which orientations to cultural and sexual difference are produced. While I am not, in any sense, finished with the work begun in this dissertation, it is to those questions and geographies that I would like to turn going forward.

The Politics of the Plural

I end, as I began, with the possibilities of the plural. I have presented the plural as a kind of provisional analytical orientation that works by staying with certain impasses—‘reading for difference’ versus ‘reading for power’ in critical geography, paranoid versus reparative critique in queer studies, or a broader set of oppositions between ‘critique-as-judgment’ and ‘affirmative’ or ‘experimental’ readings in a broader social theoretic landscape (see Braun, 2015)—without inhabiting any one ‘side’, nor attempting to deny the distinction

or reduce one position to another. This is something that many scholars manage to do without the explicit aid of this concept, but my hunch is that there is something to be gained through a further engagement with the why and how of pluralist analytical orientation. However, not just any kind of pluralism will do here. Just as I suggested in the first article that Arendt's image of a plural world needed to be supplemented with attention to differentiation and unevenness in queer and queer of color work, I also think pluralism, as an analytical stance, needs to be supplemented, if it is to be something other than an apolitical relativism or an all-encompassing assertion of mastery.

Engaging with the plural requires some sense of the kind of *difference* involved or implied. Indeed, this project's engagement with multiculturalism, its examination of a variety of modes of 'identity', and its various engagements with the 'plural' are all premised upon some understanding of what *difference* is (indeed, quite possibly multiple, distinct understandings of what difference is). However, despite the frequency with which difference is imagined and discussed in geographic work, what exactly difference is, is more often assumed than explained (as argued in Cockayne et al., 2016). To be sure, there is excellent work on how understandings of sameness and difference are constructed, say in the politics of migrant integration (see, for example, Nagel and Staeheli, 2005), and there are productive literatures on what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2002: 15) has called "the fatal couplings of power and difference." But these literatures only go so far in the direction of understanding what difference actually *is*, in an ontological sense.

Whether talking about state multiculturalism, the plural, or various modes of 'identity', they can all be understood as particular ways of categorizing and thereby producing 'difference' out of multiplicity, and here Eve Sedgwick's (1990) writing on the peculiar way that some differences come to matter while others do not remains insightful.

This could be illustrated, as well, in the second article where sexual racism's aesthetic orders organize a multiplicity of bodies into categories of 'attractive' or 'not attractive'. This is a kind of difference, to be sure, but it is a dualistic hierarchy that is constructed out of an underlying multiplicity.³⁹ The problem here, of course, is not only that this produced difference papers over multiplicity, although it does, and that is important to note, but also that, as feminist work and the literatures on 'sexual' difference in particular has long understood, these dualisms are grounded "in structural relations of hierarchy, negation, and domination" (Gökarkınel and Secor, 2016: 5).

An analytic orientation up to the task of engaging a world of plurality that is, at the same time, a world of 'hierarchy, negation, and domination' would necessarily be a *minor* pluralism. Here, I suggest that attention to the 'minor' in both Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) engagement with 'minor literatures' and Cindy Katz's (1996) development of 'minor theory' in geography can productively inform a minor pluralism that could maintain a political edge, even as it enacts and encourages a multiplicity of analytical styles and aims. Katz's work draws out the alignment of the minor with everyday experience, with subjects minoritized against dominant regimes, and against "the language and practice of mastery" (Katz, 1996: 497). That last point about mastery is, I think, particularly important in that the plural often emerges in opposition to a particular kind of mastery, but is always in danger of falling into it itself. Gibson Graham's (2006) project to read for difference in relation to capitalism was clearly part of an effort to pluralize and thereby politicize our understandings of a capitalist economy, just as Wiegman and Wilson's (2015) call for more capacious and reparative modes of analysis beyond queer studies' anti-normative orthodoxy has, I think, a similarly

³⁹ Here, Gilles Deleuze's (1994) writing on difference-in-itself provides some powerful conceptual tools for thinking through the implications of this underlying multiplicity, as Daniel Cockayne, Anna Secor, and I have teased out elsewhere (Cockayne et al., 2016).

pluralizing aim. But these approaches are, in my mind, only effective insofar as they are kept in dialogue with critical geography's and queer studies' resolute discomfort with the world as it is and the implication that the world might yet be something other than what it is now.

Deleuze and Guattari's writing on major and minor literatures provides a suggestive way to close. There they argue that "in major literatures", and one could read that as major pluralisms for my purposes, "the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as mere environment or background" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 17). The social milieu, in this case, is a kind of world-in-between, but one that is relegated to the background of multiple individual lives and projects. This would be a kind of pluralism to avoid. In contrast the "cramped space" of the minor "forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating in it" (17). These other stories are part of what a pluralist approach aims to hear, and it is precisely their vibrations that we need to understand and engage as we seek to create better scholarship and better worlds.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

The research on which these articles draw was conducted during two periods of fieldwork in Sydney, Australia, between August and December 2012 and between June and August 2013. The project was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How does sexuality, broadly understood, inform the urban and political geographies of multiculturalism and migrant citizenship in Sydney?
- 2) How do the geographies of racialization and sexual normativity shape queer migrants' everyday experiences of inclusion and exclusion in Sydney?
- 3) How do queer migrants respond, politically, to their differential inclusion and navigate the terms of societal membership in both quotidian and more organized ways?

To move toward answering these questions, I conducted 43 in-depth interviews with 1st and 2nd generation queer migrants, 23 interviews with government officials, service providers, and advocates from queer/ethnic community organizations. These interviews were supplemented with the analysis of public discourse and archival materials, participant observation in queer leisure and organizational spaces, and volunteering with migrant services organizations. In this appendix, I explain the rationale, as well as some of the limitations and implications of the methods used, and I conclude by offering some reflections on the necessarily situated nature of this project in the context of the plurality and unevenness discussed elsewhere in the dissertation.

Interviews

Queer migrant interviews

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 43 1st and 2nd generation queer migrants that inquired into participants' migration histories, the spatialities of everyday life in Sydney, and relationships with queer/ethnic organizations and spaces. I use queer here in the

umbrella sense of the term to include the minoritized sexual and gender identities associated with LGBTQ (see Yue, 2016). In practice, all participants identified as either lesbian, gay, or queer. For the purposes of this project, migrant refers to individuals who have at some point migrated to Australia from another country and are now currently living in the Sydney area. The 2nd generation designation refers to individuals whose parents were migrants. Because of the projects' interest in the mutually constitutive relationship between sexuality and race and the politics of responding to being disadvantaged in those orderings, I focused my efforts on speaking with individuals who were racialized against the dominant norms of Anglo-Celtic whiteness (see Hage, 1998).

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this task because of the sometimes personal nature of the conversations and the way they allow access to the discourses that participants use to make sense of experiences and relationships (Secor, 2010). They also, in a necessarily limited way, provide a window onto participants' everyday experiences and practices (Hitchings, 2012). The more biographical component of the interviews allowed for discussion of participants' relation to experiences of migration and settlement in Sydney (cf. Rogaly, 2015; Valentine and Sadgrove, 2014). A spatial set of questions involved getting a sense of participants' spatial imaginaries and everyday trajectories around the city, including where they lived, worked, and spent time, what parts of the city they did or did not enjoy spending time in, which parts of the city they associated with the experience or possibility of racism or homophobia, and how and where they meet or met potential partners for sex, dating, and/or relationships. If it did not come up in the course of those questions, I also generally asked participants specifically about their experiences and perspectives on the Oxford Street area (Sydney's traditional gay district). Because of the context and dynamics of the interviews, these 'mappings' were generally

talked-through rather than drawn out.⁴⁰ The third set of questions dealt with participants' relationship with queer and ethnic communities and organizations in and beyond the city, which helped to answer the second and third research question by drawing out if and how participants were involved in broader communities or organized political projects.

In general, these were one-on-one interviews, but in 3 instances, I interviewed pairs of people jointly who wished to speak with me at the same time. The location of the interviews inevitably affects how the conversation evolves (Elwood and Martin, 2000; Sin, 2003), and, in hopes of maximizing participants' comfort, interviews were conducted at a location of their choosing. For some, this meant meeting in relatively public spaces like cafés and coffee shops. In other cases, participants invited me into their homes or, in a few cases, their offices. Two participants, citing concerns about privacy or being 'outed', were not comfortable meeting in person, but one agreed to an hour long phone interview and a second participated in an extended email-exchange interview.⁴¹ All interviews were recorded and later transcribed—with the exception of 3 interviews, including the phone interview, where participants did not wish to be recorded. In those cases, I took careful notes during the course of the conversation and immediately following.

Initially, I recruited participants to interview on the basis of their involvement in visible LGBTQI and/or 'culturally and linguistically diverse' organizations or their participation in some other form of public-facing work, like art or journalism. This included

⁴⁰ A few early attempts to produce visual representations of participants' mental maps (of the sort explained in Gieseck, 2013) were met with some skepticism by participants, and I, in any case, came to think that the orientation of my questions to the city as a whole (as opposed to, say, a neighborhood scale) lent itself more easily to a narrative explanation.

⁴¹ While there are reasons to think that, everything else being equal, in-person interviews would often be preferable, the change in format seemed like a small price to pay to incorporate these participants into the project.

contact with groups like Pride in Colour, described in the first article, as well as queer ethnic groups like Trikone Australasia and the A-Men project, mentioned in the second. These initial participants often connected me with others to interview and/or circulated information about the research through relevant e-mail lists and social media networks. I also used social media myself to advertise and make connections that eventually led to interviews (Sin, 2015). From these initial interviews, I used a process of ‘snowballing’, which has been shown to be particularly effective in recruiting ‘hard-to-reach’ groups (Browne, 2005). During each interview, I would ask if participants were willing to put me in contact with others who might be willing to be interviewed, and, in many cases, they did.

This produced a sample of participants from a wide range of backgrounds that broadly reflect the diversity of migration to Australia—including historically important migration from Southern and Eastern Europe and increasingly significant streams from South, Southeast, and East Asia (see Table 1). In terms of gender, this included 27 men, 15 women, and 1 person with a non-binary gender identity.⁴²

My recruitment process also produced, I suspect, a more politically active sample than might be the case in a more broadly ‘representative’ sample (the assembling of which was not exactly my aim in any case). Given my interest in how people engage and appear politically, I see this as enabling to my broader project, even as I acknowledge that the experiences and narratives of those already involved in organizations or doing work on around these issues may be different in significant ways than those who are not. To be clear, this research did include a number of participants in that latter group, but the sample is

⁴² I had hoped to interview a relatively equal number of men and women, but for a variety of reasons, from the possible impact of my own positionality as a gay man to the happenstance of meeting a couple of relatively enthusiastic and supportive ‘gatekeepers’ whose social networks included predominantly other gay men, this did not happen.

shaped by beginning the recruitment with people involved with organizations, and should be understood with that in mind (cf. Noy, 2008). Despite offering to make translation available at a number of points, my status as an English speaker undoubtedly shaped who I was able to recruit and who was recommended to me by others.

While there was significant diversity in terms of economic status, a majority could be characterized as middle class, and many worked in professional fields.⁴³ In the context of Australia's migration system that, on the one hand, privileges educational credentials, economically recognizable skills, and English-language abilities and, on the other, effectively excludes many more vulnerable groups from entering Australia at all, this was not entirely surprising (Hawthorne, 2005; Walsh, 2011). The majority of participants who had permanently migrated (not including second generation individuals or a small number of participants on temporary visas) entered Australia as skilled workers (not uncommonly preceded by stints as students). A smaller number entered on partner or family visas, and a smaller number still entered through the humanitarian migration program (through refugee resettlement or, in one case, as someone seeking asylum before the current era of hyper-restriction). Again, these proportions generally reflected the broader picture of migration into Australia, where, during the 2014-2015 year, 63% of permanent migrants entered through skilled worker pathways, 30% through family-based pathways, 7% through the humanitarian migration program (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016).

⁴³ I did not inquire about income or perceived class status, and I am basing this largely on discussions of education and employment that emerged in the interviews.

Table 1. Migrant Interviews: Participants' Country of Origin

Participants' Country of Origin	Number of Participants
Albania	1
Bangladesh	1
Bhutan	1
Canada	1
China	2
Cyprus	1
Hong Kong	1
India	5
Indonesia	2
Jordan	1
Fiji	1
Malaysia	7
Pakistan	1
Palestine	1
The Philippines	2
Singapore	2
Sri Lanka	1
South Africa	1
Turkey	1
Vietnam	2
Australia (2 nd generation, including individuals claiming Spanish, Italian, Greek, Chinese, Turkish, Palestinian, Lebanese, and Vietnamese heritage)	8

A note on 'migrant', '2nd generation', and 'queer'

I also want to note a number of caveats about the terms I am using. Even as this project is, in a number of important ways, about migration, it is important to note that, for those who have at some point migrated from one country to another, as well as those born in Australia whose parents had migrated—being understood as a 'migrant' is not necessarily always the most salient feature of their identities (Rogaly, 2015). In a racializing context, the label of migrant may be more sticky for some than for others, and it may be used by others in such a way as to place one's citizenship or belonging in question. This is also a very

situational matter, where, for example, at one point in an interview a participant may—quite rightly—complain about how they frequently encounter the *assumption* that they are a migrant, and, a few minutes later, they might discuss how important their migrant heritage is to their sense of who they are. To be clear there is nothing really contradictory about holding those two positions, but they do point, I think, to some of the complexities of identification involved. My focus on migrants here is less about positioning participants as outsiders to a body politic and more about understanding the experiences and narratives of those who, by virtue of their relationship to migration, are often situated in those ways in the receiving society.

I use the ‘2nd generation’ designation with similar concerns and aims. As I hope the third article makes clear, there are significant problems with the genealogical imaginations at work in generational understandings of migrant integration, and, more broadly, the just described complexity around the term migrant is, if anything, magnified in the narratives of 2nd generation participants. The term “1st generation Australian” is an alternative designation in circulation in the Australian context, but I decided that, at least for the purposes of this project so far, that term was not significantly better and introduced some questions of its own. Thus, rather than implying any commitment to a generational model of migrant integrations, the use of the 2nd generation designation and the inclusion of those individuals in this project is, in my mind necessitated by the way they are implicated—albeit differentially—in the same processes of racialization as migrants and in the long-term politics of belonging and citizenship for migrant groups.

While queer or LGBTQI terminologies can be problematically limiting in the context of the diverse understandings and practices that exist around sexuality globally (i.e., not every woman who has sex with women identifies as lesbian or queer, and across the countries

from which participants' migrated, there are a range of distinct sexual and gender categories that do not map onto a 'Western' hetero/homosexual binary or the broader alphabet soup of identities that has emerged around it. Yet, the reach and extent of the liberal diaspora is long and dispersed, and these 'Western' categories of identification have, by now, a long and varied career outside the 'West' (see, for example, Benedicto, 2014; Boellstorff, 2005). So whether participants came to understand themselves through these terms before or after migration, they all, as a practical matter, claimed the terms lesbian, gay, or queer to describe themselves, even when those identifications (like most identifications, I suspect) were accompanied by degrees of alienation and ambivalence.

Policy/advocacy interviews

I also conducted 23 interviews with state officials (council and state-level), service providers, and staff or members of LGBTQI, CALD, and ethno-specific organizations.⁴⁴ These interviews, which feature primarily in the first article, were intended to help answer the first research question, as well as to provide additional context and contacts for understanding the institutional and political spaces that migrants negotiated. Because of the varied positions of the participants, questions were generally tailored toward that particular person—both as a way to gather additional information about the person's work and organization, to examine what role that work and organization might be playing in the experiences of queer migrants and migrants' citizenship and multiculturalism more broadly,

⁴⁴ The pool of potential participants for the 'migrant' and 'policy/advocacy' interviews are not in any way mutually exclusive in the sense that a queer migrant might well be working in a policy or organizational role. In cases where a participant could fit into either group, I categorized that interview according to the prevailing content of the conversation. In two cases, individuals met with me twice, once for the policy/advocacy interview and again for an interview about their own experiences as migrants.

and to begin to piece together some sense of the discourses through which participants were thinking about issues facing queer migrants (to the extent that they were at all) . They generally lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes, and were also held at location of the participants' choosing, generally offices or conference rooms, but also occasionally public spaces like coffee shops and cafés. As with the migrant interviews, these were generally one-on-one interviews, but were in two instances conducted with pairs of co-workers.

To recruit these interviewees, I identified organizations and groups whose work could potentially touch on queer migrants' experiences, including LGBTQI groups, CALD groups, migrant services organizations, and queer ethnic/queer multicultural groups. I also interviewed local council and state-level government staff whose remit touched on CALD or queer inclusion. I generally made initial contact via email, and, as with the migrant interviews, I asked participants for suggestions about other individuals who I should speak with. The Pride in Colour working group (discussed in the first article), which included representatives from the sorts of organizations just described, was especially important as an entry point.

Analysis

I approached analyzing the interview transcripts with both a phenomenological attention to the textures of everyday life in participants' accounts (Hitchings, 2012) and an attention to participants' statements as discourse (Secor, 2010). Transcripts from both sets of interviews were analyzed through a formal process of coding and theme-building to help identify categories and patterns in the data (Cope, 2010). My research questions guided the initial round of coding, and I was particularly interested in the spatial practices and imaginaries described or implied in participants' narratives and mining the potential of the

everyday to understand the politics of queer migrants' experiences as they navigated the normative orders of sexuality and race. Other themes emerged in the course of the analysis. For example, although it seems obviously related now, I did not initially foresee writing about sexual racism until I realized how common a theme it was in the interviews. This was a discursive analysis in the sense that I approached the transcripts as sets of statements occurring within what Fairclough (2013: 382) calls an "order of discourse"—Arendt might call it a 'common sense'—and broader socio-spatial context. There was also a more informal and ongoing process of critically reading interviews as narratives in a recursive relationship to relevant research literatures and theoretical materials (Wiles et al., 2005).

Situating Methods

While these two sets of interviews are the primary source of data for this project, these interviews were supplemented with the 1) compilation and analysis of media and archival documents before and during the fieldwork trips, 2) participant observation in queer leisure and organizational spaces and 3) volunteering with two migrant services organizations while in Sydney. Of course, in some sense much of what I describe in this section are things that any researcher would likely do, but I think that interview-based studies in particular can benefit from reflection on the practices that surround, inform, and supplement those interviews, including, as Pierce and Lawhon (2016: 655) discuss, efforts to develop "local literacy" and a geographically embedded sense of relationships and practices.

Before arriving in Sydney in 2012, I searched the two main daily newspapers, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney's two major daily newspapers, for news coverage of migration, sexuality, multiculturalism, and LGBTQI organizing and issues, as well as local queer media, including the *Star Observer* newspaper and *SX* magazine. I also compiled policy documents related to multicultural and queer inclusion projects at federal,

state (New South Wales), and local council levels. While in Sydney, I compiled texts related to the political projects that participants discussed. Much of this was information publically accessible online and some of it made available to me through the groups or individuals involved, including the City of Sydney council, the Gay and Lesbian Immigration Task Force, Pride in Colour, and the A-Men project. Additional materials were tracked down at the State Library of New South Wales archival collections. Some of these texts are quoted directly in the dissertation or will be used in future writing, but much of its purpose was to inform interview questions and conversations.

As both a researcher and a queer man living temporarily in Sydney, I frequented many of the same queer leisure spaces as participants, engaged in the same digital world of dating profiles and hook-up apps, and purposefully spent time in the same suburbs, including what Pierce and Lawhon (2016: 656) call ‘observational walking’, involving a “self-conscious, reflective project of wandering around to better understand an area’s physical context, social context, and the spatial practices of its residents” in suburbs across inner and western Sydney. I also took every opportunity to conduct participant observation at public events and group meetings, including Pride in Colour meetings, Trikone Australasia’s Let’s Talk Forum, ACON’s Gay Asian men’s tea room, and workshops put on by the Gay and Lesbian Immigration Task Force. I also volunteered on a weekly basis with two different organizations—one providing a range of services for migrants seeking asylum and another operating an after-school tutoring program in Lakemba, a multi-ethnic, majority-migrant suburb in southwestern Sydney. These experiences were part of developing that local literacy described by Pierce and Lawhon, as well as a (very small and very indirect) gesture of reciprocity. I kept field notes in relation to the participant observation and volunteering, and

these notes worked to contextualize and enrich my interview questions and analysis as the research unfolded (Watson and Till, 2010).

Research across a Plural and Uneven World

While this was not a participatory project in the sense of being envisioned or written in concert with research participants, it is important to acknowledge that each interview was itself a kind of collaboration, and the knowledge that emerged effectively co-produced (Nagar, 2014). A full account of my own positionality and its effects on the research necessarily escapes my grasp, and I do not wish to perpetuate the problematic image of “transparent reflexivity” critiqued by Gillian Rose (1997). That being said, I offer here some provisional and necessarily incomplete thoughts on my own situated position in relation to the research. Toward those ends, I have found Hannah Arendt’s writing on ‘visiting’ as a productive way to think around the situated nature of research in a plural and uneven world.

In a suggestively titled essay, “‘Please sit down, but don’t make yourself at home’: Arendtian ‘visiting’ and the prefigurative politics of consciousness-raising,” Lisa Disch (1997) develops Arendt’s thinking on ‘visiting’ in order to rethink the relations between knowledge, experience, and politics. Disch’s immediate concern was not a methodological one, but the implications of the essay’s reading of Arendt is particularly valuable in methodological terms.⁴⁵ To be clear, I use this text not because these interviews were sites of

⁴⁵ Disch’s aim was to clear the way for a reparative approach to ‘radical feminist’ consciousness-raising projects that acknowledges the exclusionary fantasies of ‘universal sisterhood’ that underwrote those projects and also shows how such groups can nevertheless be understood as imperfectly realized models of ‘participatory theory building and democratic politics’. She elaborates: “And because I am a feminist academic in the discipline of political theory—a field in which it is not uncommon for scholars to invoke fifth-century Athens or eighteenth-century republicanism as exemplars of democratic promise incompletely realized—... it seems to me that... radical feminism must also harbor something worth reclaiming” (133).

‘consciousness-raising’ (although I would say that my own consciousness was raised in in numerous ways), but rather because it suggests something important about this project and, potentially, social inquiry more broadly:

By ‘visiting’, Arendt meant ... a process that does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else and hence look upon the world from a different perspective but involves being and thinking in my own identity where I am not. This practice is neither insistently egocentric nor self-effacingly empathetic, although it might be easily confused with either of these (Disch, 1997: 136).

What Disch describes here is what Arendt has elsewhere described as a kind of “enlarged thought” that emerges from examining a shared world from a plurality of perspectives (Arendt, 1981: 258). Of course, one cannot fully inhabit another’s perspective, but then, I am sufficiently influenced by psychoanalytic thinking to suspect that there is not anything particularly straightforward about inhabiting one’s own perspective either. What Arendt and Disch suggest is that through a process of ‘visiting’ (which could mean study, conversation, or work together in concert with others, among other things) one can come to imagine the world from a variety of perspectives. This is still an individual’s imagining of a plurality, but it is, nonetheless, different for having attempted to imagine other perspectives. For Arendt, this is precisely the kind of thinking that *politics* requires, but I think it also names an important aspect of what it is that that social inquiry achieves, albeit as a more collectively plural project in which a scholar (who, it must be said, is in themselves plural) researches a plural world and produces some form of knowledge about the world in relation some of sort of intellectual or disciplinary community—itsself marked by plurality. As Saraswati Raju suggests (2002), that those plural academic communities are themselves unevenly situated need not prevent, and indeed should only further emphasizes the importance of, conversations and collaborations across those differences (also see Ehrkamp, 2011).

Theorizing this research as a kind of visiting acknowledges my status as a partial outsider to the context and experiences being studied, but it also emphasizes some other important aspects of the research process that the insider/outsider distinction can tend to elide (cf. Matejskova, 2014; Mullings, 1999). Most importantly for thinking a world-in-between, it avoids the fiction that the researcher inhabits a different world than research participants, while also allowing for tracing out how this shared world simultaneously connects and separates.

I have little doubt that my status as a researcher from the U.S. and as a white queer man had effects on the kinds of conversations that occurred in the interviews, as well as in terms of who I was able to recruit to participate in the project. I can speculate that this provided a partially shared set of experiences and concerns with other queer people, and with other gay men in particular. For participants' who had particularly religious families (and, as I suggest in the third article, the sense that migrants would be particularly thickly bound to their family/religion was also something that participants themselves would articulate at times), my own experience growing up in an evangelical Christian environment provided an interesting point of conversation and connection on several occasions. Participants were frequently curious about my own ethnic background and the migration histories of my family. I shared what I know about that, which is largely limited to a 20th century story of U.S.-based rural to urban migration of my grandparents, and consequent participation in the white flight to the suburbs.

One feature of being a researcher from the U.S. doing work in Australia was the implicitly comparative element it introduced into the work and into the interviews (cf. McFarlane, 2010). I would inevitably find myself wondering at times how what I was finding compared to what I knew from the U.S. At the same time, participants would themselves

frequently make comparisons from their end as well. These conversations—in and beyond the formal interviews—often touched on differences in migration histories or policies, the meanings and implications of racism across contexts, or the status of queer politics. Of course, having said what I have about the singular, shared world in which we live—and given the insights of turns toward the transnational and the global in queer, urban, and migration studies—it does not make sense to think of Australia and the United States as two distinct places to be compared, even implicitly, as much as two interrelated sites in what Povinelli has called the liberal diaspora.

Of course, the dynamics between research participants and myself are not entirely knowable (Pile, 2010), and, in any case, beyond the dynamics within the interviews lies the broader politics of knowledge production within which this work is situated (Nagar and Geiger in Nagar, 2014). It is difficult to know in advance how one's work will be received, but a conversation during one of the interviews with a queer Asian man I spoke with suggested something important, in a cautionary way, about the potential impact this work could have. This quote comes from the midst of a conversation with James about racism in queer spaces. After he had discussed racism in queer spaces in somewhat broad strokes, I followed up by asking about specific examples or places where he had run up against it. In response, he said:

“One of the reservations I have in speaking about this is that sometimes when describing an occurrence or describing an experience or lived reality, it's partially reinscribing it as a reality. So for example... like, ‘Don't wear this type of clothing when you go out. You might get mugged.’ Then it reinforces the culture in which people won't be free to wear what they want to wear for fear of being mugged. So similarly... ‘I had this experience of racism in this space’ and then I tell someone like you—or, actually, more specifically, someone who might be targeted by racism in a certain way, then over time, less people who look like him end up showing up.”

For James, this risked contributing to a negative feedback loop, where in this case, if fewer queer Asians showed up in a space, the problems with racism in those spaces would go

unchallenged, possibly worsen, and lead to even fewer people showing up. This did not stop him from going on to describe more than one such “experience of racism,” nor did it stop me from continuing to ask asking similar questions in subsequent interviews. What it did do, however, was push me to consider how I presented interview materials and my, decision, for example, in the second article, to not name the specific places where participants described encountering sexual racism.

Those sorts of adjustments, in conversation with participants, have seemed sufficient, thus far, for my academic work. As an early career scholar, I am still coming to terms with the question of whether or how my work could productively speak to different audiences beyond the academy, which might well raise more and different kinds of questions about how materials and participants are represented and involved in the process. There is, I think, significant value in doing academic work that speaks to academic audiences in relatively traditional ways, but I am hopeful, as well, that I can continue to build on the work conducted here toward more and different kinds collaborations and connections across the plural and uneven world we all share.

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Selected Professional Positions

Part-time Lecturer, Geography, Sociology, and Interdisciplinary Studies, Bellarmine University (Louisville, KY), 2014-2016

Teaching Assistant, Geography, University of Kentucky (Lexington), 2012-2014

Selected Honors

Department of Gender and Women's Studies Bonnie Jean Cox Research Award (2012)

Graduate School Academic Year Fellowship (2010)

Phi Beta Kappa (2007)