

When Race Displaces: queer/race geographies and the politics of difference

by

Emily Wong

B.A. Honours 2015

A thesis submitted to the Department of Geography

in conformity with the requirements of

GPHY 503/6.0

Supervised by Professor Audrey Kobayashi

Queen's University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

May 2015

Copyright © Emily Wong, 2015

Abstract

This thesis explores the spatialities of oppression between individuals involved in activist organizations. Oppression is a concept which has been extensively examined and challenged in feminist and anti-racist geographies. Yet those who practice anti-oppressive politics are still under the influence of those systems, as resistance is also influenced and produced through systems of oppression. This research project draws on the experiences of queer and racialized individuals in order to explore how oppression is enacted within communities which seek to challenge domination and marginalization.

Qualitative interviews with participants reveal patterns of oppression and how processes of human differentiation take place within their respective community organizations. Participants' constructions of identity and community provide insight into the prevalence of the ideal of community, and the ways in which communities may be failing to actualize solidarity across difference. Namely, they discuss how normatively white queer organizations can often struggle with issues of racialization. Conceptualizations of identity are situated within theories of intersectionality and performativity, revealing uneven affective geographies and tensions of identity politics. Using the framework of the politics of difference, the construction of difference is examined in relationship to the grounds of race and gender/sexual identity. While the affirmation of difference can be desirable, doing so requires re-scaled, context-specific approaches to avoid generalizations which lead to the reinscription of marginalization. Queer/race social positionalities are negotiated and experienced in a multitude of ways, exposing how locations of community are simultaneously locations of exclusion.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support of many wonderful people. To my supervisor, Dr. Audrey Kobayashi, thank you for everything you have done in support of this endeavor. Thank you for your insight, your critical eye, and your belief in me. This project would not exist without your encouragement and feedback. Working with you has truly been a pleasure. Your teaching, guidance, and advice have been invaluable, and I feel incredibly privileged to be able to call myself one of your students.

I also owe many thanks to all the faculty and graduate students of the Geography department who I have met in my time at Queen's, for the impromptu conversations we have on my frequent strolls through the department, and for all of your advice and encouragement. You are my role models, mentors, and friends.

To the folks upstairs in the Gender Studies department, I greatly appreciate your friendship and your unwavering dedication to progressive scholarship and teaching. In solidarity, always. Special thanks to Steph McColl for insightful and always delightful academic comments, lifting sessions, and good food.

Lucy: Your love and support were critical to getting me through a mess of responsibilities this year: wrangling a full-time job, this thesis, and assorted personal challenges. Thank you for being patient with my endless thesis/school/work grumblings, and for your kind words and encouragement.

To my colleagues in the AMS and the Queen's University administration, you have been an important source of motivation and support throughout this year. To my dear friends not involved in student government or academic geography, I promise I will be more social from here on out; thank you for continually reminding me throughout this process that there is life

outside of school and work. I also need to thank my parents for their ongoing support of my university education, so: thanks, mom and dad!

Finally, to the seven people who shared their stories with me, thank you for your time, your willingness to share your experiences, and your dedication to resistance and struggle. This thesis is dedicated to you, and to all of the QPoC past, present, and future who find themselves trying to carve out “community” in Kingston.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
Preface	5
Chapter 1 - Background	8
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	10
Identity, Oppression, and Spatiality	10
Intersectionality	12
Community and the politics of difference	14
Chapter 3 – Methodology	16
Chapter 4 – Analysis	20
Themes	22
Construction of “Community”	22
Intersectional Failure: sexuality and race	31
Performativity of Engagement	40
Chapter 5 – Conclusion	47
Epilogue	53
References	55
Appendix 1 – Letter of Information	57
Appendix 2 – Consent Form	58
Appendix 3 – Interview Questions	59
Appendix 4 – Recruitment Information	60
Appendix 5 – Codes	61

Preface

“Our visions begin with our desires.”

—Audre Lorde (1982)

This thesis is borne out of the conversations between queer people of colour about their frustrations around race, gender, and sexuality. There was no clear beginning to these sentiments—only a mounting acknowledgement that something was “wrong,” which only became more prominent as time wore on. As a queer undergraduate student, I fell in easily with queer and feminist campus groups in my earlier years at Queen’s University. These were people who wanted to make a positive change in the world, with whom I shared similar values and identities. Yet over time, I found myself increasingly frustrated by some of the people I was surrounded with, although we were alike in many regards. The way they spoke about certain aspects of identity, especially race (when they did at all), seemed to be lacking in some way, though I could not figure out what exactly it was that bothered me. These people were very clearly my friends, and I was confident that they bore me no ill will. As they touted themselves as “anti-oppressive” and “inclusive of everyone” (it was always something along those lines), I was at a loss to explain why I felt out of place. Quite frankly, I wondered why white queer people could not engage effectively with issues of racism, even though the two vectors of marginalization bore enough similarity, or so I thought, for there to be some affinity across those identities. As it became apparent to me that something was really, really not quite right about some of the communities I considered myself a part of, I started to wonder: why was this the case, and how was this all being enacted?

As a queer and racialized undergraduate student, then, I found myself falling into circles of other queer people of colour. I felt a much greater degree of affinity with them, and it was thanks to these newfound friends of mine (most of whom had more university degrees than I did)

that another world of politics became known to me. They also shared similar frustrations to me in relation to white queer communities. Even though I found comfort in knowing I was not the only one with these sentiments, the issue still intrigued me. What was the difference between the “good white people” and the people that were not? At the heart of all of this inquiry was a desire to find a way to ameliorate these situations of exclusion; I wanted to know this issue more intimately in the hope that perhaps I could find a solution.

Soon after that, I decided to pursue the project of an undergraduate thesis, and I knew that I wanted to explore the experiences of queer and racialized people in some way. When I stumbled onto Iris Marion Young’s article on community and the politics of difference (1986), I immediately drew a link to how this concept could be applied to the communities of queer and/or anti-oppressive organizers in Kingston. The scale of Young’s discussion was broader than the Kingston microcosms I was working within, but here, I thought, was the solution to coexisting without conflict across difference. After reading *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, I came to the (vague and completely inaccurate) conclusion that the need to determine concrete, achievable goals within activist organizing did not fit in nicely with a politics of difference. I thought that it was the process of organizing that stunted inclusivity and lead to marginalization within groups of people. With that in mind, I set off to conduct this research project.

As I proceeded through the course of this thesis— readings, proposal-writing, ethics approval, interviewing, transcription, more reading, and finally, the task of writing— the true scope of this undertaking very quickly became apparent. I most certainly needed to incorporate a broader body of work. Yet despite everything I did not anticipate, my original intent was to explore the lives of queer people of colour and their experiences of oppression, and I believe that this project does encompass just that.

This thesis does not seek to “understand” what it is like to be a queer and racialized person. Rather, it draws on the experiences of queer and racialized individuals to explore constructions of identity and community, and to expose the ways in which processes of oppression take place.

Chapter 1 - Background

How is oppression spatialized between people in anti-oppressive organizations? In this thesis, I explore how social relations, particularly those pertaining to oppression, are experienced by queer and racialized individuals who are associated with self-labelled anti-oppressive communities and organizations. This project is one that maps queer and racialized space while engaging with theories around community, intersectionality, and identity politics.

Kingston and Queen's University have environments of normative whiteness and cis/heteronormativity. Kingston's population is 94.2% white (StatsCan 2006)¹. No equivalent data is available for Queen's University students, but a "culture of whiteness" is often cited when describing the university (Henry 2006). Similar data collection has not been conducted on gender and sexuality in Kingston² or at Queen's, but in a Canadian LGBTQ context, queer oppression is still prevalent (Giwa and Greensmith 2012). It is within these environments and cultures of predominantly white, straight, cis normativity that this thesis is situated within. The experiences of people who are both queer and racialized provide insight into how patterns of oppression play out within normative whiteness. Within this environment, queerness is another identity which gets incorporated under normative whiteness; as a result, the queer/race conflation of identity is one which is positioned differently from white queers.

The presence of an ideological commitment to anti-oppression— an attempt to improve the conditions of structural oppression— provides a fascinating complication to these dynamics of social identity. Anti-oppression, as a social justice approach, incorporates understandings of multiple axes of oppression, while also recognizing distinct social identities and those struggles

¹ Thanks to the removal of the long-form census, this is the most recent demographic data available.

² At the time of writing, a survey on "gender and sexual minority needs" conducted by the Kingston group YGKLGBT has concluded, with a report to be forthcoming. This may be of interest to readers.

(Brown 2012). Even with this commitment to social justice, however, patterns of oppression are still replicated by the people who make up anti-oppressive organizations. My research sample sought participants who identified as activists, as I assumed this meant that they would have most likely interacted with people who are ideologically and politically anti-oppressive.

I begin with a discussion of the key concepts and theories that are present in this thesis. The task of answering the question of how oppression is spatialized between people in anti-oppressive organizations requires an understanding of identity in a geographic context, along with intersectionality and the politics of difference. I go on to explain the methods used to collect data for this research. Finally, I provide an analysis and discussion of the experiences of participants as they relate to community, intersectionality, and performative geographies.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

In order to frame the ensuing discussion on queer/race geographies, I draw on an interdisciplinary body of literature which discusses relevant concepts in order to contextualize this research. Theories on the spatialization of identity provides a theoretical framework for grounding the geographic nature of oppression as it is experienced through the process of human relation. In addition, as there is a focus on queer and racialized subjects, intersectionality theory and its debates are also pertinent, because this dialogue is located at the intersection of two constructed identities. Finally, as *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Young 1990) is the text which underpins this research, I discuss the politics of difference, its relevance to community, and the difficulties associated with defining each of those two concepts.

Identity, Oppression, and Spatiality

Identity, as it relates to power and oppression, is fundamentally about the process of creating space. An understanding of space is central to any discussion within geography, but space itself is an incredibly broad theory with a variety of interpretations.

Theories of relational geography pose that space is not a bounded container that we passively occupy, but rather, that space is an ongoing project; the creation of space is the constant process of spatializing. In discussions of racialization and queerness, constructions of the other necessarily involve the delineation of boundaries, and the setting at a distance of the other.

[...] the act of setting the other at a distance, is the geographical basis for othering, through the construction of class, gender, ethnicity, race, territory, sexuality, age, disability and so on. Distance, or alterity, ironically constitutes the human capacity for recognising both the self and the other, and the profound basis (in its objectification of the other) for oppression. Spatiality is thus the form of human relationship. There is no abstract or objective ‘space’ to

be filled, only the active filling of the world. To be human is to spatialize. To engage with others is to spatialize the other in relationship. (Boyle and Kobayashi 2011: 420)

It is on this basis of spatiality that this research is structured around: spatiality and the relations we create and perpetuate in the process of self-identification and identifying the other.

Constructions of identity involve the act of drawing borders, defining proximities, and creating distance between people; it is a necessarily geographical concept³.

Identity can be understood as “social group membership” where groups of people are differentiated from another based on a specific trait (Young 1990: 42). Identities are not fixed or stable, but are dependent on temporal and spatial contexts. Subsequently, these traits are socially and culturally constructed, such as physical markers of difference in the case of racialization. Although these constructions may be arbitrary, “group difference remains endemic” (Young 1990:47), and to ignore the reality of these processes of human differentiation would also be to ignore the presence of resulting systems of oppression and domination.

Identity is also constituted through performative processes, which is to say that “identities occur in interactions, not on stable or given understandings of social difference” (Valentine 2007: 14). The performativity of identity is also affected through proximity to certain spaces and any prevailing normativity (i.e. normative whiteness) that is implicated in the process of creating said space (Ahmed 2010), giving rise to uneven geographies of identity.

This thesis takes place at the intersection of two such group identities along which oppression is spatialized: race and queerness. It is within participants’ interpersonal interactions that constitute experiences of oppression, where the constant production of normative identities can be seen.

³ And there lies the answer to one of my most frequently asked questions: “How is that (i.e. this thesis) even geography?”

Intersectionality

While social movements, such as feminism, profess to advance the interests of a marginalized social group, it is not particularly new news that these movements may be lacking. Continuing to use feminism as an example, Black feminist scholars have critiqued the second-wave feminism's failure to acknowledge race as another vector of oppression. A key text within this critique is Kimberle Crenshaw's 1991 piece on violence against women of colour, where she named the concept of intersectionality as a means to consider "intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" against the failure of "contemporary feminist and antiracist discourses" of the time. The isolation of vectors of oppression is quite prevalent. Scholars have had a tendency to focus on singular categories such as race, class, gender, and so forth in attempting to develop theories of oppression that are based along lines of identity (Valentine 2007). Studies of racialization tend to be informed by a background assumption of hetero/cis normativity, and conversely, queer studies are often overwhelmingly informed by whiteness. Here, queer and race identity are explored in conjunction with each other, as normative whiteness must be examined in relation to how it functions in relation to heterosexism and cissexism. To only examine one or the other is to fracture individual identities in favour of universalizing an identity-based experience, or to risk reinscribing the white able-bodied middle-class male as the unmarked norm against which all other identities are considered different from (Valentine 2007). Intersectionality presents a solution to this problem. However, with a consideration of multiple identities comes another set of complications.

Intersectionality continues to be a concept that structures discussions of multiple identities, but it is not without contention. Critics of intersectionality claim that to theorize identity-based oppression as interlocking vectors is to essentialize identities, as well as to

reinscribe binary structures which are responsible for producing power and oppression (McCall 2014).

The intersectional model reproduces [assumption of a falsely universalizing unitary model of “women”] insofar as it consigns hyper-oppressed subjects to an intersection of axes of oppression, which it conceives in monistic terms that qualitatively privilege the oppression faced by subjects who are oppressed on a single axis. (Carasthesis 2008: 29)

In other words, in the context of this study, “queer” is one essentialized identity, “racialized” is the other; this then gives rise to the essential category of “queer *and* racialized.” While this does move the discussion beyond singular axes of identity, it still is implicit within a privilege binary in opposition to cis/heteronormativity and whiteness, and by virtue of its focus runs the risk of erasing other identities such as class. As a way of thinking beyond bounded identity categories, postmodernist studies of identity suggest that a complete deconstruction of the formation of identity is a more productive contribution towards the task of solidarity.

It is at this juncture that the nuances of different identities complicate the study of both the frameworks of intersectionality and postmodernist views of identity. Interventions in queer theory challenge the concept of queer space as merely disruptions of heterosexual space, arguing that this reinscribes the heterosexual/homosexual binary (Oswin 2008). However, the postmodern framework is criticized, with some scholars maintaining that “this claim to be “postidentity” often retrenches white, middle-class identity while disavowing it” (Smith 2010: 44). Identity politics reinscribes a binary between the oppressor and oppressed, and postmodernism runs the risk of not acknowledging the power that dominant and normative identities do hold.

These debates constitute some “anxieties” of intersectionality theory: problems have been identified with the concept, but no solutions have been offered (Brown 2012). As a way to

expand intersectionality beyond the limits of theory, Valentine asserts that grounded empirical research is necessary a way of addressing “the tension between the fluidity and multiplicity of individual identities and the continued importance and necessity of group politics” (2007: 19). It is this task that I undertake with the exploration of participants’ lived experiences. Even outside of the academy, the complexity of intersectionality has implications for practical realizations of intersectional solidarity.

Community and the politics of difference

The politics of difference is a concept that poses a solution to oppression in the face of processes which contribute to and result in human differentiation. In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Young eschews the ideal of assimilation in favour of a “positive self-definition of group difference (1990: 157).” Instead of an objective approach that treats everyone the same, a politics of difference takes into account the oppression and disadvantages of people and treats them accordingly; impartial justice is to the politics of difference what equality is to equity. The acts of defining and recognition becomes the “politics” that Young argues is necessary in order not to subsume difference under a monolithic “community.”

The term “community” here is used in a very broad sense to describe the way people organize others and themselves, socially and spatially. Community is a contentious construct. Geographers have debated what exactly constitutes community; others are content to leverage the term without a clear definition of what it is (Aitken 2009). Despite the contested nature of the term, Young makes an observation about it that Aitken also mentions: community is almost always a positive construction, or as Young states, an ideal. It is the ideal of community, Young argues, that leads to the exclusion of individuals, as the ideal “denies and represses social

differences” (1990: 227) in favour of a desire of social wholeness. Pressure to adhere to a certain norm within a community can lead to the homogenization of groups or group movements.

In a racist, sexist, homophobic society that has despised and devalued certain groups, it is necessary and desirable for members of those groups to adhere with one another and celebrate a common culture, heritage and experience. Even within such separatist movement, however, too strong a desire for unity can lead to repressing the differences within the group, or forcing some out: gays and lesbians from black nationalist groups, for example, or feminists from native American groups, and so on. (Young 1986: 13)

In response to this dilemma of community, Young advocates a vision for coexisting with difference as “a being together of strangers in openness to group difference” (1990: 256). In other words, differences within a group should be affirmed.

The solution that Young proposes has been criticized on the grounds that acknowledging difference in this way involves the arbitrary categorization of people into groups, and how that issue is further complicated by overlapping group membership (Ackelsberg and Shanley 2008). The question of how a politics of difference is enacted at an interpersonal level is also somewhat unclear, though Young acknowledged the problem of issues of scale. It is the latter point, a focus on the interpersonal scale, which this project is concerned with.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The original premise of this research was to explore how relationships of oppression are replicated and spatialized within communities that explicitly state a commitment to anti-oppression. I chose to interview people who identified as queer and racialized in order to explore not only marginalization of queer-identified persons, but also an environment of normative whiteness. A person who is involved with activist, anti-oppressive, or feminist organizations has most likely interacted with people who are ideologically and politically anti-oppressive. Furthermore, the experiences of individuals who are both queer and racialized provided insight into how conflicts around the concept of intersectionality were actualized.

Qualitative feminist methodologies were used in approaching this research. A feminist methodological approach can be broadly characterized by the usage of theories concerning power, critiquing dominant notions of knowledge, and critical reflexivity (Ramanzanoglu and Holland 2002; Thien 2009). Qualitative research is largely concerned with social structures and/or individual experiences (Hay 2010). As my research focused on the use of individual experiences to examine social structures, qualitative methods were useful. In addition, the research focuses on queerness and racialization, both of which may (and do) involve extensive discussions of power. Subsequently, adopting these methodologies was effective in structuring the methods through which this research was conducted.

Sample and Participants

Participants who were recruited self-identified as all three of the following criteria: participation in activist/feminist/anti-oppressive activities; queer; and racialized (see Appendix 4). When deciding on the qualifiers for participation, I assumed that an involvement in activism

would mean that participants were connected to some sort of organization or informal social group, providing the link to “community” that I was seeking. I distributed the call for participants through various organizations as well, further ensuring that I could recruit individuals who were involved in activism, in addition to distributing the recruitment notice more broadly.

A total of seven participants were recruited for this research. The call for participants was distributed through posters with recruitment information, placed in several public poster boards on Queen’s campus and the Sleepless Goat Café in Kingston. The email listservs of the following groups were also used: Levana Gender Advocacy Centre; Ontario Public Interest Research Group; The Artel Artists’ Collective. When sending the email, I asked the recipients to distribute the recruitment notice as widely as possible. Three participants were recruited directly through email. Two of the participants were known to me and volunteered to participate after I spoke to them about my research and mentioned I was recruiting. To my knowledge, the remaining two participants were recruited by word-of-mouth through people who had heard about the research project from other participants or people that I had spoken to about my research.

When contacted by potential participants, I did not turn anybody who was interested in participating away. In their first contact with me, some participants asked if they were eligible; I would respond that if they self-identified with all the qualifiers, they were. A total of 11 individuals contacted me in regards to participating in this study, of which 7 took part in an interview for this study.

Given my own position as a researcher who is also queer and racialized, my identity affected access to these communities, in addition to the type of data which was collected. The

power relationship between myself and participants was reciprocal, as we were in “comparable social positions (Hay 2010, 32)” based on my own identity and the identity of the participants. While I did not collect data on class, all of the participants were either currently university students or had university degrees, implying some sort of similarity in terms of ability to access education. The degree to which participants identified with my personal identity was made apparent in the process of interviews. During interviews, participants would occasionally make statements using “us,” demonstrating that they were also connecting their identity to mine. As mentioned, I had been acquainted with two of the participants. Thus, my social positionality also affected the way in which participants conducted themselves and subsequently, the type of data they provided.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. This method of inquiry was chosen in order to allow for the participants themselves to “interpret and make sense of issues and events (Bryman et al, 2012).” As I was exploring the experiences of queer and racialized people and how these identities shaped their experiences, qualitative interviews were useful in allowing participants to speak on their lived experiences. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask follow-up probes in order to draw out more detail and clarify points that participants would make. The semi-structured design was thus useful for providing structure and some guidance during the interviews, and was conducive to allowing participants to voice their experiences. An examination of lived experience “exposes the role that space plays in the processes of identification and disidentification (Valentine 2007).” As the

focus of research for this project was to explore identity politics and the construction of community, this method was appropriate.

The interviews were held on Queen's University campus in various locations, and ran from October to December of 2014. Interview locations included Stauffer Library, the John Deutsch University Centre, and Mackintosh-Corry Hall, in private (or otherwise unoccupied) rooms in each building. Prior to the interview commencing, each participant provided signed consent to participation in an interview and allowed for the audio recording of the interview. The interview guide included demographic questions, questions about group participation, and questions about identity.

Data Analysis

Each completed interview was transcribed by myself. I personally analyzed the content of the data and identified themes within the transcripts.

I assigned in-vivo codes to the interview texts in the first round of coding. The responses to my initial questions on demographics were used to profile the participants, using their own words. In second round coding of non-demographic data, all of the codes were grouped into structural categories (Appendix 5). Of these structural categories, three significant themes emerged: community; intersectionality and its failures, including limitations to actualize intersectional solidarity; and the performativity of how participants engaged with the people around them.

Chapter 4 – Analysis

In this chapter, I will discuss themes and findings from the interviews that emerged from the content analysis of the transcripts.

When organizing the codes from the interviews, I broadly grouped codes into three overarching categories: race, gender/sexuality, and instances where both were present. Thematically, while all participants discussed some combination of the three, the majority of discussion of their experiences of oppression were focused on race. This is unsurprising, given that the interview questions do centre race, as my research assumed that we would be discussing racialization within queer communities. However, these conversations on race often expanded into discussions of anecdotes that did not involve only the organizations, or even just Kingston at all, but became broader discussions of race and racialization.

Participants discussed racialization and sexual/gender identity using a variety of terms. The language I use throughout this paper is reflective of participants' descriptions. I use terms regarding racialization interchangeably, recognizing that there are inherent problems with each term. For example, to refer to non-white people as "racialized" infers that whiteness is not also a process of racialization, and so the term "person of colour" could be more applicable in labelling people who embody physical markers of racial difference. Yet not all participants are necessarily read as people of colour, though all are self-identified racialized individuals; indigeneity and being mixed-race are two identities that complicate this particular study.

Similarly, not every participant identifies as "queer" although I use this term throughout this paper to refer to any combination of gender and sexual identity that is not cis or heterosexual.

Figure 1 displays the summary profiles of the participants. Initials are pseudonymous and randomly assigned.

Participant	Gender/Sexual Identity⁴	Racialization	Group Involvement⁵
MN	Cis female; bisexual/pansexual	Black; Mende/Sierra Leone; African-Canadian	Education on Queer Issues Project African-Caribbean Students' Association QPoC ⁶ foodshare "Pride things"
RM	Cis female; bisexual	White; Ojibway; Native; "describe me as Euro- Canadian"	4 Directions [BAH program] major
AA	Female; gay	Indian or Sri Lankan; Brown	Education on Queer Issues Project
SK	Queer	Black; mixed race	"campus feminist stuff" Performance art Artel "briefly involved in anarchism" POCtalk
EL	"read as cis female;" queer	Mixed race "sometimes white, which comes with a lot of passing privilege"	Sexual Health Resource Centre Queen's Pride Project QPoC foodshare Black Lives Matter and Ferguson Solidarity
HB	"that's a really complicated thing," "I don't know how I should identify"; queer and pansexual	East Indian and Dutch "genetically and biologically;" Light-skinned; mixed; white and Indian	OPIRG [in another city/not Kingston] "organizing is not just event planning" POCtalk
TC	cis male; pansexual and queer	South Asian; "read as Indian even though I'm Pakistani"	EQuIP QPoC foodshare

Figure 1. Profile of participants.⁷

⁴ Self-described by the participant, i.e. in the presence of adjectives such as "cis," these were stated by the participants. The absence of these adjectives in some cases is intentional. Throughout the paper, I use the participants' self-identified gender pronouns.

⁵ As provided in the interview. Some identifiers have been slightly modified to mask participants' identities.

⁶ Colloquial term for queer person of colour.

⁷ Some qualifiers have been modified (indicated in square brackets) by myself in order to mask the participants' identity.

My original research premise assumed that simply acknowledging difference in a positive manner would not be adequate in an environment where activist organizing took place because of potential for conflict in determining goals. However, the primary sources of conflicts that were brought up in the interviews were not related to organizing, but rather, the everyday interactions that took place. Participants only briefly touched on specific organizations in their responses; the majority of their discussions pertained to everyday discrimination within communities they identified with.

Themes

Three significant themes emerged from interviews: community, intersectional failure, and the performativity of engagement. The theme of community involves the use of community as a notion in and of itself, and the notions that are also involved in its formation. Intersectional failure, or the failure to engage with multiple identities, is another main theme. The third significant theme involves the performativity of engagement; that is, the ways in which queer people of colour react to intersectional failure, which is dependent on where they are and who they are around.

Construction of “Community”

Community is a significant concept when describing human relations pertaining to queerness and racialization. Demarcating a community necessarily involves processes of inclusion and exclusion; that is, who constitutes the community, and who is placed outside of it. As my research was premised on the idea that community is difficult to construct, unstable, and unclear, the word community was not used in any of my interview prompts. Yet “community”

appears in the interview transcripts of 6 out of 7 participants, even though I did not mention the word community at all⁸.

Participants brought up community in various contexts, of which two were significant: community in terms of place, and community in terms of identity. Both involve geographic closeness, but in different ways. Community is referenced in terms of immediate physical closeness in the sense of place, such as the “Kingston community” and “Queen’s [University] community.” Community is significantly referenced in discussions of identity as well, primarily in reference to “the queer community” or communities of various racialized groups; this second use is in terms of closeness based on identity. For participants, community is heavily involved in conceptualizing different identities; the construction of community is instrumental in the spatialization of identity and vice versa.

As mentioned, many participants brought up community in their interviews without being prompted. What is said about communities suggests a number of qualities and attributes that people apply in conceptualizing community.

RM describes one formation of a particular community, consisting of other students in her program who “are really interested in indigenous rights”:

...I wouldn't say it's a formalized club, but I would definitely call it a community. Most of the people in the community I would consider to be more settler allies, but you form a community of solidarity where you're working together on things, and try to help them learn more and give back.

In this instance, a community is formed through a common affinity and/or interest with indigeneity. Commonalities draw people closer together and provide a basis for spatial

⁸ Except when community was first brought up by the participant; I asked follow-up probes about what community meant to them. E.g.: When you say community, what are you referring to or who are you referring to?

organization. RM identifies this group within her program major as a community through a common interest in indigenous rights.

Another participant, SK, said the following in response to a follow-up probe⁹ about what he was referring to when he used the term community:

...communities [have] a universality about them. They function because of my proximity to the particular groups of people that I've met, but these are also communities that exist virtually everywhere. And they're the same functional ideology, and the same motivation. I don't think that if I entered white liberal feminism in [another city], it would be— I don't think it would look radically different from when I entered it here. I think the ideology transcends geography.

SK defines his immediate community through physical proximity (i.e. spatial contiguity), but notes that community is not simply a bounded physical place. When SK states that “ideology transcends geography,” he is understanding geography in a physical, locational sense. However, the latter part of his quote alludes to how communities may be (and are) imagined on a scale beyond the local. According to SK, even if they are based in different cities, white liberal feminism and its associated communities are spatialized similarly and vary in scale.

EL, when asked about their experiences in Kingston, describes their sense of community with other queer individuals through comparing Kingston to the city¹⁰ they were in previously:

“I feel like Kingston is so white and so small and then you-- it just feels like there's no queer community, even though there is and I know queer people. It doesn't feel the same as when I was in [city]. I just felt so different. We were mostly people of colour or mixed, and the white people there were actually aware [...] in knowing and learning and understanding. We were all queer in our group of friends in high school. Even though most of my friends here are queer it just feels more disparate. We don't seem to have as much of a cohesive community, or as broad a community. It's small but it's... it's a bit disparate almost. I feel like in [city] it's a lot bigger.”

⁹ My question: “When you say community, what are you referring to or who are you referring to?”

¹⁰ This participant could be easily identified through the other identification information provided in this paper along with their city of origin, hence the removal of the city's name.

EL states that they do not feel that there is a queer community in Kingston, even though they say “there is.” This comment about the size of Kingston’s population indicates that EL’s conceptualization of what constitutes a community requires a critical mass of individuals in order for that group to “feel” like a community. In addition, EL implies that Kingston being “white [and] small” contributes to their feelings of lack of community, and further goes on to mention the racial composition of the community they had experienced in their previous city. Whether it is that the queer community EL finds in Kingston contains fewer individuals, or that these individuals are mostly white, these two attributes (or a combination thereof) are involved in the formation of their notion of community.

Although the bounds of community will inevitably be somewhat unclear, in every case, communities are constructed with and between people with some commonality. Depending on what attributes link people together and at what scale they exist (e.g. feminist movements exist at local, national, and international levels), communities require, at the very least, some form of spatial contiguity. . People “gravitate to geographic locales in part for togetherness (Garber 2013).” Whether that locale is a physical, ideological, or identity-based form of organization, these bonds that formulate community are established through closeness/proximity with others.

Community is a significant idea, constructed in a variety of ways. Participants’ constructions of community are reflective of this claim, showcasing a number of established notions such as physical closeness, personal acquaintance, and a sense of belonging (Aitken 2009). At the same time, their responses also allude to complexities and nuances that contribute to the definition difficulties, such as variations in identity, that complicate community beyond just propinquity.

Regardless of this difficulty in its definition, community as an idea is also almost always a positive construct. Young (1990) discusses the ideal of community, noting that community is a concept used extensively by critics of welfare capitalist society to imagine a society that is “free from domination and oppression.” Although some communities are not perceived positively, as is evident from EL and SK’s responses, the ideal of community is still something to aspire to. Participants’ responses reflect this, with many participants speaking about their search for community, albeit one that is compatible with their identities.

How, then, is the ideal of community constructed, and how do individuals’ searches for community manifest? HB, speaking about her experience moving from another city to Kingston, describes a difference in regards to the community of people of colour:

I've never had community. In [city], there were four politicized people of colour that I was friends with over five years. And we did not have community. So to have POCTalk— I am freaking out about it still. This is amazing! I can't believe this exists, [a] space for people of colour, this is amazing. And that was like— oh my gosh, there's a place for me here.

According to HB, community is not simply the presence and proximity of similarly identified people. POCTalk is an open-mic event centered on the performances and experiences of people of colour. It takes place at the Sleepless Goat café and attracts approximately 25-50 people per performance. HB’s comment reveals the following difference between the city they came from versus Kingston; particularly, that POCTalk is a recognized event which takes place in a public venue.

Another participant, SK, who has also participated in POCTalk, stated in his interview that he did so out of seeking “more POC-centric ways of doing politics” in reference to the event. Performers at POCTalk are all self-identified people of colour. So this particular location of

community is also political and deeply tied to personal identity; the decision to participate within this community was informed by the desire to centre people of colour within SK's politics.

After their move to Kingston, HB also described being sought out explicitly to take part in activism as a person of colour, given their background in anti-oppression. They described the process of coming into contact with POC issues, events, and other initiatives¹¹:

I think in Kingston people expect me to do lots of things [...] I think it has something to do maybe– I don't think people would be asking me to do so many things if I were a white person. It's all centered around POC stuff. Helping out with POCTalk, or the things that I mentioned earlier, doing anti-oppression. Or facilitating workshops.

Identity provides one common basis through which people seek each other out. In this case, it is racialization and racialized identity which leads to the formation of communities of racialized people. People do not create community arbitrarily; others are invited into communities because of common ground. Thus the search for an ideal is also informed by what individuals perceive as ideal.

A food-share group consisting of individuals who are both queer and racialized was mentioned by three of the participants. This group was discussed very positively by participants.

I attended Ignite¹² for queer people of colour [...] it's a great opportunity to talk about both sides. (MN)

I'm in [the] queer people of colour group, which is awesome and really fun. It's food gatherings. (EL)

Spaces like POCTalk, friends, just having friends, having the foodshare. That's amazing, it's so nice. It's those spaces that I really really value. (HB)

All three participants also show a positive perception of this particular community grouping. MN mentions the uniqueness of the experiences of queer people of colour and that being around

¹¹ Including, as we both noted, participation in this research.

¹² The formal name of this group. This name was not mentioned by the other participants. Ignite is currently listed as a working group of OPIRG Kingston.

similar individuals provides an opportunity for discussion that is not found in two of the other groups she is involved in. Similarly, EL and HB also describe the group favourably, although they are less specific as to why this site of community is inclusive.

The imagination of an ideal of community drives people to seek out locations of community, and these are not necessarily exclusive. While inclusive communities were not discussed to the same extent as communities where exclusion was experienced, within communities that are viewed as positive in this particular study, there was a distinct sense of affinity and similarity across participants' identities.

Although community is certainly constructed as positive in the aforementioned instances, communities are also sites of exclusion to certain individuals. It is the extent and form of engagement which become inadequate. Acknowledgements of difference are not necessarily happening to the degree to which participants view it as positive; is not necessarily erased, but instead, it is not negotiated appropriately.

When speaking about exclusionary communities, participants had various explanations as to how and why exclusion took place. SK detailed some of the difficulties that certain communities had with dialogue around anti-oppression:

I think that there are communities that simply cannot understand certain types of pain. And that when that dialogue is introduced to them, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, whatever label they smack on because they read a good article one time. You know? You know, one time they read bell hooks and thought it was really cool.

SK goes on to describe how individuals who label themselves as anti-racist and/or anti-oppressive are welcoming, but that do not adequately address their own shortcomings when he "start[s] calling them out." In other words, while these people are ideologically dedicated to anti-oppression, their personal practices are not fully (if at all) anti-oppressive.

MN also describes experiences of exclusion within queer communities she has been involved in.

I'm always very aware of how they might view me. Because if I let in the queer community there can be this... for some reason there's this idea that it's more acceptable to say bigoted things because of oh it's preference, or they think they face enough oppression as it is... there's an entitlement to talk about other things and an entitlement to say like, no femmes, no fatties, no blacks.

The capacity to understand others' identity is not easily developed with identities that are not one's own. This ineptitude to conceptualize queer and/or racialized identities underlies many interpersonal conflicts, and in turn, conflicts that are reflected at the community level and at larger scales.

Of course, what is exclusionary for one person is inclusionary for another. One of the participants, AA, reported not wanting to associate herself with other racialized individuals of similar backgrounds.

Whenever I go to the clubs fair and I see the Hindu heritage or the South Asian heritage clubs I always look the other way. Don't contact me, that's not me [...] Sometimes I feel out of place in spaces where people of colour are because, maybe because I was raised in a fairly white area. We don't really have a culture, or a funny name, or funny clothes or random holidays.

AA's relationship to other people of colour differs from the other participants in the sense that she does not find a similar affinity with racialized people. Depending on an individual's consciousness and means of moving through a normatively white environment, their engagement with other people of colour can vary.

AA also describes a location of queer community, the Education on Queer Issues Project (EQuIP), which she does associate more closely with:

EQuIP was the first thing I did as a queer person because I had just come out to everybody in university. So that's really fun. And I find it's a positive experience. One of the things that I like is that it's a platform for me to talk

about my experiences. I don't really answer the discussion questions, but why I enjoy it is when I'm sharing an experience I've had.

For AA, her queer and racialized identity both play a significant factor in informing her decisions of whom to associate with. She distances herself from organizations of similarly racialized people, but seeks out proximity with other queer individuals.

Although EQUiP is considerably queer-friendly, it still exists within and is a product of an environment of normative whiteness which marginalizes non-white bodies (even if they are also queer-identified). EQUiP is a positive experience for AA, but at the same time, another participant, MN, has had uncomfortable experiences at EQUiP. Here, she discusses why EQUiP has been an uncomfortable environment:

I find that like in the queer community there are times when cis gay boys like to really pretend that they have a sassy inner black woman. And take up a lot of space and it's just incredibly uncomfortable and I don't know, there were just instances where it's like I was threatening people's space just by existing, and another person, a cis white boy wanted to be the diva, wanted to be like, the main person [...] it just felt like – I suppose in their own heads they thought that [I] was taking up too much space, and they weren't taking up enough.

Although AA and MN are talking about the same group, their perception of the group and its environment is very different from each other's. They both identify as queer and racialized, yet MN experiences exclusion in a way that AA does not.

Additionally, MN's observation of space alludes to the environment of normative whiteness that this group (and the various other communities mentioned by other participants) are functioning within, as well as the discomfort that may come when disrupting dominant means of producing space. Within an environment of normative whiteness, it is only noticed that there is, in fact, in a "sea of whiteness" when a racialized body disrupts that normativity (Ahmed 2007). The space that whiteness occupies within what MN refers to as the "queer community" is invisible until it is disrupted by the presence of racialized individuals.

The construction of community is significant as the way in which people create or reduce distance between themselves, and the way in which borders and difference are drawn have implications for the replication of systems of domination. Identities affect the social groups that people seek out. For participants, forming or partaking with communities in which they feel comfortable is a desired goal. Yet an ideal community is considerably easier to imagine than it is to create.

Community can be, and is intersectional; however, a failure at engaging intersecting identities in a positive way within communities is one of the causes of exclusion.

Intersectional Failure: sexuality and race

A fracturing of identity through limited recognition serves to erase and marginalize unrecognized identities. Intersectionality, the concept coined by Crenshaw (1991), offers a way of theorizing multiple axes of oppression. The use of intersectionality as a framework recognizes that oppression is multi-dimensional. Young's (1990) argument about how the ideal of community erases difference can be understood through an intersectional lens; because the ideal assumes a monolithic community, it subsequently does not acknowledge intersecting identities.

Young's ideal of city life as a way to coexist is an interesting paradigm through which to understand the exclusion that is taking place within the communities mentioned in this study. Her solution to exclusionary communities is that there must be an openness to difference. First and foremost, this openness is not always even present in the first place, based off participants' interviews about their communities. Second, even when discussions of identity are more intersectional, this recognition is not necessarily happening to an extent where racialized individuals perceive this as positive.

Although people may be able to acknowledge intersectionality as an academic concept, based off participants' responses, there is limited evidence of instances where intersectionality has successfully been integrated into practice in Kingston and Queen's. Thus I term the following theme "intersectional failure;" a failure at engaging a multiplicity of identities beyond one's own in a pragmatic way that contributes towards positive coexistence.

Identity, by virtue of being (quite simply) socially constructed traits, places certain limitations on who can lay claim to particular identities; conversely, notions of identity are inherently constraining because to qualify an identity requires a process of determining who is deemed to "fit in." This is not to suggest that identity is limiting; rather, the way that identity is formed and understood leads to restrictions on individuals' abilities to conceptualize identities outside their own in a practical sense.

One participant noted that her queer and racialized identities had to be "separate" from each other.

I definitely find that they have to be two separate identities for me. I can of course talk about both those issues but not at the same time. (AA)

Participants do conceptualize their identities differently. Other participants noted that they explicitly identified as a queer person of colour (QPoC, colloquially):

I identify as... yeah a queer person of colour. Those things are really inseparable for me now. (HB)

I am not just a queer person or I am not just a person of colour. I'm both. Those experiences... that combined experience is very unique and it's not something I get from just ACSA or just EQuIP. (MN)

Here, it is important to acknowledge how identities can be seen as distinct from each other in AA's perception, in addition to acknowledging an identity outside of just "queer plus racialized" in HB and MN's explicit identification of queer people of colour as a distinct category.

Acknowledging a variety of distinctive identities allows for more fulsome engagement of all of those identities, not just one or the other. The difference in participants' conception of their identities may also be why a community can be seen as exclusionary for one person and inclusive for another. Not everybody who has similar identities will spatialize these identities the same way, and subsequently affects their social relations with others who are like or different.

This situation is also precisely what makes intersectionality a loaded concept: what degree of “intersectionality” must be achieved for something—say, a study—to be intersectional? Does it simply require a recognition of two or more identities outside hegemonic norms, or does it also involve an examination of how two intersecting identities transform each other and create a unique experience? Undertaking either or both recognition within the boundaries of each identity, or a more complex analysis, could be considered intersectional. McCall (2014) categorizes the varieties of research approaches taken to intersectionality¹³, and goes on to raise the caveats that not all intersectionality research falls neatly within these categories, and that she herself may have miscategorised the work of some scholars in her discussion of approaches. Suffice to say that subsequently, one could argue that this makes the task of formulating generalizations rather tenuous, which is perhaps why people seem to have such difficulty with intersecting identities.

I discuss intersectionality at length because of its prevalence and relevance to the people and communities situated in Kingston. Intersectionality is a commonly recognized and utilized approach to activist organizing; five participants explicitly brought up the term during their interviews. At the very least, most organizations and activists involved in anti-oppressive

¹³ Anticategorical complexity, intercategorical complexity, and intracategorical complexity. I am not entirely sure what my own work would be classified as.

struggle are somewhat aware of multiple identities. Many organizations who make their mandates publicly available indicate that they can name a number of axes of oppression.

The following mandate is from The Artel, which is both a venue for performance art and an artists' collective.

The Artel aims to be an accountable space. This means that we do not tolerate misogynist, misogynoiristic, transmisogynist, racist, monoracist, queerphobic, transexclusionary, classist, ableist language or behaviour that perpetuates, advocates, enables or apologizes for abuse culture and/ or rape culture, or otherwise oppressive language or actions in our space. [emphasis mine]

This mandate covers race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and sexualized violence. In comparison, the Education on Queer Issues Project has a less explicit mandate insofar as acknowledging a range of social identities, only demarcating sexuality and gender in particular:

[The Education on Queer Issues Project's] purpose is to create a safe environment for individuals on Queen's campus and in Kingston of all sexual/romantic orientations and gender identities. EQUiP strives to create a fun, welcoming, and educational community for queer and queer-positive individuals while advocating for human rights and raising awareness about queer-related issues.

Of course, given that EQUiP is very explicitly focused on queer identities, it may not be as surprising that the group is not addressing multiple identities to the same extent that the Artel is. What does seem more remarkable is that regardless of the extent to which their mandates are intersectional, both of these organizations are still sites of exclusion. Previously, MN mentioned how “cis gay boys” at EQUiP contributed to discomfort when they emulated having a “sassy black inner woman.” Although there may be no discomfort related to queer issues, queer positivity does not guarantee that all queer people will feel comfortable within that environment because of marginalization related to other intersecting identities.

SK had the following to say about the collectives he had been involved with, implicating white individuals who had been involved at the Artel:

[...] the moment that they need to be engaged with any actions of their own, or how they contribute to a potentially violent environment, is when that link suddenly becomes really hindered. And I do often notice that my communication with people of colour is very different in that regard. And even when there is pain there seems to be a different type of communication happening and a different regard of pain. Whereas white people don't access that very well.

Despite the Artel's relatively comprehensive anti-oppressive mandate, the people involved with the collective still contribute to racialized oppression. SK's statement identifies a refusal on the part of people who are white to take responsibility for how their personal actions can replicate racism.

One of the factors underlying the replication of oppression seems to be a refusal to acknowledge one's personal contribution to oppression. In a case study about discussions of race within the classroom environment, Donadey (2009) discusses how white women students are "perfectly happy" to incorporate an analysis of sexuality and class to analyses of gender—they do not completely reject a model of intersecting multiple identities— but resist incorporating race and racialization. Donadey posits that this takes place because it is easier to "get in touch with one's experience as victim of a specific form of oppression than it is to take responsibility for the ways in which we benefit from the oppression of other groups or peoples."

It is clear that an acknowledgement of intersecting identities, coupled with some knowledge of anti-oppression, is not a foolproof formula for creating an environment that truly does not replicate relations of social domination and marginalization. In the previous anecdote, RS alludes to why there may be a difference between conversations with white people versus conversations with racialized people: that when it comes to discussions of race, the "link" (i.e.

the ability to communicate effectively) he has with white people is inhibited when they are implicated in a position of oppressive power.

These sentiments of disengagement are further reflected in a more detailed description SK provides specifically about white queer communities, and how SK's discussions of race proceeded with these people:

With white queer communities which I've experienced in my time, there's an open identification of anti-racism, if that makes sense. And when you try to address the points of their identity that actually are explicitly racist, and that do contribute to a racist dichotomy, or frame your relationship in certain power dynamic ways, they're really not able to tune into that well. Because they see themselves as so, by default of being queer, so anti-racist.

White queer individuals in the particular community that SK speaks of, by virtue of being queer, consider themselves anti-racist. Experiencing one particular axis of oppression does not mean that one can say that particular experience is really like another form of oppression. Queer oppression is simultaneously like and unlike racialized oppression but this may not always be apparent to people.

The term "oppression Olympics" has emerged as a means to describe the struggle between groups to prove that one is more oppressed than another (Hancock 2007). Yet it is abundantly apparent to the participants within this study that racialization and queerness are two very different experiences. EK speaks about why this is the case:

Well race is always that visible thing. Unlike queer identity which is invisible in many ways, not always [...] Queerness often becomes I think a secretive thing, the idea of being in the closet right? You conceal if you're experiencing oppression whereas race is very visible. So it comes with different assumptions about each.

Racialization and queerness are both like and unlike. They are both axes of oppression, but the experience of each is different enough that saying they are the same is completely inaccurate. EK points out one particular aspect of how they are different: namely, that race is constructed

through physical markers of difference whereas sexual and gender identity can be invisible. It should also be noted that racialization and queerness have distinct historical contexts that inform the way racialized/queer oppression is enacted in contemporary times.

These histories also intertwine in ways that make apparent normative whiteness; this is especially pertinent in the case of the Stonewall Riots. Cultural critics point out that the popular assumption of the image of the Stonewall activist is of the cis gay white man, ignoring the contributions of trans women of colour, and leading to a “whitewashing” of the movement’s history (Roberts 2009), another example of the normativity of whiteness (along with sexism and cissexism) within the queer imaginary. Within a modern Canadian context, racism is still prevalent in queer communities and “reflects systemic and discriminatory practices of the wider Canadian culture (Giwa and Greensmith 2012).” Although white queer individuals experience oppression based on their sexual and gender identity, they themselves also carry biases about particular identities, through socialization within a Canadian culture.

The extent of prevailing norms related to social oppression is apparent when SK discusses how straight men of colour have difficulty incorporating other axes of oppression into their politics.

[...] with straight men of colour I've noticed a kind of similar trend, the trend I find with queer white communities. It's that a lot of straight cis men of colour who are openly anti-racist struggle a lot with misogyny [and] homophobia [,] incorporating a gender dynamic into their politic. Even anti-racism is intuitive for them. They've lived through it. And yet when you try to apply a politic of intersectionality to them [,] it's very difficult for them because I think they seem themselves as intuitively anti-sexist. They're less willing to even enter the conversation by virtue of their own oppressed identity. And I find that similar to white queer communities, as long as they can use the label of anti-racist, they don't feel like they need to do any further introspection.

Donadey’s point about how it is easier to conceptualize oneself as a victim of oppression (2009) is apparent in SK’s discussion of straight cis men of colour. There is a disconnect between what

self-identified “anti-oppressive/anti-racist” individuals believe is adequate in order to identify as such, and what is an actualization of anti-oppression in practice, according to marginalized individuals. One does not simply become anti-oppressive by claiming it as a label, nor does membership within an oppressed social group confer an understanding of other axes of oppression. Self-identifying as anti-oppressive might help individuals to manage their own guilt, but does not contribute towards an intersectional politics of solidarity.

The replication of oppression by individuals theoretically committed to anti-oppression can take place, especially when those anti-oppressive people have membership within identity groups that hold power and privilege. Critical whiteness studies has proposed that the acceptance of oneself as a “white anti-racist racist” is necessary in order to recognize the power that white individuals inherently hold (Case 2012). There are two particular functions that I will identify here which are at play regarding concept of the anti-racist racist: first, a commitment to opposing oppression; second, a recognition that one still embodies oppression and power in a contemporary social context. It is the second aspect that is primarily lacking in the communities discussed by participants; the inability or refusal to be self-critical of one’s personal social privileges is a key contributor to intersectional failure.

Earlier in the discussion of community, several participants mentioned that QPoC communities were relatively inclusive. MN explains why this might be the case, in regards to the particular intersection of queer/race identity:

Because even if we're racialized differently, we still do experience intersecting oppressions. We do have similar identities though not exactly the same. There's just an understanding. And you don't have to explain things as you would to other people.

The above quote provides insight as to how people find similar affinity across difference. In this particular situation, the experience of racialization provides an “understanding” as a means to

access a form of intersectionality. While the experience of racialization is varied, the shared experience of existing outside of whiteness provides a common ground of understanding for racialized individuals that white people cannot necessarily access.

As yet another complication to intersectionality, marginalization can still be experienced even when everyone involved is challenging instances of oppression. In the following situation, TC is speaking about a time where a group of queer individuals of varying racialization were speaking about racism in pop culture. A racialized person pointed out that a particular music artist was racist; the white people involved then all began to reiterate that this artist was, indeed, racist. While this seems like a welcoming circumstance—white individuals acknowledging racism—according to TC, that was not necessarily the case:

[...] while I appreciate the allyship I do not appreciate it when minorities who are trying to explain something are drowned out by people. And they are our friends. Of course I think they're our friends. I just think they should listen in some situations. It's impossible for you to know the minority experience. You can't.

TC reiterates that while the white queers in this situation are most certainly his friends, and that he appreciates the “allyship,” he does not appreciate it when the voice of someone who is white overpowers the voice of someone who is racialized, especially in a discussion about race.

Intersectional failure is apparent in the interactions of queer and racialized people with white and/or queer communities. It takes place when individuals outside of particular identities fail to engage with those identities, such as in the case of denying one's own privilege, or the drawing of inaccurate parallels between two axes of oppression. In addition, even after an acknowledgement of an anti-oppressive standpoint that is committed to intersectionality, and recognizing a multiplicity of identities, prevailing power relations are still reinscribed through everyday life.

Performativity of Engagement

Performativity of engagement is presupposed on the notion that queer and race identity are performative, and that a significant occasion that this performativity takes place is in response to instances of intersectional failure. The ways in which people react to and handle intersectional failure is dependent on where they are and who they are around, which is to say the performativity of engagement is spatially contingent based upon identity. The result is the creation of a segregated geography of racialization, queerness, and activism, where queer/racialized individuals can identify and participate in certain contexts and places, but not in others.

Judith Butler's theory of performativity (1990) poses that gender identity is constituted through repeated acts, or that it must be performed. Butler's dialogue focuses on gender; however, the concept of performativity can also be applied to different identities— in the context of this discussion, the performativity of race. Both race and gender are “performative reiterations,” and both function through “compelling subjects to assume or identify with certain identity categories (Rottenberg 2004).” As has been mentioned, race and racialization are very distinct from gender and sexuality, but the two vectors of identity are both constantly reinscribed through acting.

Performative politics also involve the creation of space and spatiality. Performativity takes place in a number of different settings, and conversely, different settings elicit different performances. In various contexts, participants spoke about being aware of their identities and how their responses to certain situations were subsequently affected.

RM, a participant who noted she was very white-passing, details how her reactions to the situations she experiences in everyday settings can constitute part of her indigenous identity.

Here, she discusses an experience that she states is somewhat common amongst white-passing

Native individuals:

I've always been that person to be the token one, and not only just the token one, but the spokesperson. When I started getting into being an activist, it wasn't like I got up on a little soapbox, it was like someone put one under me. And I know a lot of [...] people who identify as indigenous, having that happen to them, and that's where you hear a lot of getting outed in a sense because it is a lot easier to be under the radar and then as soon as you identify yourself you become the expert.

For RM, the act of identifying as Native constitutes part of that identity. In addition, she goes on to discuss how she must react in the face of tokenization—she “become[s] the expert,” showing that how she reacts to expectations around her identity can also constitute part of her performance as a Native person.

RM had further remarks on the topic of being Native and white-passing, and how whiteness was assumed to be a settler quality. She mentioned how when she identified herself as Native, respondents would occasionally hesitate; she says that this is because they are wondering “how much Native” she is.

For people race is very visual [...] indigenous groups are considered to be non-white. Their purity is also associated with that, with how brown they are, I guess I would say. So someone like myself who doesn't have, who doesn't appear in a very superficial sense to look like that I feel like it's the idea that it's the term “enough.” Like I'm not native enough to qualify for things. Or in some people's eyes I'm not native enough for them to consider me Native.

Settler-colonialism, along with white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, are systems that work in tandem with each other (Smith 2010). In order not to have her identity erased under settler-whiteness, RM must go through the act of identification.

An act of identification is also an act to reinscribe racial boundaries. The action of identifying one's race is not simply an act of labelling, it constitutes the very process of racialization (Thomas 2005). Defining identity is a constant, ongoing process. It also takes place

in opposition to another, such as the way that whiteness is the invisible marker against which racialized difference is measured (Peake and Ray 2001). Under the normativity of settler-whiteness, RM notes that it is easier to be “under the radar;” as soon as she is inscribed as different, this marks her as outside of the hegemonic power of whiteness.

The performativity of participants gives rise to an uneven geography of racialization and activism. In an anecdote about his experience in an airport, TC describes an instance of racial profiling. He mentions that he has learned to react to racism from his mother. Being racialized, for TC, has resulted in the necessity of learning how to perform his racialized identity in a way that is deemed appropriate and does not lead to further consequences.

It was at [the] airport where we’re doing the transfer. My mom and I were the only brown people [...] so we get taken to special screening. Obviously. [The agents] are asking me questions [...] he asked what was my home address. At the time we were living in Dubai. So I say Ume Sukuem road, unit whatever. It’s U-M-E space S-U-K-U-I-E-M. I get to the S-U and one of the dudes is like Osama bin Laden? And they both literally burst out laughing, I’ve never seen anyone laugh harder at something. My mom’s just like ah ha ha ha ha, just kept going with it. She is much older than me, she has dealt with a lot of bullshit. I love the things she does, I’ve learned to deal with racism from her.

In this particular situation, not antagonizing the agents even in the face of their racism is necessary for TC and his mother to proceed through the airport. TC’s experience demonstrates how the actions of racialized individuals are constrained through their identity and social context.

A major situation where a performance of identity takes place is in response to instances of oppression. Depending on an individual’s context, the ways in which participants choose to engage with these instances varies. In the previous situation, TC and his mother go along without challenging the racism that they face in order to present as acceptable to avoid further discrimination. In another situation— an instance of homophobia—TC reacts differently:

[name] and I were in drag for this thing, walking downtown, these dudes roll down and they yell faggot. We high fived because we’re like, haha, [I] don’t

care. I don't need your shit. Get out of your car, I'll kick your ass, you'll get your ass kicked by someone in a dress.

TC displays considerably more resistance here than he is at the airport. It is important to note that racism and homophobia are not entirely comparable, or else I would be replicating the same type of intersectional failure I discussed in the last chapter. What is significant here is that there are a variety of ways that TC reacts to oppression, depending on the situation and context, suggesting a performative politics and a geography of emotion.

Other participants also show how their response to instances of oppression can differ depending on their context and relationship to the person. In each situation, MN does want to speak up against what is taking place, but the ways in which she communicates her discontent is affected by who she is speaking to.

If it's friends then I will flat-out call them out, and tell them they're being incredibly disrespectful and that it's not okay. I'm not going to stick around with that treatment. If it's someone that I'm not so close with then sometimes depending on the mood I will just call them out and walk away and let them deal with that, the aftermath. If it's someone in a position of authority and I don't feel safe calling them out then I will make a complaint or go to someone else who hopefully isn't as unsafe.

MN is more comfortable to “call out” individuals when the balance of power is relatively equal. When it comes to someone in a position of relative power, if MN does not feel safe she will disengage from that situation (and re-engage in another). This difference in engagement exposes the use of performative politics and the presence of uneven areas of activism; namely, that anti-oppression can be suppressed within certain spaces.

RM brought up the example of the classroom as a site where performative politics take place. In this situation, a professor has said something problematic about Native individuals. While RM expresses a desire to correct the mistake, that particular classroom space is constructed to be repressive of these dissenting opinions:

[...] unless people are really willing to listen and be productive and really open, it's so mentally exhausting to be there [...] this sounds so bad but you feel like... you feel oppression. You feel it. You feel... the air around you is just oppressive. You don't know how to describe it but you feel really heavy. You feel the weight of it. And it just sucks. 'Cause when it's just one person in a classroom of 200 people? It's not going to happen [...] do you want to be the kind who corrects the [professor]? It can be antagonistic.

Silence is a common reaction from participants who are restricted from engaging within particular spaces. Although RM and MN both want to engage in some form, they are limited from doing so within their immediate social context; the dominant atmosphere of the classroom and the lack of support and solidarity is too overbearing for them to do so.

In Sara Ahmed's (2010) discussion of happiness, she details how situations that lead to unhappiness are kept at a distance. An "affective geography of happiness takes shape" as participants "refuse proximity to someone out of fear [they] will be infected by unhappiness" (Ahmed 97). In the context of Ahmed's discussion, RM's classroom is a site of unhappiness on a map of racialization. While RM does not physically refuse proximity to the situation¹⁴, there is still avoidance and distancing on an affective level.

Participants will completely disengage from organizations and people that they find exclusionary. Another participant, SK, spoke about coming into what he termed "campus white feminist stuff," but eventually developing a critical consciousness of how those movements failed to consider people of colour. Because of the aforementioned intersectional failure, it affects how individuals place themselves in relation to other people, and how their identity is implicated in particular contexts.

¹⁴ As an undergraduate student who has to sit through lectures where similar sentiments are common, I can understand the desire to leave in conjunction with the fact that the maintenance of my grades is very dependent on my presence in class.

HB described having to learn to interact with political settings in a specific way because of the fact that they were racialized. They made the following observation on how they had to perform a certain political identity in order for their voice to be validated:

White people can say political things— they can say the exact same things that I've told them, and people will take them seriously and be like oh wow that's so insightful and so deep. I say it and I'm violent, I'm angry, I'm a threat. [...] since then I've developed relationships with politicized people of colour to kind of build skills [...] I learned [to] interact with those things and empower myself around those things.

As a racialized person, HB must perform their identity in a certain way that is not expected of white political activists, in order to be taken seriously.

The ability of participants to discuss their experiences is also constrained in part through identity. EL also discusses how their reaction to intersectional failure can differ depending on the racialization of the people they were around. In their response to how they discussed race with white people, EL said:

I usually try to make them slightly uncomfortable [...] Usually they'll ask invasive questions and then I'll respond abruptly cause then I'm like I'm so sick of this. But I don't know. I tend to really try to emphasize the degree to which I have a lot of privilege and the degree to which colourism is a thing. But when it comes to white people they don't even care about that [...] now I'm just like [expletive] you.

This differs from how EL interacts with other people of colour, indicating a performance dependent on context. EL states that they found they could more easily discuss race because of a common background understanding of racialization.

Usually it's from a better starting point where it's not me having to start from: “white people have privilege. People of colour face oppression and discrimination.” This is usually not the starting point of the discussion. It's usually “oh my god, I know.” Or “oh, this microaggression happened, I want to talk about it. Go ahead,” that kind of thing [...] usually they come from a place where we have this understanding of what it is to be a person of colour living in a white world.

They went on to say that they were more open to conversations about racism with white individuals when there was some indication that they were willing to learn.

The performativity of engagement shows how a relational queer/race geography arises. Identity is performative, and so affects the ways in which participants subsequently choose to engage with situations. The performativity of identity also creates an unevenness in the geography of activism; it is very present in some contexts, and completely lacking in others. Queer/racialized people exist— that is, they are visible, literally and/or emotively — in one context but not another. Without the disruptions caused by racialized bodies, normative whiteness remains invisible. By no means should the onus ever be placed on oppressed individuals to take responsibility for the education and/or self-consciousness of the privileged. Nevertheless, (visible) queer/race activists and people remain concentrated within certain proximities, and completely absent from others.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The insights provided by the three themes of community, intersectional failure, and performativity of engagement reveal what processes of oppression are taking place within activist organizations. Community will remain a very prevalent concept and there will always be a multiplicity of identities within those communities. Regardless of whether one chooses to uphold the ideal of community or to reject community as a concept, it is clear that the idea of community continues to be a major framework through which people structure and conceptualize social relations, and that those communities are not adequately addressing intersectionality. The way in which participants conduct themselves in or enter some places and not others is indicative of a performance of identity. And of course, it is often the case that intersectional failure is an indicator of a space of exclusion. The identification of these themes provide a point of departure from which identifiable communities can endeavour to improve relationships that marginalize people on the basis of their identities.

How, precisely, can these communities undertake a truly comprehensive anti-oppressive project? First there must be a commitment to this project from all of the individuals that comprise that community, in addition to a willingness to be self-reflexive and critical of one's position. This may prove to be a major hurdle, as this research shows people are not particularly inclined to acknowledge how they themselves embody identities that oppress others. However, this barrier is one that can be breached; many have done so and many more will. Encouraging this commitment can and must take place at both an individual and community level.

Communities and/or organizations that are dedicated to undertaking this project have the potential to affect this change in the individuals that comprise that community, and vice versa.

Communities must also be ready to develop an intersectional politics of difference. This involves introspection between individuals of that community to develop a deeper, more honest knowledge of different experiences and how to engage with those differences. Of course, if a community is not willing to do this, it must be ready to acknowledge that it is an exclusionary community. I do not think that this is a terrible thing to admit; if community is defined through inclusion there will also exist exclusion. For example, the QPoC foodshare community organization would exclude white, cis/straight individuals. Exclusion, in its strictest sense, is not necessarily oppressive; however, in the context of this research, exclusion from activist organizations does take place as a result of relationships that replicate oppression.

I do not pretend I am offering a panacea to oppression at an interpersonal level here, nor is it likely that a catch-all solution even exists. For example, another approach could be to simply advocate for the abolishment of all communities and social groups. This may seem absurd as the drive to find and associate with similar others is a strong human desire and forms the basis for many forms of social organization. However, isolation and withdrawal is a plausible reaction, and was indeed a response mentioned by a participant. The only generalization that can be made is that no generalizations can be made; it seems responses to the issues that are present in these communities need to be as unique and as specific as the issues themselves.

The question of how queer/race experiences, or what is categorized as such, fits into broader structures of systemic domination is not one which I have fully explored in the body of this text. The narratives featured in this research offer a window of insight into the way that oppression is spatialized within communities and interpersonal relationships, all within an immediate Kingston context. The effects of exclusion through social marginalization and domination are consistent across scale. For example, racial microaggressions take place on an

interpersonal scale primarily referenced by participants. Racism continues to be reflected in white queer communities and in anti-oppressive organizations, but also beyond these structures. Oppression does not exist only in isolated bubbles of limited size, but rather, it is a multi-scalar, multifaceted process.

Given the context of this study, I have focused exclusively on how queer and racialized oppression is enacted, as opposed to how queer and racialized individuals themselves can be in positions of power in relation to others. This is not to disavow the oppression that queer and racialized people can also be complicit within (e.g. on the grounds of other identities such as religion, disability, class, etc.). While other issues are not explored to the same extent, it is important to acknowledge the privileges that my participants may hold, as well as the privileged position from where I write, as not to do so is parallel to the refusal to take responsibility for oppression that is mentioned in participants' anecdotes.

It is at this juncture that I pose the following question, one that I am sure has been posed by many others: what does a truly intersectional study look like? Will there, or can there, ever exist a text that cannot be criticized on the grounds that it does not incorporate the full platitude of human diversity?

Movements based around identity politics for civil rights can indeed be criticized on the grounds that they are assimilative and seek inclusion into an inherently oppressive system. It is certainly the case that this very research could be said to reinscribe binaries, as it delineates “queer” and “racialized” as categories in opposition to cis/straight and white as unmarked norms. Doing away with that system—that is, identity and similar systems of human categorization—would provide a solution to that criticism.

However, postmodernism lacks a practicality that is present within identity politics. Both approaches of postmodernism and identity politics have valid points. The strengths and benefits of one approach address the weaknesses and shortcomings of the other. My criticism of postmodern deconstructions of identity as an intervention to identity politics is that it is an inherently privileged perspective. A participant noted that the activist circles they found themselves in largely consisted of university students, and that their activism was very much informed by the academic knowledges that came from the people who they were surrounded by:

I would not have been an activist without the academy. There's no way. I took science, so I wasn't learning this in school. (HB)

Constructions of fixed and rigid identity, such as man/woman, gay/straight, white/visible minority, are incredibly prevalent. I would argue that for people who have not had the opportunity to engage with these debates at length, those constructions are the way that identity is understood by the vast majority of those people. This is a circular debate; postmodernism addresses the shortcomings of identity politics and vice versa. I have explored it at length and have presented the merits and deficiencies of both. As Brown states in a discussion of these very “anxieties” posed by intersectionality studies, “they are easily sidestepped but not easily solved; I have no solutions to them” (2012: 541). Much like Brown, I have no solutions, either, and so it could be said that I am “sidestepping” this debate of intersectionality. However, in the words of Kimberle Crenshaw, doing so is not without good reason:

Recognizing that identity politics takes place at the site where categories intersect thus seems more fruitful than challenging the possibility of talking about categories at all. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics. (1991: 1299)

I turn my attention away from the identity politics debate in order to focus on an aspect that is equally as, if not more important: the practical implications that intersectionality has given rise to in anti-oppressive politics. Within populations of queer and racialized people, there is still so much variation as to what is exclusionary or not. It is clear that the people and organizations brought up in participants' anecdotes are failing to actualize intersectionality. While I am interested in the merits of the postmodern debate on a theoretical level, contemporary Canadian activist politics have not reached a point where this debate is relevant in helping to advance the interests of marginalized groups. Intersectionality is but one way of theorizing identity, but for all practical purposes, it is the most useful.

At this point, Young's idea of a positive recognition of difference as a solution of coexistence becomes an applicable possibility. I do not think that one would argue against the assumption that some positive recognition of difference is better than none at all. However, using the example of race in the context of this thesis, if issues of racialization (and other identities) are engaged with poorly, this can have consequences such as exclusion and the reinscription of oppressive ideals. Arguably, some acknowledgment of how oppression affects particular individuals within communities is more ideal than completely erasing difference; however, there is still the potential for continued marginalization in either case. What I cannot find in Young's work is a scaled version of her recommendation of actualizing a politics of difference as city life, although she was aware that this issue of scale existed in her work (Ackelsberg and Shanley 2008). Group aggregation and the resulting homogenization is an issue that exists across scales, which Young acknowledged: "the problems of atomism are the same, whether the atoms are individuals, households, or cities" (1990: 250). Though I am cognisant of the complex politics that must take place for action to happen at the city level or at different scales of government, it

seems that Young's recommendation can point to a clearer an end goal on those scales, such as equity legislation or redress. Of course, it is abundantly clear that legal equality does not immediately lead to social equity. Furthermore, at an interpersonal level, more depth of understanding is needed in order to come to solutions. Developing ways in which a politics of difference can be scaled to the individual and community levels is necessary in the formation of social relations which can truly be said to be in solidarity.

Epilogue

We act from within the social relations and subject positions we seek to change.

—Ruth Frankenberg (1993)

At this point, I return to where I began this thesis: an attempt to understand how and why oppression takes place in communities which commit to anti-oppression. The conclusion almost seems too simple: people find it very, very difficult to conceptualize identities outside their own.

I now turn my attention to answering the more pragmatic question of “so what do we do?” Activists who are engaged with some of the groups mentioned in this thesis may be wondering what can be done in order to alleviate the conditions of marginalization that are present in participants’ experiences. I will give voice to these seven people and allow them to respond¹⁵:

Mostly I wish people wouldn't just assume. (RM)

I would prefer to be treated just as well as the most highly regarded members of society [...] I am not an anomaly. (MN)

I wish my friends or whatever could see things my way, or know that the things that are coming out of their mouth are offensive. (AA)

I would like very very much to live in a world in which I were not treated badly. That involves having [interpersonal relationships] that are explicitly loving and acknowledge the degree of pain and suffering and hardship that are influenced by not just racialization, but a multiplicity of oppressions and how those are enacted. I'd like very, very much to have relationships that really consistently recognize that pain and that identity. (SK)

I would not want my racial or sexual identity ignored and made not relevant, because they are relevant to me. [...] I want those things acknowledged but I don't want them fetishized, and used to dehumanize me, or limit my opportunities, or make me appealing just on that basis. It should be acknowledged but on my terms. (EL)

[...] our movements have been co-opted by systems of power, like this capitalist neoliberalist mindset. So much so that we can't even envision a world

¹⁵ Interview question: In an ideal world, is the way you would prefer to be treated different from the way you are treated now?

where these things are not existent. [...] I have a hard time envisioning a world where we don't have systems of power. I am so invested in liberation from those things. I basically hope that one day we can do that as a society, as a people, as a species. (HB)

[Treat me] like a white dude. (TC)

These few statements do not constitute a comprehensive solution to the task of ensuring inclusivity within communities. Nor is it particularly clear how any of these responses may be linked. The variation in these responses show the extent of the complexity and nuance involved with the process of engaging with difference.

In Kingston and Queen's activist organizations, oppression may be challenged in some regards, but replicated in others. It is those replications that must be dismantled, else it would be inaccurate to self-identify as anti-oppressive. There must be a willingness to acknowledge the domination that one may be complicit in, and not only if it is pointed out by marginalized persons. Solutions may also need to be specific to those communities. This thesis has demonstrated how varied humans and human organization is; solutions must likewise also be as context-specific and situational, otherwise there is again the risk of homogenization and erasure of difference. Developing an intersectional anti-oppressive politics of difference is a hefty task to undertake, but an important one nonetheless.

Significant inroads have been made across scholarship and activism over the past twenty-five years since *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. The insights gained here are a mere drop in the bucket of anti-oppression, but it has been made possible by every other drop that has come before it. The project of anti-oppression is not simple nor easy, but it is an extensive one that many have advanced in a multitude of ways. It is this project of challenging domination and marginalization that this thesis contributes to: the task of adding to the body of work which strives to lead us to more liberatory futures.

References

- Ackelsberg, M., & Shanley, M. L. (2008). "Reflections on Iris Marion Young's Justice and the Politics of Difference." *Politics & Gender*, 4(02): 326-334.
- Ahmed, S. (2007). "A phenomenology of whiteness." *Feminist theory*, 8(2): 149-168.
- Ahmed, S. (2010). *The promise of happiness*. Duke University Press.
- Aitken, S.C. (2009). "Community." In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by Rob Kitchin, Nigel Thrift. Elsevier, Oxford: 221-225.
- Boyle, M., & Kobayashi, A. (2011). "Metropolitan anxieties: a critical appraisal of Sartre's theory of colonialism." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36(3): 408-424.
- Brown, M. (2012). "Gender and sexuality I Intersectional anxieties." *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(4), 541-550.
- Bryman, A., Bell, E. & Teevan, J. (2012). *Social research methods*: Oxford University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. Routledge.
- Carasthesis, A. (2008) "The invisibility of privilege: A critique of intersectional models of identity." *Les Ateliers de l'éthique* 3(2).
- Case, K. A. (2012). "Discovering the Privilege of Whiteness: White Women's Reflections on Anti-racist Identity and Ally Behavior." *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1): 78-96.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color." *Stanford law review*, 1241-1299.
- Donadey, A. (2009). "Negotiating tensions: Teaching about race issues in graduate feminist classrooms." In *Feminist Pedagogy: Looking back to move forward*, edited by R.D. Crabtree, D.A. Sapp, & A. Licona. John Hopkins University Press.
- Garber, J. (2013). "Defining feminist community." *COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*, 338.
- Giwa, S., & Greensmith, C. (2012). "Race relations and racism in the LGBTQ community of Toronto: Perceptions of gay and queer social service providers of color." *Journal of homosexuality*, 59(2): 149-185.
- Hancock, A. M. (2007). "Intersectionality as a normative and empirical paradigm." *Politics & Gender*, 3(02): 248-254.
- Hay, I. (2010). *Qualitative research methods in human geography*. Oxford New York: Oxford University Press.

- Henry, F. (2004). Systemic racism towards faculty of colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen's University: Report on the 2003 Study - Understanding the experiences of visible minority and Aboriginal faculty members at Queen's University. Kingston, ON: Senate Educational Equity Committee.
- McCall, L. (2014). "The complexity of intersectionality." *Signs*, 40(1).
- Oswin, N. (2008). "Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: deconstructing queer space." *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(1): 89-103.
- Peake, L., & Ray, B. (2001). "Racializing the Canadian landscape: whiteness, uneven geographies and social justice." *The Canadian Geographer*, 45(1): 180-186.
- Ramazanoglu, C. & Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology challenges and choices*. London Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- Roberts, M. (2009). "This is How Whitewashing us out of GLBT History Begins." <http://transgriot.blogspot.ca/2009/02/this-is-how-whitewashing-us-out-of-glb.html>
- Rollock, N. (2012). "The invisibility of race: Intersectional reflections on the liminal space of alterity." *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15(1): 65-84.
- Rottenberg, C. (2004). "Passing: Race, identification, and desire." *Criticism*, 45(4): 435-452
- Smith, A. (2010). "The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 16(1-2): 41-68.
- Statistics Canada. (2006). Census of Population. Visible minority population, by census metropolitan areas.
- Thien, D. (2009). "Feminist Methodologies." In International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, edited by Rob Kitchin, Nigel Thrift. Elsevier, Oxford: 71-78.
- Thomas, M. E. (2005). "I think it's just natural": the spatiality of racial segregation at a US high school." *Environment and Planning A*, 37(7): 1233-1248.
- Valentine, G. (2007). "Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography." *The professional geographer*, 59(1): 10-21.
- Young, I. M. (1986). "The ideal of community and the politics of difference." *Social theory and practice*, 1-26.
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press.

Appendix 1 – Letter of Information

Title of Research Project: Queer/race geographies: the politics of difference

Investigators: Emily Wong (Principal Investigator)
Faculty of Arts and Science, Department of Geography
Queen's University
Kingston ON K7L 3N6
Email: 0ew17@queensu.ca

Introduction: The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of people who self-identify as queer and racialized and are involved in activist work in Kingston. Please read through this letter before you agree to participate.

Your Participation: Your participation in the study will require one interview session. The interview will be held in a study room at Stauffer Library or other location that is convenient to you on Queen's University campus. I will make a digital recording of your interview and I will transcribe it. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You are not required to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. You are free to withdraw at any time from the study without prejudice. If you would like to withdraw from the study, you simply need to let me know and I will destroy the recording of your interview and the transcript of it.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: All information you provide is strictly confidential. You will be referred to only by pseudonym in any written or oral presentations that may result from this study. I will also mask your identity by altering or removing any information by which you might be identified. The digital recordings and transcripts of your interview will be stored on a password-protected personal laptop and the information will only be available to me, Emily Wong, and to my supervisor, Dr. Audrey Kobayashi.

Potential Risks: There are no known risks associated with this study beyond the possible discomfort that may arise from discussing personal issues.

Potential Benefits to you: There are no personal benefits associated with this study beyond the opportunity to share your views.

You may retain a copy of this information letter and/or consent form for your own reference. If you are interested, you may also have a copy of any papers that result from this project. If you have any questions or concerns about participation in this study, please feel free to contact Emily Wong (0ew17@queensu.ca) or the project supervisor Dr. Audrey Kobayashi (kobayasi@queensu.ca). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix 2 – Consent Form

Name (please print clearly): _____

1. I have read the Letter of Information and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I will be participating in a study on queer/racialized identity, and I understand that this means that I will be asked to answer interview questions related to this topic.
3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.
4. I am aware that if I have any questions, concerns, or complaints, I may contact Emily Wong, Oew17@queensu.ca; project supervisor, Dr. Audrey Kobayashi: kobayasi@queensu.ca. I may address any ethical concerns about the study to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree that my interview can be digitally-recorded (audio).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 – Interview Questions

Demographics

1. How would you describe your gender and/or sexual identity?
2. What is your age and occupation?
3. How would you describe your racialized identity? (How do you think other people racialize you?)
4. How long have you lived in Kingston?
5. In what other cities have you lived?

Experience and Oppression

6. What is your involvement in activism and/or anti-oppression groups in Kingston?
7. In your activism in Kingston, how do you discuss race with people who are racialized as white?
8. How do you discuss race with people who are racialized as not white?
9. How do you think being racialized as [racialized identity] influences your experience as an activist in Kingston?
10. How do you think being racialized influences the experiences of queer people in Kingston?
11. Compared to the other places you have lived, in terms of the experiences of racialized people, how do you find Kingston as a city?
12. Do you feel that you are treated differently than people who are white within [name of activist organization]?
13. Have you experienced any discrimination based on racial or queer identity in Kingston and if so, can you describe that/those experience(s)? What do you do when you have those experiences?
14. Do you experience any barriers when discussing queer issues with other people who are racialized? If so, how do you address those barriers?

Conclusion

15. In an ideal world, is the way you would prefer to be treated differently from the way you are treated now? What do you do to make changes to how you are treated?
16. Do you have any final comments?

Appendix 4 – Recruitment Information

Participants wanted for research about queer identity, racialization, and anti-oppression

Are you interested in speaking about activist politics? Sharing your experiences navigating Kingston as a queer and racialized person?

Do you currently participate in activist/feminist/anti-oppressive activities?

Do you identify as non-white?

Do you identify as queer?

If you answered yes to all three questions and are interesting in participating in a confidential interview, please contact: Emily Wong (0ew17@queensu.ca), Department of Geography, Undergraduate Research Project.

Appendix 5 – Codes

Reactions	Communities/organizations	Identity politics/tensions
<p>No groundwork/questions more difficult more cognisant Not overt/microaggressions Not as easy isolated/ not represented sassy inner black woman</p>	<p>Combined experience safe/safer Education + awareness Safe space/place part of the community</p>	<p>acceptable to say bigoted things face enough oppression No femmes... Barriers another axis of oppression generally the same</p>
<p>getting outed you become the expert conversations you don't want to have not everyone is willing to listen you feel oppression just one person frustrating... facilitators wanted to correct him nothing want to say/do something memorized speech don't want to make something worse feeling like they've won</p>	<p>queer community aren't a part of queer community form a little group community of solidarity</p>	<p>race is very visual understanding they don't get it I have an inkling who is this chick?</p>
<p>says this is unfair and racist won't contradict me a lot more explaining</p>	<p>positive... on the queer front don't think I'm queer... not white</p>	<p>brown... uncomfortable that's not me brown people aren't gay funny name... clothes... random holidays</p>
<p>seeking out PoC-centric ideologies ways of doing politics pretended race didn't exist</p>	<p>taken to task the break they suck too WQC more prevalent closest thing in proximity acknowledge degree of pain communities- tangible experiences cannot understand...pain unable to show solidarity semblance of sensitivity</p>	<p>by default of being queer don't you see I'm oppressed? overwhelmingly racist... larger claims of affinity open ID of anti-racism further introspection acknowledged racialization intuitive understanding of pain</p>
<p>slightly uncomfortable</p>	<p>white cis gay men</p>	<p>Race impacts interactions</p>

<p>don't actively seek out Just not engage at all Not bring up additional thing Left that friend group Confrontational in internet life Nice to people... when they say</p>	<p>no queer community</p>	<p>isolating conceal different assumptions both are liable to assert privilege lack of critical thinking really white activism ignores racial issues</p>
<p>Exact same thing... I'm violent White tears, white guilt, you get it right Expect me to do lots of things Hard time envisioning world</p>	<p>POCtalk performance Place for me here Did not have community just having friends...</p>	<p>QPoC inseparable</p>
<p>learned to deal with racism More overt racism is refreshing Microaggressions wouldn't fuck with me Reaction to queerphobia Fuck you I was born here</p>	<p>Don't know how to interact</p>	<p>drowned out by people</p>