
Progress reports

Gender and geography II: bridging the gap – feminist, queer, and the geographical imaginary

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Abstract: Within geography, the flourishing of studies on sexuality indicate the vibrancy of scholarship that approaches sexuality as a nexus of the global and the intimate, where the most private and introspective experiences of embodied self meet with the multiscalar processes of identity and power across the local–global continuum. Certainly, recent publications in sexual, queer and feminist geographies leave no room for doubt that sexuality and gender are axes of multiscalar activity for developing meaning, power and politics in the most personal and public of settings around the world. Consequently, geographers have illustrated how any politics by and in support of those who subvert normative gendered and sexual subjectivities requires geographical imaginations that bridge methodological approaches. In this report, I focus on such geographical imaginaries by examining the efforts of those who work within and across the diverse fields of queer and feminist theories to create synergistic efforts for investigating the everyday life of power, identity and place.

Key words: feminism, gender, queer, sexuality, social theory.

I Introduction

‘Something of a “sex craze”’, as the guest editors of a recent Australian Geographer special issue on ‘Geographies of sexuality and gender “down under”’ declare, has taken off in the social sciences. ‘Geographers’, they continue, along with ‘sociologists, psychologists, and scholars in gender, cultural and health studies have shown a growing interest in the gendered and sex(ual)ized body as an important coordinate of subjectivity’ (Gorman-Murray et al., 2008: 235). Certainly, within geography, the flourishing of studies on sexuality across the discipline indicates the vibrancy of scholarship that approaches sexuality as a nexus of what Pratt and Rosner (2006) have termed ‘the globally intimate’, where the most private and introspective experiences of embodied self meet with the multiscalar processes for constructing social identities and the relations of power they sustain across the local–global continuum. Along similar lines, the guest editors of a special issue of Feminist Review conclude: ‘This indeed is one of the primary reasons for sustained attention to sexuality:

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it is frequently at the level of the intimate, the intersubjective of the everyday ... that national and international power relations are produced and sustained’ (Hemmings et al., 2006: 2).

As many scholars have noted, geographers have made significant inroads into sexuality and gender studies across disciplines by forcing an acknowledgement of spatial process as occurring in the interstices of discursive and material practice (see Curran, 2005; Ahmed, 2006). As Browne (2007b) writes in her introduction to the special issue on ‘Lesbian geographies’, ‘questions of power’ must be put into dialogue with inquiries into ‘the material possibilities of subversion’, as the daily experience of identity criss-crosses the symbolic, the material, the intimate and the global (p. 1). Certainly, recent publications in sexual, queer and feminist geographies leave no room for doubt that sexuality is an axis of multiscalar activity for developing meaning, power and politics in the most intimate and public of settings around the world. Consequently, geographers have illustrated how any politics by and in support of those who subvert normative gendered and sexual subjectivities will require ‘geographical imagination(s)’ that bridge approaches across the social sciences and humanities (see also Elder and Nast, 2007).

In this report, I focus on such attempts at developing the political potential of geographical imaginaries through scholarship that revisits the kinship binding queer and feminist research. In other words, I examine the efforts of those who work within and across the diverse fields of queer and feminist theories to generate political alternatives to the subjugation of people across multiple nodes of difference and the myriad hierarchies of power that materialize in relation to them. In this way, I delimit my discussion, which is not meant to be an overview of work on sexuality within feminist geographies, queer geographies or geographies of sexualities, to those efforts at dialogue across feminist and queer scholarship. Additionally, I do not delve into the debates within each of these fields regarding their epistemologies, the role of identity and specific categories to their analyses, and other related issues that have sparked fruitful discussions over the tensions of identity politics and other political approaches. Indeed, while I acknowledge the scholarship that argues for a distinction between geographies of sexualities and queer geographies along with that scholarship that shows how feminism is, in fact, a multitude of ‘feminisms’, I use here the words ‘queer’ and ‘feminist’ with the understanding that there are cross-cutting currents within each that belie any suggestion of monolithic meaning. The pitfalls to such catchall terms must be kept in mind even as they serve heuristic purposes.

In narrowing my topic in this way, I therefore highlight the research that draws from those elements of feminist and queer approaches that root themselves in ongoing suspicions of anything regarded as ‘normal’, ‘essential’ and ‘embodied’. This research, rather than choosing between either sexuality or gender, or queer or LGBT, or homosexual and heterosexual, and so forth, focus, instead, on how normalcy, and its numerous others, emerges through the spatial practices of gender, sexuality, and other forms of identity that, in turn, reproduce the contexts in which people live out their daily lives. Consequently, these combined efforts illustrate how there is no parsing of racism and misogyny from homophobia, of normalcy from masculinity and class dynamics, of sexism from heterosexism, of the human body from discourses of normal gender and perverse sexuality, and so forth, in daily life around the world. Thus, this research illustrates that there is no justification for such parsing, theoretically. So, even as these efforts at reflecting upon the relationship of feminist and queer theory and politics represent only a fraction of the writing on sexuality and gender by geographers, and other scholars working in dialogue with geography, I think they represent significant
interventions within their respective fields as well as across them for investigating sexuality and gender as intimately global and politically urgent geographies.

In this report, I refer to such efforts at dialogue across feminist and queer theory as ‘interventions’ as they must necessarily engage with the tensions that have characterized the debates across these fields. The rockiness of the relationship between feminist and queer scholarship, even as many scholars attach themselves to both, is entangled within the interwoven webbing of the humanities and social sciences, of poststructuralism and structuralism, of hermeneutics and phenomenology, of theories of power and epistemology and, of course, within the associations binding gender and sexuality. In many ways, the relationship between feminist and queer scholarship has served as a convenient terrain upon which these broader relationships have been debated. And these debates have muddied the waters in arguments over origins, shared pasts, coordinated politics and, predictably, sexism and heterosexism across the two fields. Within these ongoing discussions, both fields continue to engage the ‘identity’ debates catalyzed by the poststructuralist critique of subjectivity and the liberal project of civil rights based upon identity politics (see Alcoff, 1988; Warner, 1991; Binnie and Valentine, 1999; Binnie, 2007). As a result, both fields engage in the deconstruction of the categories that initially formed their foundation as fields of inquiry, with feminism often tangled up over gender and women, and related identities, and queer theory over sexuality and LGBT, and related identities.

In this process, feminist and queer scholars have debated their own political projects and claims to epistemology in relation to their controversial allegiance to particular identities and categories of analysis. Within these questions there has also been a longstanding concern that trickles into much of the scholarship: what are feminist and queer theory without each other? Can gender and sexuality be studied without subsumption of one to the other? Can sexism and heterosexism be given equal weight in analyses? Can anti-essentialism be brought into collusion with anti-normativity? What are the political stakes if the answer is ‘no’ to any of the above? As Judith Butler warned in the dawning of such questions, ‘Politically, the costs are too great to choose between feminism, on the one hand, and radical sexual theory, on the other’ (Butler, 1994: 15). Writing some 15 years later, feminist scholar Diana Richardson (2006) confirms this admonition in her characterization of the split between feminist and queer theory as ‘inappropriate and unhealthy’. Yet, before turning to the current efforts to move beyond this ‘unhealthy’ impasse, as Richardson puts it, I briefly review some of the divisions that have historically undermined them. I then turn to the efforts at dialogue across these divisions to illustrate how they are pushing both fields to expand their geographic imaginings of new political possibilities.

II The dispute

In Intersections between feminist and queer theory (Richardson et al., 2006), a recent overview of the historical dynamics between these fields, the editors characterize this split as grounded in an initial loyalty of categories, namely of feminists to gender and of queers to sexuality. They write:

For the majority of feminist writers to see the two and to refute the primacy of gender is to fail to capture the structural presence of gender as a social division that shapes women and men’s lives and ultimately shapes sexuality. For queer writers this fails to capture the significance of sexuality, in particular homosexuality as ‘a whole cluster of the most crucial sites for the contestation of meaning in twentieth-century Western culture’ (Sedgwick, 1990: 72). (Richardson et al., 2006: 2–3).

This allegiance within certain strands of feminism to structural visions of gender and to a prioritization of gender above other categories of inquiry has prompted many scholars
of sexuality, over the last two decades, to call for a separation of sexual studies from feminist studies across the humanities and social sciences. Additionally, while many lesbian feminists had long fought such structuralist politics within the rubric of feminism (see Garber, 2006), others advocated a break from these battles and the creation of a separate arena of inquiry around sexual studies, which would have overlap with but not be identical to feminist studies on sexuality and gender (Rubin, 1992). From this perspective, a distinction between feminist and sexuality studies was necessary so that the latter could develop its analyses on its own terms and not always in relation to the category of gender. Feminist geography was not, as Mona Domosh observed, immune from such critiques. In her insightful ‘Sexing feminist geography’, she concludes: 'Questions of sexuality and sex have been addressed in a belated and circumscribed manner' across feminist geography, such that studies into normative sexualities were constantly having to justify their focus in relation to gender' (Domosh, 1999: 430).

As pivotal voices in such debates, Bell and Valentine (1995) broke controversial ground within the discipline by calling for 'a divorce' of sexuality studies from feminist geography (p. 11). With the publication of *Mapping desire*, and what now serves as a benchmark volume, they argued that sexuality studies should not be lumped 'under the umbrella of feminist geography'. Indeed, as is well illustrated throughout the text, the spatial and social complexities of sexual dissidence and the experience of LGBT extend well beyond arguments over whether sexuality is as central to lived geographies as any other. A particularly important contribution of geographers to these debates has been a challenge to the feminist public/private divide that assumes a pre-given place for social subjects, such as the feminized domestic as opposed to the masculinized public sphere (see, for instance, McDowell, 1997; Longhurst, 2002). Geographies of sexuality complicate the notion of home and challenge a priori notions of it as a domain of 'safety', of a stable 'femininity', and of a 'non-political domesticity' (see Elwood, 2000; Valentine, 2000; Gorman-Murray, 2008). Additionally, both queer and LGBT geographies have emphasized the significance of 'placelessness' as disruptive of neat and tidy binaries of spatial belonging (Wolfe, 1997; Binnie and Valentine, 1999; Knopp, 2007b). So, rather than fight the battles within feminism over whether lesbian and gay experience is as important to social life as gender, they argued that sexual geographies should launch their own field and reject a reduction to this tautological debate.

Yet, while recognizing the importance of such interventions, many feminists argue that these insights have often been made along with a 'tendency to oversimplification and glib (or vitriolic) dismissal' of feminism as a unidimensional field built upon an uncontroverisal concept of gender as a transparent construct (Garber, 2006: 85). The presentation of feminism as homogenous or monolithic as unfractured by debates concerning race, sexuality, normativity and essentialism reduces feminism to something unrecognizable to many feminist scholars, especially to those who fought against such reductions within the rubric of feminism. The fight against heteronormativity, for instance, as Phil Hubbard observes, 'is not a particularly new argument, as feminist writings at least as far back as the work of Rich (1980) have argued that compulsory heterosexuality imposes forms of gender identification that ostracize those heterosexual women who do not conform to an ideal of femininity (see also Domosh 1999 on the “sexing” of feminist geography)' (Hubbard, 2008: 6).

In corroboration of this point, Richardson et al. (2006: 1) observe, 'Feminist writers were among the first to challenge [normative] frameworks for understanding gender and sexuality', and so the assumption that such interrogations were indicative of a new field, distinct from but somehow mirroring feminism (as indicated by Warner, 1991), was dismissive of the fact that these interrogations...
were intrinsic to feminism (see also Enke, 2007). This sort of epistemological violence, according to feminist critic Biddy Martin, effectively constructed “queerness” as a vanguard position that announced its newness and advance over against an apparently superseded and now anachronistic feminism with its emphasis on gender’ (Martin, 1994: 104).

So the dispute that took shape through feminist and queer writings became firmly seated within the disciplines and directly through the writing of ‘feminist and queer’ thinkers, while leaving more questions about how these leftist, progressive, anti-normative, and critical fields could be, as Butler urged in 1994, ‘put into a dynamic and empowering interplay’ (Butler, 1994: 1).

III The terms of engagement

Now, with a decade of reflection on the cleaving of feminist and queer studies, there has been a modest renewal of interest in contemplating their potential interplay amid the ongoing evidence of a need for it. A clear articulation of such efforts is found in Kath Browne’s introduction to the Social and Cultural Geography special issue on ‘Lesbian geographies’ when she writes: ‘I want to argue that collectively these papers augment both our understandings of geographies of sexualities and feminist geographies. They do this by providing conceptual and empirical bridges, while at the same time talking to wider debates in social and cultural, urban, sport and tourist geographies’ (Browne, 2007b: 2). Browne’s point, echoed by others, is not to ignore the debates that have divided feminist and queer intellectual initiatives but, rather, to take their ongoing lessons about the tricky relationship of identity to post-structuralist inquiries as points of departure for engaging in critical theories that are themselves engaged in critical politics (see also Browne, 2007c).

As part of these politics, a prominent concern shared by scholars of feminist, queer, and critical geographies is the need to reorient the politics of knowledge production, particularly the ongoing whiteness of the discipline, its male-heaviness, and its Eurocentricity, fortified further by Anglophone privileging (see Haritaworn, 2007; Valentine, 2007; Caluya, 2008). As Longhurst urges:

[I]t is imperative to engage not just with issues of gender, sex and sexuality but with issues of biculturalism, multiculturalism, dispossession, racism, colonization and postcolonization. In living ‘down under’ one becomes quickly aware that race, ethnicity and culture are important categories of identity that cannot be disentangled from local, regional, national and international politics. (Longhurst, 2008: 384)

Recognizing the challenge to disrupting binary conceptualizations for the politics of research, Natalie Oswin (2008) offers a critical assessment of queer geographies to advance ‘a critical geography that goes beyond a sexual politics of recognition and a queer geography that engages deeply with feminist, postcolonial and critical race theories’. While feminism does figure into her conceptualization of the kinds of alliances necessary within the discipline, she does not develop this alliance further and rather offers a comprehensive review of the field of queer geography in which she clearly lays out the debates concerning the relationship of queer and critical theory, particularly around the axes of sexuality and sexual dissidents (see Bell and Valentine, 1995; Binnie, 1997; Oswin, 2008). Yet, still, this poststructuralist position clearly resonates with the feminist arguments of the previous decade that sought to use the tools of anti-essentialism developed in relation to critical race theory, poststructuralism and other refusals to reduce feminism down to the identity politics of gender. One of the principal justifications for such a move was to create new applications for feminist theory, as Oswin also articulates for queer theory, ‘to bring questions of race, colonialism, geopolitics, migration, globalization and nationalism to the fore in an area of study previously
trained too narrowly on sexuality and gender’ (Oswin, 2008: 90).

In a similar vein, feminist and queer scholar Gayatri Gopinath, in her book *Impossible desires: queer diasporas and South Asian public cultures*, finds promise in coupling queer and feminist theories for exploring queer diasporas without, as she writes, ‘[acceding] to the splitting of queerness from feminism that marks’ many projects on queer subjectivities (Gopinath, 2005: 7). In her analysis of the film *Fire*, she concludes that ‘queer desire becomes the means’ by which the female lovers, who are its protagonists, ‘extricate themselves from the terms of patriarchal heteronormativity’ (p. 153). Implicit in this and the above texts is the argument that only through a combination of queer interrogations of normativity with feminist and postcolonial questionings of subjectivity can knowledge of power develop into political practice.

Evidence of this political commitment across queer and feminist theory within geography is readily found within J.K. Gibson-Graham’s (1996) notable combination of feminist, queer and Marxian theories as a form of political engagement that recognizes, theorizes and supports the many creative ways that people, around the world, shape the relations of power in which they live their lives. At the basis of their theorization is a rejection of another kind of identity politics, one that imbues capitalism with an identity of global stability. By using the tools of anti-normativity and anti-essentialism, they advocate the politics of refusing capitalism a planetary identity as the most coherent, powerful force on earth, and, as such, argue that myriad localized protests make differences in real ways, every day. This feminist, queer, Marxist and poststructuralist intervention revealed, as social theorist Judith Halberstam writes, ‘a far more complicated picture of globalization and the relationships between the global and the local’ than orthodox Marxist, feminist or queer accounts allow (Halberstam, 2005: 12). In her own work, *In a queer time and place* (2005), she draws from Gibson-Graham and the theoretical synergies they develop across feminist and queer theory to expand geographic imaginaries of progressive politics aimed at repudiating normativity and its complicity with power in late capitalism.

Toward this end, numerous scholars working at the queer/sexuality/gender/feminist nexus within geography focus on the metaphors of theoretical and methodological engagement for expanding the terms and realms of inquiry. For instance, Gill Valentine discusses ‘intersectionality’ as a means ‘to theorise the relationship between different social categories: gender, race, sexuality and, so forth’ (Valentine, 2007: 10). In dialogue with Valentine, McDowell (2008) pushes this theorization of intersectionality to engage with the variability of experience (of identity, subject position, and so forth) across space. In her study of migrant workers, she advocates a comparative approach for examining the intersections of identity and the relations of power of everyday life in relation to capitalist dynamics. She writes:

> I explore these questions, through the lens of the subject positions of international migrant workers, not only as their significance in the global economy is increasing but because migration is taking a new form – that of transnational connections rather than permanence … it seems clear that the comparative method is essential as intersectionality works out in different ways in different places: geography always matters. (McDowell, 2008: 504)

Such theorization is reminiscent also of Doreen Massey’s expansion of the concept of articulation, as it was developed by Chantal Mouffe, as a means for investigating how social experiences of place and identity are mutually reinforcing in a ‘double-articulation’. As such, these metaphors place the analytics of research under scrutiny and ask how the production of knowledge about place and identity occurs along with the description of those places and identities within the analyses.

Taking a different tactical approach, Jasbir Puar prefers the Deleuzian ‘assemblage’ to
the concept of intersectionality. ‘Queerness’, she explains, as ‘an assemblage moves away from excavation work, deprivileges a binary opposition between queer and not-queer subjects, and, instead of retaining queerness exclusively as dissenting, resistant, and alternative (all of which queerness importantly is and does), it underscores contingency and complicity with dominant formations’ (Puar, 2006: 121–22). Unlike intersectionality, assemblage in this usage does not assume any discrete analytics – such as race, sexuality, gender – as starting points for inquiry. Instead, and through her focus on the figure of the ‘suicide bomber’ as the iconic ‘terrorist … a queer, non-national perversely racialized other’, Puar unmoors queer theory from sexuality and feminism from gender to turn them into a collaborative critique of ‘the normative script of the US war on terror’ (Puar, 2005: 67; see also Puar, 2007). Imagined through the rubric of assemblage, the suicide-bomber-qua-terrorist forms ‘[a]s a queer assemblage – distinct from the “queering” of an entity or identity – race and sexuality are denaturalized through the impermanence, the transience of the suicide bomber; the fleeting identity replayed backward through its dissolution’ (Puar, 2006: 130). The assemblage then both dissolves as it develops through a convergence of fleeting identities – muslim, terrorist, man, bomb, blasted body – that through their dissolution create other political possibilities and subjectivities.

Whether assemblage or intersectionality or articulation or double-articulation is more adequate to the task of organizing fields of inquiry into the production of place and identity is not my concern at this moment. Instead, I think it important to recognize how these efforts to engage across the fields of feminist and queer studies are necessary for revealing ‘the many messy, organic, inorganic and complicated ways in which desire and erotics are coded outside of the logics of binary modes of thinking’, as Elder and Nast (2007: 18) write. Indeed, clinging to an idea of division between feminist and queer research is itself a form of binary thinking as well as a reification of difference that stymies opportunities for exchanges across the messy and complicated ways of producing knowledge about the messy and complicated exchange of place, identity and power. So, while the above calls for combining theoretical and methodological approaches represent a minority within sexuality, feminist and queer studies, they raise important reasons for moving beyond intransigent positions in the pursuit of fresh ideas for engaging with the global significance of the locally mundane experiences of sex, gender, race, age and all of the other ways of identifying subjectivity within human bodies, lives and power.

IV Bridging the gap
While such theorizations are proving instrumental for motivating dialogue, the best evidence for the political potential of such approaches lies within the work of geographers who develop these analytical commitments through research grounded in everyday engagements with power and resistance. As Browne et al. (2007) write, in Geographies of sexualities:

[Geographers’] eagerness to engage with concrete social relations and practices in their research means that their insights are materialistic, spatialized and affective. It is through this focus on the materialistic, spatialized and affective that sexual geographers help to contribute something both distinctive and innovative to broader thinking on sexual difference, relations and desire. (Browne et al., 2007: 1)

For example, through a series of articles on the political strategies of the Toronto Women’s Bathhouse Committee, Catherine Nash and Alison Bain (2007a; 2007b) merge feminist methodologies for interrogating embodiment with queer critiques of normative subjectivities to investigate ‘how the processes of “queering” identities and spaces play out differently in practice across differently gendered and sexualized gay and lesbian spaces’ (2007b: 167). Through such
a combination, Nash and Bain reveal how ‘queering the binary understandings of gender and sexuality proved a complex task’ that did not lead to uncluttered conclusions about a movement’s successes or failures (2007b: 167). As they show through this research, both feminist and queer analyses offer key tools for illustrating how the production of knowledge into social movements must engage, if the goal is to be relevant to those movements, with the fits and starts of politicized identities and their precarious spatialities. As this study shows, the constructs of sexuality and gender prove, time and again, to be points of convergence for such untidy politics.

This insight into the synergistic operation of sexuality and gender finds corroboration within another feminist and queer approach to understanding the political movement of second-wave feminism in the urban United States. In her book, Finding the movement, Anne Enke (2007) demonstrates how the spatial dynamics of identity formation is also a process of dismantling those very identities and the spatial boundaries of their belonging and exclusion. Again, like Nash and Bain, and in resonance with McDowell, Enke combines the forces of feminist and queer studies to emphasize political importance of ‘telling stories from multiple perspectives; comparative, transnational, and global histories that transcend conventional boundaries of region and nation’ for understandings of social movements and their lessons for future trajectories (Walkowitz and Weinstein, cited in Enke, 2007: ix). Such research lends credence to Larry Knopp’s observation that ‘despite their multiple forms and many tensions’, feminist and queer research ‘share basic political commitments to social justice, equity, and the dismantling of power structures producing injustice and inequity’ (Knopp, 2007a: 48).

Kath Browne (2007a) provides another glimpse into such dynamics through her investigation of femininity and related subjectivities among queens and dykes within the context of the Dublin Pride 2003. In approaching her study as a geographic dismantling of heteronormativity, she focuses her attention on those within her study who wish to reaffirm binary distinctions of man/woman, queen/dyke, and so on. In so doing, she writes ‘[I]t is important not only to render sexualities fluid, but also to contest the assumptions of sex and sexed bodies that often structure definitions of “heterosexual”, “lesbian” and “gay”’ (Browne, 2007a: 114). And, in so doing, she builds upon the formulation of feminist theorists who have well shown that basing one’s identity on binaries that cleave sex and gender, the biological and the social, and so on, contributes to politics that reinforce the gender/sex dichotomy and the problems that it presents for queer politics and identities (p. 114). The point here is not to pledge an allegiance to any set of categories but instead to join the tools of feminist and queer theories for ‘explor[ing] the eventful creations’ of categories, and how they underpin concepts of normative subjects, in particular contexts (Browne, 2007a: 124).

Other studies foreground the notion of desire as a means for intersecting, in the spirit of Valentine and McDowell, sexuality, public society and economy with the normative gendered production of families and sexualities across generations (see Drummond, 2006; Werner, 2006; Ho, 2008). One example is Helle Rydstrom’s (2006) article, ‘Sexual desires and “social evils”: young women in rural Vietnam’, in which she illustrates how concepts of ‘social evil’ mingle with those regarding normative female sexuality and foster anxieties within a rural Vietnamese community regarding the dangerous forces of globalization and cultural change. Danièle Bélanger’s (2006) article ‘Indispensable sons: negotiating reproductive desires in rural Vietnam’, also in Gender, Place and Culture, illustrates how women negotiate their own desires for families and women’s roles in relation to the pressure to bear male children within Vietnam’s two-child policy. Here, sexuality, linked with reproductive obligations and the construction of normal gender
roles, within an assumed heteronormativity, illustrates the need to intersect postcolonial theories with those of subjectivity (see also Tucker, 2009).

Meanwhile, numerous studies that combine queer and feminist analytics for disentangling the production of subjectivity from the production of workspaces, political events and civic organizations illustrate how sexuality serves as a nodal point for channeling the shifting dynamics of power and place that people navigate as part of their daily lives (see Podmore, 2006; Johnston, 2007; Luzia, 2008). A continued focus on the concept of ‘home’ at the crossroads of feminist and queer theory illustrates how the bracketing of ‘the home’ as a private or safe space does not hold true for studies into LGBT and queer experiences of home life (see Kentlyn, 2008) while, from the vantage of masculinity studies, the concept fails to support the feminine-masculine binary that grounds normative concepts of private–public divides (see Gorman-Murray, 2008).

Studies of sporting events and athletic subjectivities is also providing productive insights into the intersections of gender, sexuality, race and public performance in the creation of sports, their athletes and their publics. For instance, in her examination of lesbian protests at professional US women’s basketball (WNBA) events, Tiffany Muller (2007a; 2007b) shows how political identities form, just as any other kind of identity, through the spatial practices of inclusion and exclusion. To make this point, she discusses ‘how the complexities of lesbian identities are obscured by acts of resistance’ by lesbians through the organization of a ‘kiss-in’ as a counter-public strategy for fighting homophobia in women’s sporting events. By employing feminist and queer theory, Muller examines how ‘sports space’ materializes through the matrices of normative families, genders and sexualities as they emerge on the court and in the stands.

Collectively such studies, and there are numerous others within the current sex-craze of research, illustrate that no single approach is adequate for understanding the politics of everyday life and for organizing subversive actions to the discrimination, subjugation and exploitation experienced by so many around the world on a daily basis. While many of the articles highlighted here neither delve into the theoretical discussions of their terms nor fully analyze their engagement across feminist and queer research, they reveal implicitly the need for studies that begins with the concept of the everyday within their research design. That is, they interrogate the mundane experience of space, place and identity as people navigate the tricky terrain of daily living and illustrate how this living does not fall neatly into either/or categories: either their experience is of sexuality or of gender, of class or of race, of age or of wellness, and so on. As such, these studies do not settle positions regarding which, among the metaphors of intersectionality, articulation, assemblage, coordinates, crossroads, and so on, is the most appropriate to the task. Instead, they demonstrate how through application to specific projects grounded in the unspectacular places of everyday life, the various approaches for conjoining the lessons of feminist and queer theories create commanding tools for cultivating geographic imaginaries aimed at dismantling the corrosive morphologies of power across space and through time.

At the same time, I also think there is further need for synergy between the more theoretical approaches and those that take grounded experience as their point of departure. Such is the challenge for scholars, such as many in the fields of sexuality, queer and feminist studies, who seek to use the theoretical tools of their trades for promoting the politics of justice, equity and progressive change. Seeking intersections, articulations and assemblages across the theoretical insights into subjectivity (as productive of power) with research of the everyday experience of subjectivity is essential for illustrating the theoretical significance of the mundane and the experience of power in daily life.
These approaches require a blending of methodologies and compromises within approaches as daily life blurs theoretical symmetries and as theoretical investigations emphasize some daily experiences as more significant than others. Some of the works mentioned above seek this synergy, but there seems room for plenty more and not only within the topics I am discussing here. In my preliminary readings for my next report, it seems that research into affect, power and the geographies of emotion provide a good opportunity for investigating such possibilities.

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Notes
1. Their words are ‘psychological and sexology’ instead of ‘normative’; but their reference to the former refers to the processes for institutionalizing heteronormative concepts within professional, educational and state agencies.
2. I would like to thank Destiny Aman and Nicole Laliberté for turning my attention to Massey’s discussion of double-articulation.
3. By contrast, for instance, at the women’s basketball games at my own institution, a regular feature of the event is the roving camera that captures kissing between men and women. The camera carefully avoids the numerous lesbian couples at the event as well as any two people of the same gender who are seated next to each other.

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