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LGBT-friendliness & the Promise of Inclusion: A Queering Ethnography of Inclusion in the 'Diversity World' of Business and the Social World of 'Queer Activism' in London

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LGBT-friendliness & the Promise of Inclusion:

A Queer*ing* Ethnography of Inclusion in the 'Diversity World' of Business and the Social World of 'Queer Activism' in London

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Abstract

The thesis adopts a queer perspective to explore how the discourse of LGBT-friendliness and its promises of inclusion are experienced by the subjects to whom these are supposedly intended to speak to. It does so by drawing on over eighteen months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork carried out in London in the 'diversity world' of business among LGBT professionals, role models, 'straight allies' and 'diversity & inclusion specialists', and in the social world of 'queer activism' with campaigners fighting against the closure of a 'queer pub' by property developers and the Council's promise to include a 'replacement LGBT venue' in the redevelopment. The thesis sheds light on how the process of inclusion is intricately connected to neoliberal practices of capital accumulation and the ways in which corporations attempt to extract the (queer) 'value' of 'diversity'. It also shows how inclusion is inflected by a host of intersectional racialized and classed embodiments and (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities. In so doing, the thesis contributes to our (empirical) understanding of the lived experiences of organizational gender/sexuality by providing an ethnographically-grounded account of the operation and negotiation of 'LGBT-friendly' normativities, to the (theoretical) scholarship that aims to make sense of these by offering a 'critically queer' theorizing of the concept, rhetoric and practice of LGBT inclusion, and to the (methodological) queer*ing* of organization. Ultimately, I argue that whilst LGBT inclusion may surely be considered a desirable (and highly seductive) goal, it is not only questionable whether and how far this may actually dismantle normativities, but also that inclusion might even exacerbate and accentuate their (re)production, sustaining conditions of inequality, 'unfriendliness' and exclusion. This demonstrates the value of combining critical interests on the exclusionary dynamics of 'inclusion' with a queer sensibility on the performativity of gender/sexuality and scholarship on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism, thus problematizing and queer*ing* corporate actors' investments in 'inclusion' and the relationship between 'activism' and 'business', and developing and politicizing extant interrogations of 'LGBT-friendliness' in the field.

Illustration on front page (Figure 1): 'Cocktails and Dreams' (in Smith, 2016a).

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Love, solidarity and huge thanks to you all. I dedicate this thesis to you.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Name: Olimpia Burchiellaro

Signature: ……………………………………………………

PART I

INTRODUCTION, LITERATURE REVIEW
& METHODOLOGY

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CHAPTER ONE

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LGBT-Friendliness & the Promise of Inclusion: Queer*ing* Inclusion in the 'Diversity World' of Business and the Social World of 'Queer Activism'

On Christmas eve 2016, *The Economist* ran an article entitled 'Gay bars are under threat but not from the obvious attacker' about the epidemic of closures affecting LGBTQ+ venues in London (Smith, 2016a). A colour photograph illustrating the story features a neon sign reading 'Cocktails and Dreams' (Figure 1) in blue and pink cursive writing. The article describes LGBTQ+ venues as "places that contain memories of first kisses or heart break…[as places] where people, often persecuted or misunderstood by others, made friends and felt accepted at last". In an accompanying blog post[1], author Adam Smith, a White gay man who lives and works in London, situates himself in relation to these experiences, explaining that gay bars were an integral part of his 'new life' and 'newfound freedom' as an out gay man.

In the article, Smith acknowledges the rich history of LGBTQ+ venues in the city and that their loss might be "painful". Yet, he ultimately reads their closure as "an unhappy side-effect of a far more cheering trend": the "increased acceptance of homosexuality in the rich world". Gender/sexual Others, or so Smith's argument goes, have now proven themselves to be major contributors to their societies, workplaces, families and communities, and thus no longer need to congregate in "scruffy", "disintegrating" and "dingy" bars "with peeling leather seats and the sodden smell of stale alcohol" in order to be 'free'. Of course, we are not all 'free'. Smith is adamant in reminding readers that these spaces remain "as important as ever in the developing world", where homosexuality is still "illegal". *There*, these spaces serve as important political and affective reference points for LGBT activism and community. But *here,* in the "rich world", "shifting social attitudes" which have "become markedly more tolerant",

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[1] 'A special place in my heart: I needed to understand why gay bars are so important' (Smith, 2016b).

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mean that "many gay men and women, particularly youngsters, do not feel the need to congregate in one spot". LGBTQ+ spaces, we are encouraged to believe, have no place in the contemporary 'inclusive' landscapes of a city like London, and fighting for their existence is (at best) nostalgic and (at worst) backwards-looking[2].

The portrayal of 'the rich world' as 'inclusive', 'accepting' and 'friendly' towards previously disenfranchised gender/sexual Others is emblematic of 'queer liberalism' (Eng, 2010), a heavily racialized, classed and gendered process which refers to "a contemporary confluence of the political and economic spheres for the liberal inclusion" (Ibid, p3) of particular gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans "citizen-subjects petitioning for rights and recognition before the law" (Ibid). Elsewhere, Jasbir K. Puar (2007) has argued that this supposed 'benevolence' towards gender/sexual Others, which Smith attributes to British society in general and London in particular, is "contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege, consumption capabilities, gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity" (xx). From this perspective, the 'inclusion' of *some* previously disenfranchised gender/sexual Others depends on the exclusion of other Others.

But between Smith's celebration and queer scholars' condemnation of desires for and promises of inclusion, much goes unexamined. Who is excluded when some are included, and how? How does the pursuit of inclusion 'in the rich world' align with or interrupt the (re)production of exclusion? How does gender/sexuality[3] come to be (re)configured in the production and consumption of inclusion? Who benefits from the promulgation of these promises? Or rather, whose 'dreams', ominously gestured at by the neon sign (see Figure 1), are coming true, and whose are being shuttered? In this thesis, I provide answers to these questions by tracing out the work that goes into

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[2] Likewise see an editorial, also published by *The Economist* ("It's getting better: quietly, but quickly, anti-gay attitudes are vanishing in schools," 2012) which claims, citing Mark McCormack's (2012) controversial book *The Declining Significance of Homophobia*, that homophobia is 'getting better' and that British attitudes towards homosexuality are becoming less hostile and more 'friendly'. As Charlotte Hooper (2001) poignantly notes in her *Manly States*, this understanding of the world according to linear narratives of progress reproduces Western, white and 'manly' readings masqueraded as "authoritative hyper objectivity" (p132).

[3] The thesis uses the term 'gender/sexuality' as a way of pointing to the intimate imbrication of sex, gender and sexuality, and the political utility in refusing to separate these (explained in more detail in section 1.2.4).

establishing promises of inclusion and their effect on the lived organizational experiences of the subjects of this newfound 'friendliness'.

The thesis draws on eighteen months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork conducted in and around two spatially and politically dislocated 'social worlds' in London. The first is the 'diversity world'[4] of business, comprised by the various meetings, conferences, workshops and networks of LGBT*[5] professionals, role models, 'straight allies' and 'diversity & inclusion specialists' dedicated to the making of 'LGBT-friendly(ier)' business organizations. The second is the social world of 'queer activism'[6], and it is a world which, for the purposes of this project, unfolded around a group of campaigners- The Friends of the Joiners Arms - fighting to oppose the closure of a local 'queer pub'[7] by property developers, and the local Council's promise to include a 'replacement LGBT venue' in the redevelopment.

The research was concerned with the ways in which the discourse of LGBT-friendliness, as a "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2006, p20) of inclusion, was being experienced 'on the ground' (Weiss, 2011) by the 'diverse'[8] and differently-situated subjects to whom it is supposedly intended to speak to (Rumens, 2015). Particularly relevant seemed to be an ethnographic interrogation of what these promises do- who they include, and on what terms- as well as what they don't do; how they circulate and are taken up by the gender/sexual subjects to whom they are intended to speak to; and

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[4] In 'On Being Included', Sara Ahmed (2012) describes the 'diversity world' as a "world of mobile subjects and objects, of the networks and connections that are necessary for things to move around" (p11). As she explains, this renders a study of this 'diversity world' necessarily multi-sited (discussed in more detail in section 1.3 and Chapter Three).

[5] I use LGBT*, empirically, when referring to this study's participants. I do so in order to problematize the category of 'LGBT' and avoid reifying it as a stable and/or as an ontological certainty (discussed in more detail in section 1.3).

[6] I use 'queer activism' throughout to denote a form of gender/sexual politics which rejects assimilation and the marketization and commodification of LGBT* identities in favour of anti-assimilationist (and often anti-capitalist) politics of resistance (Brown, 2007).

[7] I refer to the pub as 'queer' to reflect (most of) the campaigners' understandings. At the same time, terminology was a site of contention during the fieldwork experience. Whilst most campaigners referred to the pub as 'queer', the Council, the property developers and other institutional actors referred to it as an 'LGBT' or 'LGBTQ+' pub.

[8] I refer to 'diverse' and/or 'diverse subjects' through the use of inverted commas to reflect the thesis' poststructuralist orientation towards diversity as a discourse and thus not a term which describes an ontological reality 'out there' but rather participates in the constitution of such a reality by constituting 'diverse subjects' as intelligible (discussed in more detail throughout and in particular in Chapter Two, section 2.2.4).

how we are to conceptualize the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, activism/business and resistance/control amidst these (supposedly) 'friendlier' organizational realities.

Like Nick Rumens (2015, 2018), I have long been not only fascinated by the idea that something or someone can be 'friendly' towards the specific, and, from a queer perspective, ontologically problematic (Boellstorff, 2007; Sedgwick, 1990), group of gender/sexual subjects denoted by the LGBT acronym, but also troubled by the increasingly central role played by the "[t]emples of global capitalism" (Rao, 2015, p38) in the creation of supposedly more 'inclusive', 'welcoming', and 'friendlier' gender/sexual 'scenarios' (Hearn, 2014). Indeed, as scholars working on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism have shown, whilst the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' signals a more open, "liberal, tolerant, inclusive…[and] diverse sexual politics" (Ludwig, 2016, 418) than ever before, this is often accompanied by a reconfiguration (at best) and reinvigoration (at worst) of various gender and sexual norms, a radical remapping of the private (individual) and the public (collective) in favour of the former, and the appearance of new, perhaps subtler, forms of control (Duggan, 2003; Eng, 2010; Puar, 2007; Rumens, 2018). From this perspective, promises of LGBT inclusion are bound up to the ways in which capital produces "subjects accommodated to its own needs" (Wesling, 2012, p107), re-organizing (and limiting) what it means to be a 'diverse' gender/sexual subject, and, ultimately, what it means to *do* gender/sexual politics. These contradictory 'neoliberal landscapes' (Spade, 2011) constitute the entry point from which this thesis begins its interrogation.

These contradictory dynamics seemed to be particularly relevant in a city like London. Indeed, like other aspiring 'global cities'- from Tel Aviv (Ritchie, 2015) to Sydney (Markwell, 2002), Manchester (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004) and Berlin (Ludwig, 2016) - London is often imagined as an 'inclusive' place that embraces difference. In particular, and as *The Economist* article which opens the Chapter suggests (Smith, 2016a), the city is often petitioned as a shining example of LGBT-friendliness. These discourses play out at a local, (homo)national *and* international level, working to construct the city as a "welcoming, open place for everyone" (London City Hall, 2017d). Yet, London is also a city riddled with inequalities and exclusions. In particular, empirical studies indicate that LGBT inclusion in the city often comes at the expense of communities and forms of difference that cannot be easily

accommodated within "plenary geographies of capitalist accumulation" (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014, p3). These include working-class and immigrant communities and other economic, racial and/or gender/sexual 'outsiders' which, whilst celebrated under the guise of 'diversity' and 'inclusion', are often left behind by (neo)liberal narratives of 'progress' (Eng, 2010; Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014; Puar, 2007).

Drawing from extant queer and critical approaches to diversity and inclusion as well as scholarship on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism, I thus began my journey in pursuit of 'the tangible ethnographic products' (Rajak, 2011) of 'LGBT-friendliness'. The journey took me from the boardrooms, conference suites, and meeting rooms of the large glass-and-steel structures which define London's skyline and in which the 'diversity world' of business unfolded, to the basements, living rooms, backyards and poorly-lit and 'dingy' pubs in which the campaigners regularly met. In each, I observed and participated in various disparate activities, including training to be(come) an LGBT role model, writing objection letters to the Council, networking, protesting, and speaking to LGBT* professionals, activists, and 'professional activists' (Rodriguez, 2009) about their experiences of 'LGBT-friendliness' and 'LGBT inclusion' more broadly.

Three broad findings emerged from such an engagement. The first is that whilst in the 'diversity world' of business the discourse of LGBT-friendliness was predominantly experienced as 'opening up' spaces for LGBT* subjects to 'come out', 'be(come) successful' and be(come) 'role models', in the social world of 'queer activism' it was experienced as a phenomenon characterized by a number of (discursive, physical and political) 'closures' (Chapters Four and Five). Inclusion was, indeed, not an unambiguous good. Rather, whilst some entrepreneurial, normatively productive and 'extra-ordinary' LGBT* subjects stood to gain from inclusion, attaining significant (material and symbolic) gains and statuses in the process, others were not simply 'left behind' but actually co-opted by these processes. In this sense, it appears that 'inclusion' does not simply maintain but actually exacerbates conditions of mal- and/or non- recognition and 'unfriendliness'.

Secondly, I also found that inclusion (re)produced various exclusions by straightening 'queerness' and reworking the desire and the need to be(come) recognized to

seductively invite 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects to exploit themselves and others. Navigating these dynamics required complex, exhausting and painstaking forms of 'labour' deployed in order to perform gender/sexuality in the 'right' way and align oneself with the 'LGBT-friendly normativities'[9] of the promises which this discourse purports to bestow (Chapters Six and Seven). This process of seduction and incorporation was deeply related to and embedded in neoliberal regimes of capital accumulation, intricately connected to the manifold ways in which corporations attempted to extract the (queer) 'value' of 'diversity', and inflected by a host of intersectional racialized and classed embodiments and experiences.

Whilst this exposed that promises of inclusion do indeed (re)produce a host of exclusionary dynamics, it also, and thirdly, revealed that inclusion was not simply reproduced by its own inevitable neoliberal logics but rather open to (re)interpretation and (re)appropriation (Chapter Eight). In so doing, the thesis makes a theoretical, empirical and methodological contribution to the fields of inclusion studies and queer organization studies (OS) by developing a 'critically queer' theorising of the concept, rhetoric and practice of LGBT inclusion, by providing an empirically-grounded account of how 'LGBT-friendly normativities' are inhabited and resisted, and by methodologically queer*ing* organization. These will be discussed in more detail in section 1.4.

In what follows, I draw from the extant literature to outline this project's object of study (section 1.2), before focusing on the research aims and questions (section 1.3). I then proceed to elucidate what I mean with the usage of some key terms (section 1.4) before outlining the methodology adopted in pursuit to answers to the questions posed in section 1.3 (section 1.5). I then outline this project's contribution to the field (section 1.6) and conclude by detailing the structure of the thesis and the contents of the Chapters which compose it (section 1.7).

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[9] I use 'LGBT-friendly normativities' throughout the thesis to describe the various (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities which characterise supposedly 'friendly' and 'inclusive' organizational formations.

1. 1 Overview: research object, aims and questions

1.1.1 Research object: 'LGBT-friendliness' and the promise of inclusion

The research object which underpins this doctoral project is the discourse of LGBT-friendliness. Following a queer and post-structuralist perspective (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, section 2.2.4 and 2.3), I conceive of this discourse as a 'technology of power' which, underpinned by "implicit assumptions about identity…[and] categories" (Bendl, Fleischmann & Walenta, 2008, p383), is organized around a "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2006, p20) intended for those who embody these recognizable, normalized, regularized and disciplined gender/sexual diversity categories (Ahonen, Tienari, Meriläinen, & Pullen, 2014). From this perspective, the discourse of LGBT-friendliness does not have a passive relationship to its subjects. That is, it does not simply 'identify' gender/sexual subjects, nor does it simply 'fulfil' their desires. Rather, it performatively 'makes these up' and "constitute[s] them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention" (Foucault, 1972, p49 cited in Ahonen et al., 2014, p265). Thus, a queer and poststructuralist approach to 'LGBT-friendliness' discursively deconstructs the very concepts of 'diversity' and 'inclusion', understanding the former not as a stable or fixed entity but as a messy, fluid, "dynamic, situational… site of contestation" (Ahonen et al., 2014, p266) and the latter as a site replete with (hetero- homo- and cis-) normative designations of what counts as a 'good' and 'desirable' life. At the same time however, it is also clear that 'LGBT-friendliness' does not simply involve discursive "struggles over meanings" (Ibid, p278) but has 'real' and tangible consequences[10]. Indeed, promises are a way of "mak[ing] the future into an object" (Ahmed, 2010, p29), or what Hannah Arendt (1972) has called "the uniquely human way of ordering the future" (p92 cited in Ibid). It is thus of crucial importance (politically as well as conceptually) that we inquire into the kinds of futures the discourse of LGBT-friendliness is orienting us towards, the kinds of objects, physical as well as of thought, it is materializing, and for whom.

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[10] Arguably the emancipative potential of queer research is unlocked precisely by looking at the (material) consequences of these (discursive) regimes (Valocchi, 2005).

Shedding light on these futures, which are ultimately forms of attachment and desire that we nurture as forms of (affective and material) survival, has revealed the manifold contradictions by which we live our lives as gender/sexual Others in late-capitalism. Indeed, as Lauren Berlant (2006) explains in her work on 'cruel optimism', to frame an object as a 'cluster of promises' "allow[s] us to encounter what is incoherent or enigmatic in our attachments, not as a confirmation of our irrationality, but as an explanation for our sense of *our endurance in the object,* insofar as proximity to the object means proximity to the cluster of things that the object promises" (p20, emphasis in original). Many of the conclusions put forward by this thesis might make the reader ponder whether, how, and by what fraudulent ruse, LGBT* subjects, and LGBT politics more broadly, have been sold to the highest bidder. Yet, in framing 'LGBT-friendliness' as a "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2006, p20), the aim is to foreground the seductive allure of this discourse. Indeed, underpinning this ethnographic engagement is a desire not to dismiss or denounce (as some queer scholarship has done) those who seek inclusion in (hetero- homo- and cis-) normative institutions but "*to understand* the organization of the desire for recognition" (Pullen, Tyler & Wallenberg, 2016b, p85, emphasis added), or indeed, what moves people, however (ir)rationally, to deposit their hopes, longings, dreams and desires- for belonging, for happiness, for success, for a 'normal life', and for more 'inclusive', 'friendly' and 'progressive' gender/sexual realities- into such an object in the face of substantial damning evidence which proves the contrary: that, for most of us, the inclusionary promise of 'LGBT-friendliness', like the neoliberal fantasy of 'the good life', may be nothing more than an illusion.

In conceptualizing the 'problem of inclusion' in these terms, I am not particularly interested in pursuing a 'representational critique' which simply takes issue with the homogenising tendencies of terms such as 'LGBT-friendly' and/or (especially) 'gay-friendly'[11] (Bendl & Hofmann, 2015; Rumens, 2015). Indeed, whilst I am personally supportive of the central tenets of this critique, the thesis is more interested in thinking critically about what the '–friendly' denotes instead. This is because, firstly, the debate ('gay' vs. 'LGBT' vs 'LGBTIAQ+') is well-rehearsed and exhausted in predictable

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[11] This latter term especially has been under considerable scrutiny for the ways in which it elides important (cis-)gender differences and reinstates the privilege and primacy of gay male (often and primarily white and middle-class) voices in LGBT community(ies) (Rumens, 2015).

ways which ignore the perpetual partiality and incompleteness of categories and acronyms. And secondly because the 'logic of enumeration' (Boellstorff, 2006) which underpins this critique, that is, the belief that "political and theoretical efficacy can exist only through naming each category of selfhood or experience" (Ibid, p19), conceives of inclusion [read: enumeration] as a satisfactory corrective solution. Ultimately, whether 'gay', 'LGBT', or 'LGBTQIA+(exasperated)etc…', what fascinates me and what constitutes this project's primary research interest is thinking about what it means to be 'friendly' towards a 'diverse' group of gender/sexual subjects, what it means to promise these inclusion (into what? On what terms? Why?), and how this is manifested and experienced on the ground by the subjects these promises are supposedly intended to speak to. Whilst in some ways a post-structuralist approach overlaps with the representational critique by focusing on the ways in which "unpredictable constellations of desire…become concretized into limited models" (Wesling, 2012, p107) of gender/sexual identity, in the latter emphasis is placed on enumeration, in the former, on deconstruction.

1.1.2 *Research aims and questions*

Three main research aims underpin this investigation. The first is to explore the organization of (promises of) inclusion in business and activist social worlds. The second is to interrogate the 'laboured performances of gender/sexuality' engendered by these promises and required in order to be(come) included. The third is to interrogate the nature of, and opportunities and openings for, resistance and creative co-optation amidst these seemingly 'friendlier' gender/sexual scenarios. Each aim is to be achieved through intertwined theoretical and methodological strategies (discussed in more detail section 1.4), and is guided by an underlying research question, explored below.

Research question 1: how are promises of inclusion organized, what normativities do they (re)produce, what kinds of futures and spaces are these promises materializing, and for whom?

As Rumens (2015) reminds us, whilst the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' might suggest more inclusive, progressive and 'tolerant' socio-political organizational realities for gender/sexual subjects living and working within its folds, "with it come a number of unanswered questions that relate to how the term… is being understood, measured, and deployed, as well as what it means [and does] to those it is intended to 'speak to'" (p185). Indeed, scholars have shown that the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' does not necessarily entail more emancipative experiences but may actually (re)engender a host of (hetero- and homo-) normativities which "restrict discursive possibilities for subjects to identify, relate, and organize in everyday life" (de Souza, Brewis & Rumens, 2016, p602).

Of particular salience to our aim of investigating how promises of inclusion are organized is Pullen et al.'s (2016b) redeployment of the concept of 'organization' (discussed in more detail in section 1.3) to investigate "the *organization* of the desire for recognition… the conditions upon which the conferral of recognition depends, and the consequence of its denial for those who cannot or choose not to conform to the norms governing subjective viability" (p85, emphasis in original). Building on this (re)conceptualization, the research looks at how promises of inclusion are organized: how these are constructed, the normativities they (re)produce, and the kinds of gender/sexual subjects they make space for, in specific contexts within which situated experiences of gender/sexuality take shape.

In addressing this research question, I draw from an ethnographic tradition which foregrounds the ways in which gender/sexuality- "its regulations, norms, institutions, pleasures and desires- cannot be understood without understanding the spaces through which… [it is] constituted, practiced, and lived" (Browne, Lim & Brown, 2007, p4). My interest in asking this question thus lies around thinking about the organization of promises of inclusion from a situated perspective: looking at how the "norms, practices, and meanings [of 'inclusion'] are spatially and temporally constructed" (Ahonen et al., 2014, p255) in the field, tracing and observing its emergence in specific

situated formations and in relation, not isolation, to other concepts and objects, and focusing on the embodied formations of gender/sexuality - the kinds of desires, aspirations, ways of existing in time and space and 'corporeal styles' (de Souza et al., 2016, p607)- that take shape and are rendered intelligible by the discourse of 'LGBT-friendliness'.

In doing so, I aim to redress two limitations of extant queer approaches to 'LGBT-friendliness' and inclusion. The first derives from Wiegman and Wilson's (2015) discussion on 'anti-normativity's queer conventions', in which they argue that whilst queer perspectives have offered trenchant and much-needed critiques of the various norms which organize our lives, they have paid less attention to their conceptual specificity as they travel (or fail to do so). Whilst the field of queer OS is still under-developed compared to the broader scholarly fields to which Wiegman and Wilson (2015) are referring to in their critique, similar tendencies can be observed in the OS field's propensity to conceptualize 'queer' as everything that is at odds with the 'normal' (Parker, 2011).

Yet, as Martin Parker (2011) reminds us, queer*ing* is "not a position- a standpoint" (p38) and it might not even be "some*thing* which can be referred to and given a content" (Parker, 2016, p72). Thus it is of the utmost importance, especially at this critical juncture in which 'queer' is slowly but steadily emerging as a fashionable and 'mainstream(ed)' device in organization scholars' critical toolkits, that we do not take norms and normativities for granted but rather pay attention to how they are produced, how they unfold *in practice,* and their lived and material effects (Kirby, 2015; Love, 2015; Martin, 1994). This might be especially relevant in relation to the concept of 'homonormativity', to which scholars in the field of OS are devoting increasing attention (e.g. Benozzo, Pizzorno, Bell & Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; Rumens, 2018). Whilst in some ways Wiegman and Wilson's (2015) as well as Parker's (2011, 2016) reflections might run the risk of dismissing the importance of 'anti-normativity' altogether, I rather take from them a recognition of the importance of paying more (ethnographic) attention to the "entangled character of norms" (Wiegman & Wilson, 2015, p11).

The second limitation which asking this research question aims to redress relates to the ways in which, with the minor exception of Ward (2008) and Rumens (2018), scholars in the field of queer OS rarely situate the discourse of LGBT-friendliness within the context of neoliberalism. This has resulted in an incomplete and at times inadequate engagement with questions of class and the class politics of inclusion (for an exception, see Berrey, 2014; Zanoni, 2011). The absence of neoliberalism from the field is surprising, given that, firstly, a concern with normalization and "the self-reproducing self-regulating subject is common to both" (Richardson, 2005, p518) queer and neoliberalism scholarship, and, secondly, given that neoliberalism is being increasingly being branded as an 'LGBT-friendly' project[12]. Of particular salience here is an interrogation of "how business-friendly [read: neoliberal] assessments and constructions of workplaces and employers as gay-friendly can reproduce the very heteronormativities that damp down the disruptive and destabilising effects of particular LGBT identities and selves" (Rumens, 2015, p190), which "represents an empirical knowledge gap" (Ibid) in the field. In ethnographically situating the emergence and organization of 'LGBT-friendly' promises of inclusion in the age of neoliberalism, the thesis aims to redress this limitation by exploring the ways in which neoliberal understandings of life and politics inform the shape and the direction of inclusion, the ways in which (some) gender/sexual subjects are becoming known, viable, and include-able, what this can tell us about the class politics of inclusion, and the implications of this for extant critical perspectives on inclusion.

Research question 2: what laboured performances of gender/sexuality are required in order to inhabit promises of inclusion, and what cost and value accrues from their successful performance?

After thinking about the kinds of (discursive, physical and political) spaces opened-up by the discourse of LGBT-friendliness, I turn more specifically towards the labour that goes into becoming included, that is, the labour that goes into inhabiting,

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[12] See, for example, how the World Bank and the IMF, bastions of neoliberal world orders, are increasingly labelled as 'gay-friendly' organizations and as bastions for the making of 'gay-friendlier' world orders (Rao, 2015).

extending and fitting into and participating in these emergent spaces. Here I once again draw from a queer and post-structuralist, and specifically Butlerian (1993, 1999), understanding of gender/sexuality as performance, but extend it by conceptualizing the performance of gender/sexuality itself as a form of labour (David, 2015, 2016; Wasser, 2016; Wesling, 2012). Indeed it seems that one of the defining features of contemporary regimes of neoliberal capitalism is the reshaping of the boundary between 'work' and 'gender/sexuality', whereby work "produces both value as well as a gendered, corporeal and desiring subject" (Wasser, 2016, p58), and where 'gender/sexuality' it itself becoming an "integrated part of new labour regimes" (Ibid).

These shifts are evident not only in the emphasis accorded to the notions of 'authenticity' and 'being one's true self' within the logic of 'LGBT-friendliness'- which, in the context of work, collapses the boundary between 'the personal' and 'the professional', what we think of as 'private' and what we think of as 'public'- but also by the kind of (self-)managerialism which underpins the promise of inclusion itself. Indeed, as Rumens (2018) notes, "what is remarkable about the boom in discourses on places, institutions and spaces that are gay-friendly is the role it plays in enabling LGBT subjects to make the 'right' choices about fitting into extant spaces and institutions that are hetero- and cisnormative" (para. 13.38). It thus seems fitting, in a world in which desires and affects are increasingly "turned into something like the new raw material of capital" (Wasser, 2016, p59), to think of gender/sexuality as a form of labour and to explore how and when this "turn[s] into [a] direct resource of…labourers and profit-oriented endeavours" (Ibid), and how and when it doesn't.

In posing this question, I am especially interested in thinking about how participants inhabit, perform, and take up the various normativities through which promises of inclusion are bestowed "…in their speech, their actions, their demeanour, their appearance, their gestures, their desires, their very materiality, in dynamic and complex ways" (de Souza et al., 2016, p608), and the value and the costs which accrue from their successful performance. I do so not only to appreciate the multiple ways in which gender/sexuality is "intricate[ly]…[imbricated] in the institutions of capitalist modernity" (Duggan, 2003, p83) but also to problematize the idea that the discourse of LGBT-friendliness delivers a smooth, neat, and straightforward path to inclusion. The aim is thus to shed light on "the lived experiences of the dynamics of exclusion

and inclusion shaping the pursuit of recognition, as well as the performative labour-the work involved in bringing particular subjectivities into being in order to conform to normative regimes of intelligibility and recognition" (Tyler, 2018, p57; also see: Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016).

In doing so, the research also aims to redress two related limitations emanating from extant research on inclusion. The first relates to so-called 'mainstream' research in organizations and it laments the ways in which this renders 'inclusion' into a target of managerial practice. Indeed, focusing on the existence of 'diversity tools' (role models, rainbow lanyards, Diversity Champions accreditations, Charters) as barometers for measuring 'LGBT-friendliness', these (surely well-intentioned) efforts to document best practices make inclusion (and gender/sexual 'diversity' more broadly) into an object of management. This is problematic because it privileges a managerial reading of inclusion, embodying a taken-for-granted assumption that 'LGBT-friendliness' is- at once and in equal measure- an inherently 'good' and a 'desirable' goal for organizations and organizational subjects alike. Whilst this may certainly be the case, more attention should be paid to the (often contradictory) ways in which promises of inclusion are experienced, negotiated, and engaged-in in practice by those gender/sexual subject to whom these are intended to speak to.

Secondly, and relatedly, shedding light on the laboured performances of gender/sexuality engendered and required in order to be(come) included also delivers an understanding of norms and normativities which is not only more grounded in materiality and less "focused on the textual" (Courtney, 2014, p387) than the discursive take usually offered by queer theory offers, but also one that is messier, 'less hegemonic', more open to change and contestation than critical scholars have erstwhile assumed. Indeed, whilst in tracing the exclusionary underside of inclusion has undeniably provided a much-needed corrective to the mainstream managerialism detailed above, it has also, paradoxically, run the risk of solidifying the discourse of LGBT-friendliness as an all-encompassing technology of power without escape, ignoring the agency of gender/sexual subjects (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Yet, LGBT* subjects are not simply "*subordinate*…[and] *subjected* to essentialist discourses" (Benozzo et al., 2015, p302, emphasis added) and more

attention should be paid to the labour involved in fitting into these powerful discourses (for an exception, see Rumens & Broomfield, 2014).

Research question 3: what alternatives and opportunities for resistance exist amidst and beyond 'LGBT-friendly' promises of inclusion?

Indeed, aware of the dangers of positing 'LGBT-friendliness' as a monolithic monster in which everything 'means the same thing' (Gibson-Graham, 1999; Sedgwick, 1990), I also aim to attend to if and how promises of inclusion are being "locally created, resisted and transgressed" (Browne & Bakshi, 2013, p7). Indeed, perhaps one of the most interesting dynamics engendered by the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' is that whilst on the one hand this has contributed to the "neoliberalizing of social movement activism" (Grundy & Smith, 2007, p295), where business, not social justice, seems to be the underlying concern, on the other, it also appears that these new forms of visibility and knowledge production have opened up (however inconsistently and ambivalently) opportunities for resistance, "exploited by marginalized groups seeking entry into policy discourse" (Ibid). Thus, whilst Rumens (2018) might be correct in pointing out that "sexuality has never been more controlled and managed by organizations" (para. 13.7), we might still want to harbour some hope, and start exploring possibilities, for queer resistance and co-optation. Simply put, more attention needs to be paid to how 'LGBT-friendliness' and the power relations it engenders "can be circumvented, strategically appropriated or countered through language, creating openings not only for alternative meanings but also for micro-emancipatory projects" (Zanoni et al., 2010, p17).

In posing this question, I am thus especially interested in thinking about the various 'productive incoherences' (Gibson-Graham, 1996) and 'affirmative sabotages' (Spivak, 2012) which are currently being imagined and practiced to "transform…the instruments of the dominant discourse into tools for its transgression (Dhawan, Castro Varela & Hochschule, 2016, p35). The point is here, once again, exploring how "norms are more dynamic and more politically engaging than queer critique has usually allowed" (Wiegman & Wilson, 2015, p2) and deploying a queer*ing* perspective to shed light on how the normativities engendered by LGBT-friendliness are not only organized and inhabited, but also transgressed, reworked, and bent. Here

the question is thus not only as Miranda Joseph (2002) explains, how we might not allow ourselves to be 'seduced' by "the notion that capitalism now addresses us in our diversity and particularity" (p47 cited in Oswin, 2007, p656), but also how we might subvert this process of seduction in pursuit of our own goals.

Ultimately, to the extent that, as others have argued and something which the conclusions reached by this thesis confirm, the discourses of diversity and inclusion might be problematic and conceal and reproduce exclusionary logics, these might also be things that 'we cannot not want' (Dhawan et al., 2016, p35). To this end, it is of paramount importance to find and nurture ways of co-opting these to enact alternatively 'queer' and not simply 'LGBT-friendly' futures. As Gibson-Graham's (1996) thoughtful work on the performativity of research practices reminds us, we must be willing to enact alternative versions of reality in our own accounts of the world, realities in which 'LGBT-friendliness', as an incarnation of a dubious neoliberal logic of inclusion, is no longer, or at least, not only, "a hegemonic entity or 'grand conspiracy' that is unsurmountable and all pervasive" (Browne & Bakshi, 2013, p7). The LGBT* subjects participating in, and being, at times, visibly and viscerally enthused by, promises of inclusion should thus not be understood as mere 'victims' or 'dupes' in the perpetual expansion of neoliberal capitalism. Rather, drawing from an ethnographic tradition of empathy and compassion for the need and desire to be recognized, to belong, to *feel* included, what we need is a situated and grounded account of the creative strategies and compromises which gender/sexual subjects strike in order to survive, and the ways in which these structure their engagements with 'LGBT-friendliness' in ways which both reinforce but also circumvent some of its normalizing logics.

Before continuing, I feel it is important to define what I mean by some key terms to which I keep referring to in this chapter and throughout the course of the thesis: 'queer(ing)', 'LGBT*', 'organization' or 'organizing', 'gender/sexuality' and 'neoliberalism'.

1. 2   Defining key terms

1.2.1   Queer(ing)

Providing an exhaustive definition of 'queer' would be an ambitious and superfluous endeavour, especially given the scepticism it harbours towards the stability of meaning (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, section 2.3). However, for the purposes of clarity, in the thesis I follow Parker (2002) in conceptualizing 'queer' as a verb and as a mode of engagement which is more than something which is simply deployed to understand 'queer lives' (whatever these may be) but rather not only entails 'making trouble with' (Butler, 1999) gender/sexual normativities but actually disrupting a host of normativities which regulate and control the ways in which we live and organize our lives. I thus think of queer*ing* "not a position- a standpoint- but an attitude of unceasing disruptiveness… [where] [w]hatever is known must be doubted, whatever seems full must be emptied, whatever is obvious must be secreted away" (Parker, 2001, p38). Queer*ing* understood in this sense moves beyond a search for 'better representation' towards interrogating (gender/sexual) categories themselves, aiming to theorize 'LGBT-friendliness' not simply in a way which includes 'queer voices and experiences' but one that involves making organizational theory itself queer (Warner, 1991, xxvi).

Moreover, I also understand queer*ing* beyond a mere identification, and rejection, of 'the normal', to explore in more detail the *specific* ways in which normativities are (re)produced, experienced and lived. In this sense, queer*ing is* thus not (only) "whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" (Halperin, 1997, p62 cited in Pullen et al., 2016a, p1), nor does it (necessarily) entail a "moving *against"* (Wiegman & Wilson, 2015, 6) norms. Rather, 'queer' is herein understood as a way of "moving *athwart"* (Ibid), of circumventing, undoing and re-signifying normativities and not simply 'opposing' them.

I make this move (from 'queer' as standpoint to 'queer' as verb) firstly, because it enables us to explore how the discourse of LGBT-friendliness 'straightens', unbends, (re)aligns, unsnarls and/or untwists, the messiness of gender/sexuality and the

"disorderliness of organizational life" (Rumens, 2015, p187)[13], and secondly, because it enables us to shed more light on the practical and theoretical possibilities for the re-imagining of normativity itself. In understanding queer(ing) in these terms, the thesis seeks to show how a more attentive and detailed focus on the actual operation of normativities- how these are inhabited and 'taken up' *as well as* rejected- is crucial in the opening up for (theoretical and political) opportunities for emancipation and resistance.

1.2.2   LGBT*

The second term which I want to clarify is 'LGBT*'*, where the asterisk becomes a necessary way of marking out this category as not the same as merely 'LGBT'. I first came across the use of the asterisk attached to gender/sexuality categories when noticing how the term 'trans*' was being used by some activists (especially in online communities and/or social media) to describe a transgender embodiment that defied the woman/man binary and/or fell outside traditional gender norms (for example, genderqueer, non-binary, etc…). I later learnt that the asterisk stemmed from common computing usage, where it represents a kind of placeholder- often referred to as 'wildcard'- which can be used in searches as a way of gathering terms which share the same prefix. In this case, searching 'trans*' brings up results such as *trans*mission, *trans*gression, *trans*ition, *trans*atlantic, *trans*formation, etc…). Stryker, Currah & Moore (2008) also make a similar move in a special issue of *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* entitled 'Trans-', where the decision to use the term with a hyphen, as opposed to 'trans' (no hyphen) or 'transgender', is justified by saying that "it [trans-] remains open-ended and resists premature foreclosure by attachment to any single suffix" (p11).

The point of the asterisk, or the hyphen, is thus to make the category to which it is attached messier, more permeable, unsecure, uncertain and problematic, than it would

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[13] Indeed, as Ahmed (2006) has remarked, "the question is [or should be] not only how queer desire is read off line, but also how queer desire has been read in order to bring such desire back into line" (p72).

otherwise be in its non-asterisked, non-hyphenated manifestations[14]. The queer*ing* impulses behind the use of LGBT* were not limited to the writing up stage but also extended into the project's methodological practices (discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, section 3.1). Ultimately then, using LGBT* in an empirical sense enabled me to move beyond simply asking about the experiences of 'LGBT subjects' in organization towards questioning the category itself, its specific manifestations and the ways in which the lived experience of gender/sexuality (fail to) fit within its purview. At the same time, I use 'LGBT' (no asterisk) in a conceptual and/or theoretical sense, for example, when referring to 'LGBT politics', 'LGBT inclusion' or 'LGBT subjects' and/or 'identities' more generally.

1.2.3   Organization/organizing

The third term which deserves clarification is this project's use of 'organization'. Whilst in the field of OS, 'organization' often refers to bureaucratically structured formal organizations such as "…universities, airlines, chemical plants, supermarkets, government departments" (Fineman, Gabriel & Sims, 2010, p1), this project adopts it to refer to 'the social organization' of life more broadly. Other scholars have already expressed the desire for this more expansive conception of 'organization', foregrounding the processes and activities by which organizations are maintained and acknowledging their existence in wider socially organized contexts (Watson, 2012). This project's understanding of 'organization' dovetails these attempts whilst also (re)conceptualising 'organization' not as a noun ('the organization') but as a verb ('to organize') and a fluid practice which exceeds the boundaries of formal organizations and affects and marks our everyday lives (Pullen et al., 2016a; Zilber, 2014). 'Organization' is thus conceptualized both as a practice by which LGBT* subjects make sense of, arrange and experience their gender/sexuality in relation to 'LGBT-

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[14] I am also aware that some have critiqued the use of the asterisk in relation to gender/sexuality categories, especially the ways in which it runs the risk of emptying them of their socio-political significance. Whilst I recognize that the use of LGBT* too runs the risk of implying that LGBT identities aren't 'real', I use this category not as a way of denying the existence of these identities but as a way of trying to make it a lot more uncertain what it is I mean when I talk about 'LGBT subjects' (Butler, 1993).

friendliness' and in a broader sense relating to the very terms of inclusion. That is, 'organization' is used to refer both to the coming together of LGBT* bodies in business and activist spaces, and to the process(es) by which gender/sexuality is reshaped, or indeed re-organized, by and through the discourse of LGBT-friendliness. Indeed, throughout the thesis I also posit 'organization' and 'gender/sexuality' not as separable entities but as having a mutually constituting effect on each other (Hearn, 2014; Pullen et al., 2016b; Rumens, 2018) (also discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.1.2). Ultimately, as evident from the kinds of aims and questions outlined in the previous section, I unequivocally endorse Pullen et al.'s (2016b) call for a queer organizational interest to be deployed in pursuit not merely of an understanding of the experiences of 'queer subjects' in organizations, but towards an understanding of the broader *"organization* of the desire for recognition" (p85, emphasis in original).

1.2.4   *Gender/sexuality*

The fourth term which requires some elucidation is 'gender/sexuality'. Social scientists are used to thinking of sex, gender and sexuality as "separate variables with discrete attributes defined in binary term: bodies are either male or female; our gender presentation, behavioural disposition, and social roles are either masculine or feminine; our sexuality is either heterosexual or homosexual" (Valocchi, 2005, p752). The landscape of LGBT organizational research too tends to see these as identities where participants are either men or women, masculine or feminine, gay or straight (de Souza et al., 2016). The consequence of such an approach is that doing 'sexuality research in organizations' often means elucidating and describing the experiences of LGBT subjects and treating the category of 'LGBT' as "the starting assumption on which…[the] research is based and the major lens through which we interpret data" (Valocchi, 2005, 752). Yet, both the queer *and* the ethnographic approach adopted by this thesis alert us to the ways in which categories "incompletely or imperfectly represent a broad range of complicates social processes" (Ibid, 753) and how sexuality

is itself *gendered*, and gender, in turn, *sexual* (Doan, 2010)[15]. Thus, drawing from queer perspectives which conceive of the relationship between sex, gender, and sexuality as an empirical question in its own right (de Souza et al., 2016; Valocchi, 2005), the thesis opts in favour of using the term 'gender/sexuality' as a way of pointing to the intimate imbrication of sex, gender and sexuality, and the political utility in refusing to separate these.

1.2.5   *Neoliberalism*

The fifth and final term which deserves elucidation is 'neoliberalism'. The task that the term 'neoliberalism' has been performing has been that of naming in a more critical way the economic policies which over the past thirty to forty years have resulted in tattered social safety nets and the upward redistribution of societal resources (Cheng & Kim, 2014; Di Feliciantonio, 2015; Duggan, 2009; Kumar, 2018; Spade, 2011). The term has also been deployed beyond the realm of economic policy to describe a "cultural formation that elevates free market principles… [and] extends market rationality to all spheres of life, including our most intimate ones" (Kemp & Berkovitch, 2019, p3; also see: Foucault, 2006). In particular, scholars of gender/sexuality have sought to clarify that neoliberalism "in fact has a sexual politics" (Duggan, 2003, p177) and has considerably reshaped the conduct of LGBT politics away from a queer politics of resistance and class solidarities and towards assimilation, professionalization, and access to dominant mainstreaming institutions of marriage, the military and the market (Halberstam, 2005; Richardson, 2005). Against accounts which posit neoliberalism as "based on a political rationality that is geared toward increasing freedom and tolerance" (Ludwig, 2016, p417), these scholars emphasize neoliberalism's 'anti-democratic' (Ibid), 'violent' and 'unfriendly' dimensions.

The usefulness of the term 'neoliberalism' has been deeply contested (e.g. Dunn, 2017). In particular, scholars have argued that through its use, "dissimilar…experience

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[15] For a thought-provoking exploration of the impossibility and the dangers of understanding gender and sexuality in binary and ontologically separate ways, see Valentine's (2003) ethnographic work on an 'alternative lifestyles' support group in New York City.

of social change [are] undermine[d] [by] the sweeping designations provided by most presentations of neoliberalism" (Ibid, p435). The thesis embraces the critique and attempts to redress it by making a distinction between neoliberalism as an ideology and "the 'actually existing neoliberalism' in practice" (Olesen, 2014, p291). In so doing, it aims to move away from reductively economic and 'sweeping general' understandings and of 'neoliberalism' (e.g. Harvey, 2005) to emphasize the ways in which neoliberalism is deeply interconnected, negotiated, and reshaped in relation to "everyday lived experiences in local contexts" (Kanna, 2010, p102). From this perspective, crucial to our understanding of neoliberalism is an understanding of the "ways neoliberal ideologies resonate with and are made persuasive within local formations of identity, conceptions of self-hood, and idioms of citizenship are essential to their appropriation by the subjects targeted by neoliberal modes of governance" (Ibid)[16].

I now outline the methodological approach adopted in pursuit of the questions posed in section 1.1.2. In particular, and as the (brief) discussion of neoliberalism above demonstrates, paying attention to 'the local' is of paramount importance to this project's aims. In what follows I outline the multi-sited ethnographic methodology adopted and the specific 'localities' in which the discourse of LGBT-friendliness was traced.

1. 3   Methodology

This project deploys a multi-sited ethnographic methodology to trace 'LGBT-friendliness' across two 'social worlds'- the 'diversity world' of business, and the social world of 'queer activism' (discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, section 3.2). In the 'diversity world' of business, I conducted ethnography through participant observation in various organizational sites- mostly LGBT networking events and panel discussion- and interviewing employees who work in 'an LGBT-friendly

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[16] This also redresses the fact that "neoliberalism's history, manifestation, and effects can vary so greatly in different locations that its utility as an analytical category is limited" (Cheng & Kim, 2014, p362) (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, section 2.4).

organization' and/or who felt invoked by this discourse in the workplace and/or in their professional lives. In tracing promises of inclusion in this field I was especially interested in examining the contemporary incorporation of 'gender/sexual diversity' into processes of capital accumulation via its integration into the productive sphere of 'the workplace' and, in particular, 'the [LGBT-friendly] business organization'. London served as a (local) epicentre for this (global) process. Indeed, hosting the world's largest financial corporations and donned a "master of the international financial universe" (MacAskill, Cruise & Jones, 2019), the city offered an interestingly fitting opportunity to examine these processes "in the belly of the beast" (Calás & Smirchic, 2014, p641).

The social world of 'queer activism' took shape around a group of activists- The Friends of the Joiners Arms- campaigning to oppose the closure of a local queer pub, The Joiners Arms. Of particular interest was the campaigners' interaction with and experience of 'LGBT-friendliness' in relation to the local Council and the property developers who closed the pub, and an agreement (between the latter two) which promised to (re)include a 'replacement LGBT venue' on the former site of The Joiners Arms. Situated at the intersection of a number of class struggles or 'wars' (Halberstam, 2005) in the city, The Friends of the Joiners Arms' struggle to oppose the closure of one of London's remaining working-class 'queer' pubs enabled me to further trace the incorporation of 'gender/sexual diversity' amid processes of capital accumulation beyond the 'diversity world' of business, where many of these promises originate, and into the social world of 'queer activism'. In this social world, I conducted participant observation by 'following' (Marcus, 1995) the activists themselves: tracing their interactions with the local Council, the property developers and the media, attending both their internal and their public meetings as well as other events in which they participated as speakers and/or attendees, and took an active and engaged participant role by contributing my labour to the campaign.

Over the last two years I have spent my time travelling (physically *and* conceptually) between these two social worlds, the sum of which make up 'the field'. Neither of these worlds is constituted by a geographically fixed space, nor has clearly delineated boundaries. Rather they are (partial) constructs. And whilst methodologically 'useful', they also harbour a crucial limitation pertaining to the politically fraught labour

involved in 'making the cut' (Falzon, 2009). Firstly, whilst using the epithets 'queer'/'activism' and 'diversity'/'business' in delineating these two worlds, I do not mean to posit 'queer' and 'business' as two opposite sides of a spectrum, I do not naively assume that 'queer' is something which could or should be unproblematically attributed as a property of something in general, and activism in particular, nor do I somehow wish to imply that 'activism' is somewhat 'queerer' than 'business'. Secondly, I also similarly do not wish to posit 'activism' and 'business' as a binary either. Indeed, one of the conclusions emanating from the fieldwork experience was that, conceptually and politically -speaking, it might be unhelpful to posit 'activism' and 'business' as separate entities in the context of 'LGBT-friendliness', a phenomena which represents at once the 'business-ification' of activism and social justice and the 'activation' of business in the supposed creation of more socially just worlds (Grundy & Smith, 2007; Rao, 2015; Richardson, 2005; Ward, 2008).

Aware of the limitations of the categories adopted to conceptualize the social worlds which constitute the field of research, I nevertheless opted in favour of understanding these through the labels of 'diversity world of business' and 'queer activism' to do justice to participants' own understandings. Indeed, in the 'diversity world' of business, participants used the concept of 'diversity' to describe the discourses and initiatives in which they were involved. In the social world of 'queer activism', participants saw themselves as engaging in 'queer activism', distinguished by its rejection of (neo)liberal discourses of inclusion and assimilation, and a playful politics of resistance which celebrates transgression and rejects the marketization and commodification of gender/sexuality (Brown, 2007). The term 'diversity' was also interpreted negatively. As one participant put it, "when I think of 'diversity politics' I think about something that is palatable to straight white and cis people"[17]. I therefore primarily use these terms to do justice to participants' own understandings and positionality in the field.

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[17] Fieldnotes, May 2018; Coleen as we discuss some of the findings of the thesis over coffee in August 2019.

1. 4   Original contribution to knowledge

This thesis contributes, through its sustained focus on the organization of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness and its promises, to our understanding of the lived experiences of gender/sexuality and to the theoretical scholarship that aims to make sense of these and the terms of inclusion. I make significant contributions to original knowledge by adding to and reconceptualising debates in existing scholarship on queer OS and inclusion studies in three different areas.

Firstly, as discussed, there has been growing, albeit still limited, critical engagement with the discourses of diversity and inclusion. This work has primarily focused on the (re)production of exclusions at an organizational level, decoupled from larger societal and global phenomena (for an exception, see: Ahonen et al., 2014; Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008; Zanoni, 2011). This has also resulted in an incomplete and at times inadequate engagement with questions of class and the class politics of inclusion (for an exception, see: Berrey, 2014; Zanoni, 2011) (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, section 2.4).

Whilst I too have looked at gender/sexual subjects' experiences of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in situated organizational contexts, I have also taken a more expansive approach by situating 'LGBT-friendliness' within the context of neoliberalism and political economy more broadly (David, 2015; Preciado, 2008; Rao, 2015; Wasser, 2016). I have thus combined work on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism with critical scholarship on diversity and inclusion, queer theory and organization, to explore the specific ways in which gender/sexuality is becoming included "in the institutions of capitalist modernity" (Duggan, 2003, p83) and what this can tell us about a 'slice of the world system' (Marcus, 1995). In so doing, the thesis not only problematizes the idea that 'inclusion' is an unequivocal 'good' but also demonstrates that commitments to inclusion and 'LGBT-friendliness' cannot simply be about recognizing and incorporating 'diverse' gender/sexual identities in organizations, but need to consider, and problematize, the class politics of inclusion. In so doing, the thesis contributes to the growing field of inclusion studies by shedding light on the specific dynamics of inclusion/exclusion which affect 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects, contributing to a 'critically queer' (Butler, 1993) theorising of the concept,

rhetoric and practice of LGBT inclusion: how inclusion is implicated and interwoven with the 'straightening' and exclusionary logics of neoliberal capitalism and thus the need for a queer (or 'wonkier') model and understanding.

Secondly, a growing and important body of queer scholarship in the field of OS has emerged over the years, troubling predictable alignments between gender/sex/sexuality, and challenging a host of taken-for-granted (hetero-, homo- and cis-) normativities which inflect the ways in which we live and organize our lives (Bendl & Hofmann, 2015; Priola et al., 2018,; Pullen et al., 2016a) (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, section 2.3). This work has significantly redressed some of the managerial biases which permeate work on organizational gender/sexuality. Yet, as noted by others, these engagements, like those of queer theory more broadly, have to date relied on a discursive analysis focusing on the textuality of everyday life at the expense of the materiality and bodies and the "*subjectively embodied* products of discourse" (Courtney, 2014, p387, emphasis added).

Drawing from first-hand ethnographic data accounting for participants' lived experiences of gender/sexuality in multiple settings, the thesis makes an empirical contribution to the field of queer OS and in particular to ongoing discussions about 'LGBT-friendliness' and its relationship to heteronormativity (Giuffre et al., 2008; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014; Williams, Giuffre & Dellinger, 2009), cis-normativities (Rumens, 2015) and (the less frequently explored notion of) homonormativity (Benozzo et al., 2015; Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008). In so doing, the thesis demonstrates the ways in which queer theory, and queer*ing* as a critical practice, can contribute beyond the merely theoretical, philosophical and discursive by providing an ethnographically-grounded account of the operation and negotiation of 'LGBT-friendly normativities'. This goes beyond the non- or anti- normative and into the "bloods, bricks and mortar" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p1) of everyday life to explain "the adoption of our everyday gendered and sexual selves" (Valocchi, 2005, p757). The aim here is not to dismiss an analysis of discursive power altogether, nor to forego the goal of theory-building, but to incorporate these aims within a discussion that recognizes the material and political impact of social institutions on the lived and embodied organizational experiences of gender/sexuality (Valocchi, 2005).

Thirdly, the thesis offers an original contribution to knowledge by demonstrating the validity of a multi-sited ethnographic methodological approach to organizational diversity and inclusion. While in recent years scholars of organization have become increasingly suspicious of assuming integration, unity, and wholeness in organizational research, multi-sited studies remain peripheral in Business Schools (for an exception, see Pecis, 2014). Engaging with subjects, processes, and fieldsites not (traditionally) explored, the thesis 'makes troubles with' (Pullen et al., 2016b) organization as an ontological unit of analysis and as a field, thus contributing to ongoing discussions about the relationship between 'business' and 'activist' organizations, how to radicalize the Business School and/or how to make organizational theory itself queer (Ford, Harding & Learmonth, 2010; Jones & O'Doherty, 2005; Warner, 1991). The original contribution(s) to knowledge proposed by the thesis will be discussed in detail in each Chapter, and further cemented and defined in the Conclusion (Chapter Nine).

1. 5   Structure of work

The research questions in this thesis chart a progress from a study of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness in business and activist social worlds as it currently exists, towards a glimpse of queerer futures. In doing so, this project ultimately aims to move beyond a critique of 'LGBT-friendliness' towards proposing alternatives by drawing from the disruptive potential of queer bodies, positionalities and practices. In Chapter Two I review the extant literature on organizational gender/sexuality and diversity and inclusion, with particular focus on emerging critical and queer perspectives on 'LGBT-friendliness', and the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism, with the aim of exploring the productive potentialities that are unlocked through their simultaneous deployment. In Chapter Three I detail the multi-sited and ethnographic methodological approach adopted in order to seek answers to the questions posed in section 1.2.

Chapter Four and Five shed light on the organization of promises of inclusion as they unfold in the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism'.

Chapter Four draws from ethnographic observations collected across a series of LGBT networking events, panel discussions and conferences to argue that neoliberal governmentalities inform inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business, and that, organized around desires for 'extra-ordinariness', these trajectories engender the individualization, professionalization and privatization of gender/sexual politics where inclusion simply entails 'crashing ceilings'. I then explore what this might mean into the social world of 'queer activism', where austere socio-political and economic climates are reconfiguring the landscape of London's queer subcultural nightlife. In Chapter Five I draw from fieldwork conducted with The Friends of the Joiners Arms to argue that the promise of inclusion in this field did not extend its commitments to the 'queer' (Halberstam, 2005) gender/sexual subjects which once populated the pub it was supposedly intended to protect. Inclusion in this field should thus be understood as 'a Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag' which ultimately worked to 'straighten-up' the 'wonkiness' of gender/sexuality in pursuit of profit. I conclude by drawing connections between both social worlds and offering some preliminary reflections on the contribution this makes to the field of inclusion studies and queer OS.

Chapter Six and Chapter Seven trace the labour that 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects have to perform in order to be(come) included and the value and costs which accrue from its performance. In Chapter Six I attend to the 'diversity world' of business and, drawing from data collected through eight in-depth interviews with participants in the field, explore their laboured performances of gender/sexuality in 'the LGBT-friendly organization'. I argue that whilst 'the LGBT-friendly organization' seems to open-up new possibilities for recognition, these are dependent upon the (re)production of 'queer value' with considerable costs both for those who fail *and* those who succeed in performing their gender/sexuality in (organizationally) valuable ways. In Chapter Seven I return to the social world of 'queer activism' to reflect on the campaigners' (re)production of 'queer value' through the performance of paper*work* and affective labour. I argue that the 'queer value' of these performances was, at once, (re)appropriated by institutional and corporate actors but also subverted to redress some of the campaigners' redistributive demands. I conclude by reflecting on how this labour and its 'queer value' resemble to and/or differ from that performed and

(re)produced in the 'diversity world' of business, and trace the contribution that these reflections make to the broader critical field of inclusion and queer OS.

In the third and final part of the thesis, I draw from ethnographic fieldwork observations collected in both social worlds to make the case and trace opportunities for resistance to inclusion and 'LGBT-friendliness' (Chapter Eight), and conclude by summarizing the project, its contribution to the field of inclusion studies and queer OS and avenues for further research (Chapter Nine).

CHAPTER TWO

Old & New Directions in Organizational Gender/Sexuality, Queer Theory & the Politics of Inclusion: A Review

This chapter outlines the literature through which I develop my research and research questions. I focus on four key areas- gender/sexuality and organization (section 2.1), diversity and inclusion (section 2.2), queer theory and queer(ing) organization (section 2.3), and finally, the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism (section 2.4). I review the key concepts in each field and how they will be approached in the thesis. In so doing I aim to not only situate this doctoral project amid these four broad and intersecting research fields, but also to identify limitations and possibilities for further engagement. Initially I argue that whilst promising developments have occurred in the field, queer perspectives are still under-researcher and under-developed. Moreover, it seems that some of the (certainly well-intentioned) efforts at including the voices and experiences of LGBT subjects in organizations have coincided with managerialist[18] agendas in ways that severely limit the transformative potential of gender/sexuality. The remaining sections of the chapter outline the need of- and possibilities for- redressing these two limitations. In particular, I demonstrate the currency of the questions posed by scholars working on gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism for the fields of queer OS and inclusion studies.

2. 1   Gender/sexuality and organization

The study of gender/sexuality has historically been restricted to disciplines outside OS departments, "grounded on the assumption that…[these were] not a workplace matter" (Priola, Lasio, Serri & De Simone, 2018, p735). Yet, in the last few decades scholars

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[18] 'Managerialism' here refers to "the perspective taken by most management studies literature, which privileges the position and perspective of managers as defined by the 'strategic' discourse of the organizations in which they work" (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p8).

of organizations have begun exploring and opening-up the analytical and empirical relevance of gender/sexuality in, and to, organizations (Brewis, Tyler & Mills, 2014; Hearn, Burrell, Sheppard & Tacred-Sheriff, 1989; Priola et al., 2018). As noted by Rumens and Ng (2017), "gender, in comparison to sexuality, has typically attracted more scholarly interest" (p109). Nevertheless, whilst scholarship in the field is "still modest and fragmented" (Priola et al., 2018, p735), some themes and concerns emerge as particularly relevant. These can be broadly categorized as first-, second- or third-wave research strands[19].

2.1.1 First-wave research

'First-wave' research on gender/sexuality and organizations focused primarily on issues of workplace discrimination and exclusion experienced by LG(BT) [20] employees. These studies reflected on, and were a response to, a hostile political reality of widespread homophobia and heterosexism on the workplace (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Colgan & McKearney, 2011; Humphrey, 1999; Priola, Lasio, De Simone, & Serri, 2014; Ragins, 2004, 2008). Despite the "fragmented and often a-theoretical nature" (Creed, 2006, p378) of much of this research, the issue of self-disclosure and non-disclosure of one's sexual identity ('coming out') is a unifying theme. 'Coming out' was conceived as an important activist endeavour (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003), a development necessity (Creed, 2006), and an individually and organizationally beneficial pursuit (Spradlin, 1998), with efforts made to document the conditions under which lesbian and gay men could disclose their sexual identity at work.

First-wave scholarship performed the important task of documenting the manifold inequalities and exclusions experienced by LG(BT) subjects on the workplace, and

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[19] I borrow from Colgan and Rumens (2015) 'the wave metaphor' as a way of tracing the development of the field of gender/sexuality and organization. Whilst, as Colgan and Rumens (2015) themselves acknowledge, 'the wave metaphor' may inadvertently obscure "the similarities between each eave" (p3) or, alternatively, over-emphasize the differences which separate them, it is nevertheless a useful way of thinking through the theoretical and empirical developments which have occurred in the field.

[20] Research on gender/sexuality and organization did not focus on bisexual and trans- people until much more recently (Monro et al., 2017; Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016).

"expose[d] and critique[d] the nature and extent of objectionable treatment of LG(BT) sexualities in all areas of life" (Colgan & Rumens, 2015, p6). At the same time, these approaches were limited in some serious ways by their disproportionate focus on gay men and lesbians at the expense of bisexual and transgender employees, by a positivist approach to gender/sexuality, in which 'lesbian' and 'gay' were treated as taken-for-granted, stable and truthful identities, and by a lack of awareness of the heterogeneity of LG(BT) subjects, or indeed how gender/sexuality is inflected by other forms of differences such as race, class, and gender.

2.1.2   Second-wave research

'Second-wave' research acknowledged that LGBT employees had received some recognition in organizations and focused attention on how policies and legislations could be developed to create inclusive and 'friendlier' environments (Colgan, Creegan, McKearney & Wright, 2007; Colgan & Rumens, 2015; Ellis, 2009; Ozeren, 2014; Wright, Colgan, Creegany & McKearney, 2006). Dealing with first-wave realities of LGBT organizing, second-wave research also unmasked the (gendered, racialized, and classed) tensions within the LGBT acronym. For example, Woodruffe-Burton & Bairstow (2013) focused on butch women's gender presentation, concluding that "not all lesbians share the same kind of pressures; while there can be no single concept of woman…for example, there is equally no single notion of lesbian identity" (p360). Similarly, Tessa Wright (2011) explored the intersection of class and gender in the workplace experiences of lesbian women, finding that "women in non-professional occupations tended to be situated in workplaces or environments where there was greater resistance to organizational equality policies and initiatives" (p698), whilst Colgan (2015) deployed an intersectional perspective to explore the experience of Black and minority ethnic disabled LGBT employees who work in 'good practice employers', finding that "sexual orientations and gender identity and gender reassignment were not acorded the same status as race, disability or other equalitys trands within their organizations" (p117).

Second-wave research also more readily focused on a wider range of employment issues and strategies for managing gender/sexuality on the workplace (e.g. 'friendships', Rumens, 2011, 2012), and on bisexual and trans experiences, although studies which specifically address the latter are still limited (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard & Sürgevil, 2011a; Green, Payne & Green, 2011; Hines, 2010; Köllen, 2015; Monro, Hines & Osborne, 2017; Ozeren, 2014; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016; Priola et al., 2018; Schilt & Connell, 2007; Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016), and became more aware of the constructed nature of gender/sexuality as multiple and fluid. Yet different theoretical and multi-disciplinary perspectives were still lacking.

Alongside these interests is also a growing attentive focus to the concept of organizational gender/sexuality, and a more general positing of gender/sexuality as a "central if relatively neglected aspect of organizational lives and processes" (Brewis, Tyler & Mills, 2014, p306). The focus here shifts from merely looking at 'LGBT people in organizations', and away from taking gender/sexuality as an unproblematized ontological fact, towards looking at the organization of gender/sexuality, its "categorization, classification and hierarchical ordering" (Ibid) as well as the gender/sexuality of organization, that is, "the lived experience and management of [gender/]sexuality within and through organizational settings" (Ibid). In this regard, the themes of power, control and resistance emerge as particularly meaningful concerns that continue to both "fascinate and to elude organizational scholars" (Ibid). Thus, it seems that as the field continues to grow, it is not only shattering "the container metaphor of organization by showing how [gender/]sexuality and organization are mutually constitutive of one another" (Ng & Rumens, 2017, p109), but also more readily engaging with the paradoxical nature of the nexus between power-resistance-control in organizations.

2.1.3 *Third-wave research*

Finally, 'third-wave' gender/sexuality organizational research engages with some of the problems emanating from previous scholarship, cautioning against a simplistic understandings of gender/sexuality and the ways in which some particular and

'normative' expressions are validated at the expense of others (Benozzo, Pizzorno, Bell & Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; Bowring, 2004; Giuffre, et al., 2008; Muhr & Sullivan, 2013; Priola et al., 2018; Pullen et al., 2016b; Rumens, 2012, 2013, 2018; Williams et al., 2009). Third-wave research is also accompanied by a greater degree of theoretical sophistication, moving away from simply focusing on 'homophobia' and 'heterosexism' towards using terms such as 'bi-phobia', 'bi-negativity', 'trans-phobia' and ultimately, hetero- cis- and homo- normativity (Colgan & Rumens, 2015; Green et al., 2011; Hines, 2010; Irving, 2007, 2008; McCarthy, 2003; Ozeren, 2014; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). This worked to problematize some taken-for-granted assumptions of both first- and second- wave scholarship, such as the liberatory outcomes of 'coming out' at work (Benozzo et al., 2015). Third-wave research also continued building on second-wave interests by exploring 'intersectionality as a lived experience' (Colgan, 2015; Taylor, Hines & Casey, 2011) and approaching gender/sexuality through gendered (David, 2015, 2016; Muhr & Sullivan, 2013), (sometimes) classed (Fleming, 2007; Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, 2011, Taylor, 2006, 2011, 2018), and (more rarely) racialized lenses (Holvino, 2010). Thus both second- and third- wave organizational research supplanted first-wave interests by exploring LGBT issues in a range of different settings (Humphrey, 1999; Williams & Giuffre, 2011), focusing on equality and inclusion of 'diverse' genders/sexualities, not only their exclusion (Colgan et al., 2007; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Priola et al., 2018; Wright et al., 2006), as well as the embeddedness of gender/sexuality in organizational processes (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009).

2.1.4 *'The LGBT-friendly organization'*

Attracting increasing scholarly attention in 'third-wave research' developments is an emerging and 'new' organizational form': the ' gay- ' or 'LGBT-' 'friendly' organization (Rumens, 2015; Williams & Giuffre, 2011; Williams et al., 2009). The term is "seldom…explained and interrogated" (Rumens & Broomfield, 2014, p367). Yet some intimations about its meaning and significance can be found in this limited but developing field. Fleming (2007) understands 'LGBT-friendly organizations' as places embodying a "pro-gay culture" (p248), where "gay themes" (Ibid) are

prominent, and which work well with the "general cultural message of being yourself, fun, ebullience and outgoingness" (Ibid). Williams et al. (2009) define them as "work settings [that] attempt to eradicate homophobia and heterosexism" (p29). Whilst Correia and Kleiner (2001) as "those organizations that foster an atmosphere considered hospitable to gay, lesbian, and bisexual employees" (p95).

Work in the field has also constructed 'LGBT-friendliness' in relation to inclusive organizational practices and discourses, such as the presence of an inclusive employment policy, LGBT staff networks, and/or 'LGBT role models' (Colgan et al., 2007; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Correia & Kleiner, 2001; Ng & Rumens, 2017; Wright, 2011; Wright et al., 2006), and in relation to both the social justice (Colgan et al., 2007) *and* the business case (Lambert, 2015) for 'diversity' and 'inclusion'. Underpinning the emergence of the discourse of 'LGBT-friendliness' in organizations, and as the findings in the thesis will confirm, is thus both a promise of inclusion and recognition sustained by "an implicit assumption of an ethics of tolerance and liberalism" (Rumens & Broomfield, p367) and an economic promise of financial profit and gain (Rumens, 2018). 'The LGBT-friendly organization' is thus positioned in opposition to the closeted histories of exclusion and discrimination which concerned first-wave research, and reflects a move away from the "bureaucratic idea that employees must adopt an organizational persona at work" (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p188), whereby gender/sexuality is no longer seen as anathema to organizations and organizational processes but rather as a valuable dimension of the self that can (and should) be harnessed- by employers *and* employees alike- in the pursuit of organizational goals. Whilst some celebrate this as a progressive development in response to the various exclusions and inequalities documented by first-wave scholarship, the emergence of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness has also attracted significant criticism (discussed in more detail in section 2.4).

'The LGBT-friendly organization' also seems to have been accompanied by a shift from trade unions to company LGBT staff/employee networks and 'LGBT role models' as the main sites of workplace activism. As Colgan and McKearney's (2012) note, whilst LGBT union networks were the dominant focus and locus of LGBT workplace activism in the late 1980s and through the 1990s, more recently the focus seems to have shifted in favour of the creation of company LGBT networks and, as

Stonewall[21] emphasises "the need for a network to establish a case that 'should include benefits to the organization and not just to LGB [sic] employees' (Stonewall, 2005, p22 in Colgan & McKearney, 2012, p362). Whilst some argue that, working in tandem with management, LGBT staff networks are better-positioned to achieve meaningful change, others suggest that their emergence poses serious questions in terms of challenging organizational forms of control (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard & Sürgevil, 2011; Colgan & McKearney, 2012). For example, Greene & Kirton (2009) have argued that a "vacuum of responsibility" (p23) accompanies the emergence of company LGBT networks, with ambivalent but mostly negative consequences for LGBT workplace activism.

'LGBT role models' too seem to be crucial components of 'the LGBT-friendly organization'. Having 'visible' and 'authentic' 'LGBT role models' on the workplace is indeed often mentioned as going beyond mere 'diversity initiatives' to provide an aspiration and an inspiration for closeted employees (Browne, 2014). This is foregrounded by the emergence of publications which detail the benefits of having 'LGBT role models' at work, encouraging LGBT employees to 'step up' to become more visible at work and organizations to invest and promote these as 'diversity success stories' (Stonewall, 2012). In this regard, the discourse LGBT-friendliness resembles that of 'post-feminism': a form of politics and a discourse which purports that the various exclusions and inequalities experienced by 'women' (and, in our case, gender/sexual Others more broadly) have been resolved, and which heralds 'role models' in general, and successful corporate actors in particular, as examples of this newfound 'equality' (Gill, 2016; Liu, 2019; McRobbie, 2004). In the thesis, I use both the 'LGBT network' and 'LGBT role models' as (conceptual and physical) sites from which to observe (and participate in) the 'diversity world' of business, and argue, dovetailing critical approaches to both, that their emergence does indeed (re)organize the conduct of gender/sexual organizational politics in remarkably neoliberal ways.

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[21] One of the largest LGBT rights organizations in Britain (https://www.stonewall.org.uk/) (also see: Rumens, 2015 on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and the Stonewall 'Diversity Champions' program).

Promising changes have occurred in the field of gender/sexuality and organization. In particular, third-wave gender/sexuality and organization research, reflecting wider shifts in the field of OS (Pullen et al., 2016b), has opened-up a number of interdisciplinary problematics concerning the relationship between 'gender/sexuality' and 'organization' (Parker, 2002) and the stronghold that positivist and quantitative approaches hold in the field- with a contemporary privileging of more qualitative, ethnographic, and post-modern methodologies (Rouleau, de Rond, & Musca, 2014; Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2009). The field has indeed become increasingly more attuned to the socially constructed character of gender/sexual categories, the relevance of intersectionality and the experiences of bisexual and trans people, both as subjects of knowledge and as knowledge producers in their own right. In light of the violent incidences of transphobia in the United Kingdom, where trans-exclusionary (so-called) feminists protested Pride in London in 2018, and where, most recently, a letter denouncing efforts at promoting trans- inclusion in Universities was signed by over 30 academics, these developments are not only welcome, but politically necessary. This doctoral project owes its very existence to the fertile conditions created by the development of the field and the various scholars who, motivated by a desire to make the lives of LGBT+ subjects in organizations more 'liveable', contributed to its advancement.

At the same time I also contend that some themes and problematics have remained under-theorized and under-researched. Firstly, although queer perspectives in OS are emerging as part of third-wave research interests, these are still underdeveloped (Pullen et al., 2016b). Secondly, with the exception of Rumens (2018) and some strands of critical diversity and inclusion research (Zanoni, 2011), the field of organizational gender/sexuality has largely ignored developments occurring outside the field and ultimately, the imbrication of 'LGBT-friendliness' in neoliberal regimes of capital accumulation (Eng, 2010; Puar, 2007; Rao, 2015). In the next section, I situate contemporary organizational interests in gender/sexuality and the emergence of 'LGBT-friendly organizations' amid broader critical discussions of 'diversity' and 'inclusion'. I argue that scholarship in this field is helpful in contextualizing developments with regards to gender/sexuality amid contemporary capitalist

investments in 'diversity' and 'inclusion', and, in particular, at tracing the co-option of efforts at including gender/sexuality in organizations by business agendas.

2. 2   Diversity, inclusion, and its critics

Interests in issues of 'difference' have also been addressed in the field of diversity and inclusion. Whilst this complements and supports scholarship on gender/sexuality and organization, "research on LGBT workers is disproportionately smaller compared to research that focuses on other dimensions of diversity" (Ng & Rumens, 2017, p110). Yet, scholarship on 'diversity' and 'inclusion', and, in particular, that which is critical of, and mindful about, the outcomes and stated intentions of these discourses, remains helpful in reconnecting interests in 'diverse' organizational subjects with its politics.

2.2.1   From 'equality' to 'diversity (management)'

Initial discussions of workplace 'diversity' were dominated by the discourse of 'equality', in which differences were understood to mean 'group difference' (Liff & Wajcman, 1996; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000). Yet, a more instrumental understanding of 'diversity' (and its management) emerged in 'the demographic turn' (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000), and a "conceptual distance… [was] created between previous equality discourses which rested on the language of social justice" (Oswick & Noon, 2014, p25). The concept of 'workplace diversity' assumes that the workforce is 'made-up' of "various [demographic] types of 'diverse' identities [which] are identified in order to be managed" (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p151).

Whilst scholarship on 'equality' mostly focused on gender and race, 'diversity management' started referring more explicitly to other forms of differences, including age, religion, disability, and sexuality (Bendl et al., 2008). Class and class differences nevertheless remain a remarkably under-explored area in the field, which many have argued is symptomatic of the largely corporate nature of 'diversity' (management) initiatives and the ways in which organizations are not simply inscribed in, but actually

reproduce, capitalist frameworks (Berrey, 2014; Irving, 2007, 2008; Marsden, 1997; Scully, Blake-beard, Konrad, Prasad & Pringle, 2006; Zanoni, 2011). The shift from 'equality' to 'diversity' was also met by a concomitant shift in focus from group to individual differences (Liff & Wajcman, 1996), and a 'happier' rhetoric where differences are to be celebrated, as opposed to the discourse of equality which foregrounds the historical inequality and discrimination which underpins (different group) identities (Noon, 2007; Swan, 2010).

The 'happy' rhetoric (Swan, 2010) of 'diversity management' was nevertheless challenged with a 'turn to politics' (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000). This was underpinned by a concern that the emphasis on 'diversity management' ignored civil rights/social justice arguments and had taken the politics out of change (Ibid, p20). Others also argued that 'diversity management's' 'inclusiveness', the notion that 'everyone is different', obscures power differentials and lacks a historical memory of the exclusion of minorities (Ahmed, 2012; Noon, 2007; Prasad, Pringle & Konrad, 2006).

2.2.2 The business case for diversity

Despite the important questions posed by critical diversity scholars in a quest to politicize the field, the 'political turn' was nevertheless silenced by the emergence of the 'business case' for diversity. Here 'diversity' turned 'economic' (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000) and was linked to organizational performance and image (Noon, 2007; Rhodes, 2017; Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010). The business case is based on a "voluntaristic/deregulated agenda driven by the market" (Oswick & Noon, 2014, p26), as opposed to state-driven equality strategies, which were equated to legal coercion. The 'economic' turn (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000) thus marked a surge of scholarship which emphasized the 'business benefits' of doing 'diversity', including increased productivity, ability to understand customer needs and attract and retain talent, all of which enhance competitiveness whilst reducing the likelihood of litigation (Dye & Golnaraghi, 2015). Some later studies attempted to refine the 'business case' by emphasising that the materialization of its benefits depended on how 'diversity' was managed (Kochan et al., 2003).

Interestingly, as noted by Rumens and Ng (2017), "a turn of emphasis from studies on anti-discrimination towards researching the business case for valuing LGBT diversity (since the 1990s) has seen a small boom in the number of papers devoted to LGBT workplace diversity, equality, and inclusion" (p112). The emergence of 'the LGBT-friendly organization' is part and parcel of these shifts and is explicitly underpinned by efforts to link LGBT employees and 'gender/sexual diversity' more generally to its economic benefits. The business case for 'LGBT diversity' builds on first-wave interests on the effects of coming out, extending them to examine their impact on individual, work group/team and organizational, productivity (Button, 2004; Chrobot-Mason, Button & DiClementi, 2001; Johnston & Malina, 2008). At an individual level, LGBT employees who work in 'LGBT-friendly organizations' are reported as having higher levels of organizational commitments (Nam Cam Trau & Hartel, 2004) which enables these employees to avoid the "loss of productivity or efficiency resulting from emotional trauma, un-cohesive work teams, poor communication or destructive conflict among workers" (Day & Schoenrade, 2000, p48) resulting from non-disclosure and to devote all their energy to "professional performance" (Köllen, 2015, p996). At an organizational level, organizations that engage in the discourse of LGBT-friendliness are seen as more 'modern' and globally competitive businesses that benefit from recruiting employees from a broader talent pool (Day & Greene, 2008), accessing to the so-called 'pink dollar' market through targeted marketing efforts (Oakenfull, 2013; Tuten, 2005, 2006) and extracting added productivity dividends from 'more productive' LGBT employees (Stonewall, 2012). The 'business case' for LGBT 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in organizations is, moreover, buttressed by 'LGBT-friendly indexes' (e.g. Stonewall, 2017), in which organizations are ranked according to 'best practice' in the area and which is in turn is harnessed by these as a marketing and recruitment strategy.

The business case for LGBT 'diversity' and 'inclusion' is endorsed both by 'LGBT-friendly' business organizations *and* LGBT rights organizations as evident by Stonewall's well-known slogan that "people perform better when they can be themselves" (Stonewall, 2008). Many have argued these proximities and alliances between business organizations and the LGBT movement are symptomatic of the contemporary (re)organization of gender/sexual politics away from anti-capitalism

and in favour of an assimilationist politics bent on the notions of respectability, professionalism and assimilation (Richardson, 2005; Sears, 2005; Vaid, 1995; Ward, 2008a) (discussed in more detail in section 2.4).

2.2.3 Critical approaches to diversity and inclusion

Lorbiecki and Jack's (2000) final 'turn' in the discourse of diversity is critical, sceptical of the business case for 'diversity', and calls for the return to the more social justice oriented discourse of 'equality' and the political turn. Scholars broadly identified under the banner 'critical' lament the explicit treatment of the subjects of diversity as mere assets in the pursuit of business goals and objectives (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Prasad & Mills, 1997; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop & Nkomo, 2010). They also take issue with the individualistic/voluntaristic aspect of 'diversity' arguing that this "would obscure unequal power relations in organizations… hampering the ability to challenge them" (Zanoni et al., 2010, p9). Specifically, they argue that 'diversity management' rests on unqualified assumptions and a functionalist/modernist agenda which, premised upon a means-end relationship and a focus on organizational goals, takes the perspective of management and managers (Kirby & Harter, 2003; Litvin, 2002). Critical diversity scholars thus see the business case as 'a discourse of control' (Dye & Golnaraghi, 2015, p263), claiming that "those who manage are privileged subjects and those constructed as different are managed…denied agency and full subjectivity" (Ibid, p264).

Some critical scholars approach the issue by looking at how the business case for 'diversity' undermines social justice, and ultimately pacifying the radical potential of difference, at an organizational level (Just & Christiansen, 2012; Kirton & Greene, 2010; Noon, 2007; Zanoni & Janssens, 2004, 2007; Zanoni et al., 2010). Arguing that the business case undermines social justice by refusing to confront structural (as opposed to individual) inequalities and that, as a whole, the diversity (management) literature "does not merely neglect power dynamics, but rather takes a clearly managerial perspective" (Zanoni et al., 2010, p13), these scholars conclude that the business case for 'diversity' "might ultimately provide to be dangerous for social

justice" (Noon, 2007, p773). An example is Fleming's work (2007) with colleagues (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, 2011) on how workplace contexts in which employees can 'be themselves' represent increased management control by working as 'distractions mechanisms' from other, more taxing, forms of (class) control. Taking an explicitly Marxist perspective on organizational diversity discourses and initiatives, they ultimately conclude that efforts at including 'diverse' gender/sexual subject are mere exercises in organizational control.

Others approach the issue from a more global perspective by tracing the implication of so-called 'diverse' and 'inclusive' organizations in global hegemonic forces and systems of oppression and inequality (David, 2015, 2016; Hearn, 2014; Humphries & Grice, 1995; Mir, Mir, & Wong, 2006; Mirchandani & Butler, 2016). For example, Humphries and Grice (1995) show the ways in which the managerial language of 'diversity' undermines equality and social justice by being complicit with the hegemonic forces of global capitalism. They argue that the economic element in 'diversity management' distracts us from "more significant development[s], where marginalized communities in the First and Third Worlds are related to the peripheries of capitalism, where no 'managing diversity' programs apply (p30). Mirchandani and Butler (2016) make a similar point and argue that scholars should recognize "not only that individuals are embedded within local racialized, class-based and gendered hierarchies, but that these processes are constructed by globalization and nationalisms" (p497).

Somewhat dovetailing critiques of 'diversity', some scholars have begun placing more emphasis on the concept of 'inclusion', arguing that "in place of diversity, a theoretical and political commitment to inclusion is something we should be striving for" (Tyler, 2018, p49). These have thus devoted attention to 'making inclusion work' (Katila, Meriläinen & Tienari, 2010) and expanding the 'inclusionary potential' (Dobusch, 2017) of 'diversity'. Yet, by and large, 'inclusion' remains a largely ubiquitous, elusive and widely disputed term (Mor Barak, 2015). And whilst, for some, inclusion is a compelling and progressive force committed to redressing inequality (Pless & Maak, 2004; Riordan, 2014; Sherbin & Rashid, 2017); for others, it is a 'managerial buzzword' (Tyler, 2018, p49) accompanied by exclusionary logics which govern and restrict who is included and include-able. Indeed, it seems that, like 'diversity',

'inclusion' can, too, involve a merely "instrumental recognition of difference on organizational terms" (Tyler, 2018, p55), and that the feelings of harmony that 'inclusion', like 'diversity', arouses (Ahmed, 2012a; Almeida, 2016), can work to conceal power relations and the exclusion of 'undesirable' Others (David, 2016; Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014; Rennstam & Sullivan, 2018; Tyler, 2018; Vijayakumar, 2013). This has lead Stella M. Nkomo (2014) to denounce inclusion as mere 'old wine in new bottles' and argue that whilst "[c]alling for inclusion in opposition to exclusion is a natural theoretical and practical response" (p580), with it may come a number of unanswered questions as to what exactly this discourse *does* and for whom. In the thesis, I build upon these critical interrogations to extend our (empirical) knowledge of LGBT inclusion and the (theoretical) scholarship that aims to make sense of these and the terms of inclusion.

2.2.4   *Limitations and possibilities: a poststructuralist approach*

Critical scholars problematization of business-centric understandings of 'diversity' has not only countered the managerial logic and language of 'mainstream' diversity field, but also opened-up possibilities for (re)imagining the very study of OS, whom the field is for and its role in the creation of more emancipative, socially just and radical organizational realities against and beyond the logics of capital. At the same time, these approaches have also been limited in two major ways. Firstly, diverse subjects' agency is somewhat lost amidst the totalizing logics of capital. Indeed, in conceptualizing organizational power in terms of 'domination', critical scholars have largely ignored the multiple ways in which contemporary organizational power seems to operate by enjoining workers to "develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p619), which, paradoxically, reconstitutes employees' agency as a form of (self-)management and opens up spaces of resistance and micro-emancipation (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007).

Secondly, it also seems that in seeking to oppose the instrumentalism which permeates discussions of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in organizations, critical scholars have not

problematized 'diversity', running the risk of stabilizing differences as ontological facts to be 'rescued' from profit-making mechanisms (Ahonen et al., 2014; Prasad, 2012; Zanoni et al., 2010). Whilst positing gender/sexuality as an "interchangeable cog in the profit-making mechanism" (Litvin, 2006, p87) is surely a powerful metaphor around which to construct a challenge to managerial readings of 'diversity', this seems to miss the specific ways in which gender/sexuality is currently becoming incorporated and enveloped in processes of capital accumulation (for example, see: Preciado, 2008; Preciado, 2013).

A poststructuralist approach to gender/sexuality seems to offer one way to redress these limitations. Indeed, poststructuralist and discursive approaches, whilst still critical of the ways in which the business case trumps questions of social justice, have reconciled the two discourses and reconstituted (diverse) workers' strategic agency in the process (Ahmed, 2007; Brewis, 2018; Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010; Zanoni & Janssens, 2004, 2007; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop & Nkomo, 2010). Poststructuralist approaches have also redressed the second limitation by placing emphasis on 'diversity' and 'inclusion' as organizational *discourses* rather than realities- intended and/or attained (Ahonen et al., 2014; Jones & Stablein, 2006; Tyler, 2018; Zanoni & Janssens, 2004, 2007; Zanoni et al., 2010). These have thus pointed to "the problems deriving from a positivistic ontology of identity" (Zanoni et al., 2010, p12), in particular the ways in which identities "are conceptualized as ready-made, fixed, clear-cut, easily measurable categories" (Ibid). These interventions have also deconstructed the very concept of 'diversity' and argued that this reproduces "white, heterosexual, western, middle/upper class, abled men as the term of reference" (Ibid). Thus, reflecting third-wave interests in gender/sexuality and organization, poststructuralist scholars call for more attention to the paid to social constructed-ness of categories of diversity and the manifold ways in which "focusing academic and philosophical inquiry on the study of analytical categories of difference scholars overlook the discursive processes that produce these differences and, thus, fail to holistically appreciate the [a]etiology of cultural disenfranchisement" (Prasad, 2012, p569). A limited but emerging body of scholarship within poststructuralist approaches is that of queer OS. In the thesis, I adopt a poststructuralist approach, and a queer perspective in particular, in order to maintain a critical perspective without denying

agency to the subjects of diversity and inclusion nor foregoing nuance in an exploration of the specific ways in which gender/sexuality becomes incorporated in capitalist regimes.

2. 3   Queer OS: queer*ing* gender/sexuality, diversity and inclusion, and 'the LGBT-friendly organization'

Whilst queer theory does not contest that some people do in fact experience their identity in coherent and stable ways, it also recognizes that an understanding of "virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of the homo/heterosexual binary" (Sedgwick, 1990, p1). Queer theory thus seeks to explore "the dynamic character of identities" (Bendl et al., 2008, p384) and expose "the mechanisms of exclusion implicit in a heterosexual/homosexual, male/female opposition" (Ibid). In utilizing queer theory, scholars of organizations have not only troubled gender/sexual categories but also "the central categories and meanings associated with organizations and organizing" (Pullen et al., 2016b, p84).

Queer approaches to OS have indeed been deployed to challenge organizational concepts, questioning dominant understandings of 'leadership', 'management', 'accounting' (Bendl et al., 2008; Harding, Lee, Ford & Learmonth, 2011; Lee, Learmonth & Harding, 2008; Parker, 2001, 2002, 2016; Rumens, 2017; Tyler & Cohen, 2008). In relation to 'diversity' (management) and 'inclusion', queer scholars have showed how these discourses work to produce gender/sexuality as stable, neat, de-politicized, contained, manageable, and marketable (Bendl et al., 2008; Morrish & O'Mara, 2011; Rumens, 2018). Whilst studies applying queer theory and concepts to diversity (management) discourses are still limited, it seems that a queer emphasis on the deconstruction of categories "is especially well suited for unpacking 'diversity management's' implicit assumptions about identity constructions" (Bendl & Hofmann, 2015, p383).

Indeed, crucial to a queer sensitivity is an understanding and appreciation of gender/sexuality less as a fixed property of individuals, and the categories we use to

define it less as means through which to "discover the 'roots' or 'authentic' content of one's identity" (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000, p26), and more as performatively (and messily) constituted and in a constant process of becoming. Queer approaches are highly indebted to Foucault's poststructuralist framework and re-conceptualization of gender/sexuality as a culturally and historically specific category of knowledge, which opens up a space to reconcile it as irremediably part of the realm of (Western) power (Foucault, 1978, 1981)[22]. A queer perspective thus allows us to decentre the "picture of stable identity that is intrinsic to the modern [liberal] subject" (Bendl et al., 2008, p385). From this perspective, identity categories can thus be read as "…instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression" (Butler, 1993, p308). Ambivalence here is key, for identity is both the site of one's empowerment and oppression, resistance and control. Such an understanding politicizes agency, whereby whilst resistance is not possible outside of discourse, there is always possibility for what Butler (1993, 1999) calls 'resignification' or 'subversive citation'. Central to this understanding of identity and agency is the concept of performativity, which foregrounds the way in which "…being gay or lesbian is not a truth to be discovered, it is a performance, which is enacted" (Ward & Winstanley, 2005, p452), and thus open to change and transformation.

2.3.1 Challenging (hetero- cis- and homo-) normativities

In troubling gender/sexual categories, queer theory also brings with it the explicitly political goal of disrupting the various (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities which underpin organization and modes of organizing by troubling stable and predictable understandings and alignments between sex, gender, and sexuality (Bendl, 2005; Bendl et al., 2008; Bendl & Hofmann, 2015; Benozzo et al., 2015; Bowring, 2004; Brewis, Hampton & Linstead, 1997; Courtney, 2014; de Souza, Brewis & Rumens, 2016; Heyes, Dean & Goldberg, 2016; Muhr & Sullivan, 2013; Rumens, 2012, 2013,

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[22] This may pose problems for the ways in which (gender/sexual) diversity (management) discourses are imposed and/or travel in contexts outside 'the West' (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2011; Massad, 2017; Puar, 2007; Rao, 2010, 2015).

2018; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014). Heteronormativity is "typically understood as a normative regime that requires individuals to inscribe themselves into a hierarchical sexual order…[and is] also mobilized as an analytical category to examine how heterosexuality acquires a normative status in the workplace, against which LGBT sexualities and genders are often cast as 'abnormal' and 'unnatural'" (Ng & Rumens, 2017, p109). For this reason, 'gender' also becomes inseparable from the study of sexuality under queer lenses, which leads us to a "sharper and more complex analysis of how (gendered and sexualized) identities are constructed" (Bendl et al., 2008, p385).

Others have also pointed out how heteronormativity involves more than gender/sexuality but actually entrenches a number of (reproductive, familial, monogamous and spatio-temporal) social values which determine the shape a life must take in order to be intelligible and ultimately liveable (Berlant, 2006; Berlant & Freeman, 1992; Butler, 1999; Halberstam, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1999). So, for example, Benozzo et al. (2015) identify that their respondents often 'come out' in the workplace and into a gay couple relationship, which they argue is a form of heteronormativity for it firstly, welds "together biological sex, gender, and sexuality" (p298), but also, secondly, because it mimics and "reinforces a heterosexual discourse of monogamy" (Ibid). Rather than simply being a form of empowerment, as argued by both first- and second- wave organizational research, 'coming out' from a queer perspective is something which introduces the subject to "other domains of power… [such as] those of psychological or sexual discourses and practices, which produce recognizable, adapted and self-controlled identities" (Ibid).

More recently, scholars have also focused on the operation of cis-normativity in organizations, a term which describe "a normative regime in which it is 'normal' for individuals to be cisgender, whose personal gender identity is the same as the sex category they were assigned at birth (Ng & Rumens, 2017, p109). Likewise, perspectives on homonormativity (discussed in more detail in the next section) are also emerging (Benozzo et al., 2015; Rumens, 2018), yet these remain limited, a fact which I argue is symptomatic of queer OS research unwillingness to situate the emergence of 'diversity', 'inclusion' and 'LGBT-friendliness' within the context of neoliberalism (for an exception, see: Rumens, 2018) (discussed in section 2.4).

Scholars working in the field of OS have thus argued that the discourses of diversity and inclusion are often grounded in hetero- cis- and homo- normative "principles and practices" (Priola et al., 2018, p733) that foster "new kinds of conformism that exclude or marginalise others" (Ibid). From this perspective, crucial to our critical frameworks should be understanding "the organization of the desire for recognition, the very desirability of inclusion…[and] the conditions upon which the conferral of recognition depends" (Pullen et al., 2016b, p85).

2.3.2 Queering 'the LGBT-friendly organization' and the terms of inclusion

As noted by Rumens and Ng (2017), "challenging normativity in the workplace can be difficult and sometimes at odds with current efforts made by some organizations to cultivate LGBT diversity and inclusion in the workplace" (p109). Indeed, queer perspectives on 'the LGBT-friendly organization' have pointed to the troubling effects of "producing indexes and lists, and their capacity to transform the disorderliness of organizational life into something static and tangible" (Rumens, 2016, p187), questioned "whose sexual interests are being served in [gay-friendly] organizations" (Williams & Giuffre, 2011, p552), and whether we "[c]an …understand gay-friendly workplaces as context where there is a breakdown in heteronormativity?" (Ibid) or whether 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects are only included, and include-able, inasmuch they abide to the norms of professionalism (Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009), visibility/invisibility (Williams et al., 2009) and productivity (Rumens, 2018) which continue to inflect business organizations. A queer approach to 'LGBT-friendliness' thus points to "a wider field of normalization, rather than simply intolerance, as the site of violence" (Warner, 1991, xxvi) and argues in favour of a reading of 'the LGBT-friendly organization' not a "specific space of place, fixed in time, but a constantly negotiated process involving the production of power" (Williams et al., 2009, p33).

On the one hand, critical scholars have focused on whether, despite the label of 'LGBT-friendly', these organizations truly open-up opportunities for LGBT people to 'be themselves' on the workplace. Amongst these, the work of Williams, Giuffre and Dellinger (2009, 2008) in particular, was one of the first interventions which aimed to

query the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' from a queer perspective. Whilst limited by the omission of trans participants, these scholars problematize the emergence of 'the LGBT-friendly organization' by arguing that "just as in the era of the closet, the [LGBT-friendly] workplace… may involve forced choices between acceptance and visibility" (Williams et al., 2009, p29), and ultimately that LGB(T) people continue to face discrimination, inequality, and exclusion, in the form of "stereotyping, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination" (Giuffre et al., 2008, p271), despite organizational claims of inclusion. What this highlights is that, notwithstanding the fact that, for the authors, 'LGBT-friendly organizations' are a step in the right direction, there is still work to do to make sure these can "accommodate a much wider variety of sexual expression" (Giuffre et al., 2008, p274).

On the other hand, critical scholars have also taken these critiques a step forward by deconstructing the very *idea* of 'LGBT-friendliness'. Nick Rumens' work (2015, 2018) stands out as particularly noteworthy, problematizing not only the undeniable reality that the impetus for change is coming from a business case approach in which gender/sexuality are mere instruments in the (modernist) pursuit of organizational goals, but also the very rationale underpinning efforts at measuring, quantifying and determining the shape of 'LGBT-friendliness'. At the same time, Rumens' work extends beyond simply pointing to some of the limitations of 'LGBT-friendliness'. This comes out most vividly in his most recent book, *Queering Business* (Rumens, 2018), in which he deploys a queer perspective to problematize the imbrication of 'LGBT-friendliness' in neoliberal processes of capital accumulation, contributing to the reproduction of local and global inequalities (also see: Eng, 2010; Puar, 2002, 2007). From this perspective, 'LGBT-friendliness' is not simply accompanied by exclusions and inequalities, as if these were mere remnants of the homo- trans- and bi- phobic organizational regimes which pre-dated the emergence of inclusion. Rather, classed and racialized hetero- and homo- normative exclusions and exclusionary regimes are integral to its operation and the manifold ways in which it is 'gender/sexual diversity' is identified, quantified, measured, commodified and deployed in pursuit of neoliberal agendas and projects (also see: Irving, 2007, 2008).

2.3.3   Limitations and possibilities: queer political economy

Queer perspectives offer a remarkably useful tool with which to explore the emergence of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness. In particular, in the thesis I use a queer perspective as an entry point from which to *do* critique in a way which remains attuned to the intricacies of gender/sexuality within and beyond diversity and inclusion categories. At the same time, whilst queer theoretical perspectives in OS are emerging, queer expressions of life and politics remain under-researched. Firstly, as Bendl & Hofmann (2015) note, whilst queer theory has begun to filter into the study of organizations and management "its full potential- in terms of questioning and deconstructing the heterosexual matrix and the idea of fixed identities- is rarely applied" (p203). Indeed, with some exceptions (Rumens, 2018; Rumens, de Souza & Brewis, 2018; Sardy, 2014), queer interventions in the field have tended to perpetuate the "reproduction of heterosexuality and homosexuality" (Bendl & Hofmann, 2015, p202), using 'queer concepts' but remaining trapped in gender/sexual binaries at a methodological level (e.g. Brewis & Bowring, 2009). There is indeed an undeniable tension between 'queer'- understood and deployed as an identity and as a shorthand to more complexly (than the LGBT acronym) describe 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects, and 'queer*ing*', understood as a verb and as "an attitude of unceasing disruptiveness" (Parker, 2001, p38) which does not simply seek to theorize 'organization' in a way which includes queer voices and experiences, but actually involves making (organizational) theory queer.

Secondly, although queer perspectives on 'diversity' are emerging, "the notion of inclusion, and the different permutations within the continuum inclusion–exclusion, still remains [largely] underexplored" (Priola et al., 2018, p735). One notable exception is Priola et al. (2018) work, in which they argue that mainstream understanding of inclusion are "embedded within a normative logic according to which sexual subjects (e.g. male or female, married or single, heterosexual or homosexual) are included within institutional mechanisms of state power" (Ibid). As scholarly interests increasingly shift from the notion of 'diversity' to 'inclusion', one should expect queer perspectives to follow (also see: Tyler, 2018).

Thirdly, with the exception of Rumens (2018), queer perspectives in the field have rarely contextualized their critiques within historical and contemporary capitalist relations, thus omitting questions of class and political economy. As Rosemary Hennessy (2000) most notably argued, queer theory has often "retreat[ed] from class analysis" (p49) whereby "the very possibility of linking the changing organizations of [gender/]sexuality to capitalism remains all but unspeakable" (p54). Hennessy's comments are perhaps excessively severe, omitting recent efforts made to link a queer analysis to class, political economy and a Marxist perspective (Butler, 1997; David, 2015, 2016; Duggan, 2003; Irving, 2007, 2008; Rao, 2015; Valocchi, 2017; Ward, 2008). Yet they do point to a longstanding tension between gender/sexuality and class, 'the economy' and 'culture', and, more broadly, between 'queer' and critical Marxist anti-capitalist projects. As Yvette Taylor (2011) explains, it seems indeed that when the frames of 'capitalism' or 'political economy' are summoned in sexuality studies, this is often to "demonstrate the real, higher stakes of class analysis" (p5) and to side-line questions of gender/sexuality. On the other hand, when class and its intersections with gender/sexuality are investigated, "[t]here is virtually no effort to ground [this] class analysis in a critique of political economy" (Seidman, 2011, p38).

These tensions are further exacerbated when one considers the relationship between 'queer' and critical Marxist projects. encapsulated in an exchange between Judith Butler (1997) and Nancy Fraser (1997) in an issue of *Social Text*. In her contribution, Nancy Fraser understands injustices relating to gender/sexuality, such as 'heterosexism', as stemming from issues of cultural misrecognition, as 'status injuries'. Whilst she is careful not to minimize the gravity of these, she nevertheless argues that these forms of injustice are separate from class struggles operating in the economic realm, which have to be addressed by tackling redistributive issues. Against this, Judith Butler accuses Fraser of proposing a 'merely cultural' understanding of gender/sexuality and the politics of inclusion which fails to problematize the culture/economy binary. In Butler's view, Fraser's reading represents a tendency manifest in critical Marxist thinking "to relegate new social movements seeking inclusion through recognition to the sphere of cultural…to dismiss them as being preoccupied with what is called the 'merely' cultural" (p33-4). This tendency is by no means restricted to critical Marxist scholars but is a reading which permeates popular

culture and society more broadly, and which has, in recent years, voided mainstream LGBT politics of a sustained or substantial critique of economic injustice (Duggan, 2003; Hennessy, 2000; Richardson, 2005; Vaid, 1995). From Butler's perspective, struggles of recognition (gender/sexuality) should not be separated from struggles of redistribution (class). Thus, whilst "both critics strive toward a leftist politics… they disagree over the inherent ability of identity politics to deal with this fact" (Oswin, 2007, p655).

This debate is somewhat mirrored in the extant literature, namely between critical approaches to diversity and inclusion and queer approaches to OS, respectively. Indeed, on the one hand, in exploring how the discourses of diversity and inclusion buttress organizational processes of capital accumulation, the former have often treated questions of gender/sexuality as mere 'distraction mechanisms' (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, 2011) that take attention away from (more pressing) workplace class struggles. On the other hand, the omission of questions of class and capitalism from queer approaches to gender/sexuality also reproduces this distinction (for an exception, see: Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008). In the next section, I demonstrate how scholarship on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism may offer one way out of this scholarly impasse by deploying a queer*ing* impulse to tackle questions of class and political economy. In particular, I argue that work in and around the concepts of 'homonormativity' and 'gentrification' offers an interesting opportunity for combining critical interests in how the discourses of diversity and inclusion are implicated in the (re)production of class inequalities and hierarchies, with a queer sensibility about the performativity of gender/sexuality and the fields of normalization through which it is disciplined. This not only constitutes a research gap in the extant literature, but also offers a remarkably interesting opportunity through which to further develop and politicize extant interrogations of gender/sexuality and 'LGBT-friendliness' in the field.

2. 4   The gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism

As Winnubst (2012) explains, "[n]eoliberalism is arguably one of the most frequently circulating terms in current academic and non-academic political conversations" (p80). Whilst invoking a "remarkably elastic set of meanings" (Ibid), anthropologist David Harvey (2005) defines it as a "political economic theory 'that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (cited in Ward, 2008, p7). To its proponents, this is "the essence of democracy" (Winnubst, 2012, p80). To its critics, it embodies all the "the evils of the economic doctrines of globalization" (Ibid). And while some denounce the elasticity of the term as something which renders the concept "neither intellectually precise nor politically useful" (Dunn, 2017, p435), the term 'neoliberalism' has nonetheless been successfully mobilized to name in a more critical way the ascendance of the free market in both 'the economic' and 'the cultural' realm.

Indeed, whilst neoliberalism was initially primarily understood in economic terms (e.g. Harvey, 2005), in recent years we have witnessed increasing interests in its relationship to cultural processes (Bahn, 2009; Cahn, 2008; Cheng & Kim, 2014; Fourcade-Gourinchas & Babb, 2002; Ho, 2005; Kanna, 2010; Kipnis, 2008; Ruben & Maskovsky, 2008). These include "the commodification or marketization of realms of life that were previously the prerogative of the state, the apotheosis of the entrepreneur as a creative genius, the analogization of society as a corporation" (Kanna, 2010, p101) as well as the concomitant celebration or "the emotional and affective…notions of 'freedom' and 'choice' that obscure systemic inequalities and turn social movements towards goals of inclusion and incorporation and away from demands for redistribution and structural transformation" (Spade, 2011, p50). Scholars working in this area have thus looked at how neoliberalism "gets into our minds and our souls, into the ways in which we think about what we do, and into our social relations with others" (Ball, 2012, p18 cited in Tzanakou & Pearce, 2019, p3), promoting "self-managing, self-sufficient, and self-advancing" (Cheng & Kim, 2014, p362) practices that promote unhealthy (and unrealistic) lifestyles and expectations (Bloom & Rhodes, 2018; Cheng & Kim, 2014; Cummins & Blum, 2015; Kumar, 2018; Ludwig, 2016; McWhorter, 2012; Richardson, 2005).

2.4.1 Gender/sexuality & political economy

Building upon scholarship which understands neoliberalism as a cultural *as well as* an economic project, queer and feminist scholars of gender/sexuality have, too, sought to clarify that neoliberalism "in fact has a sexual politics" (Duggan, 2003, p177), and that understanding its emergence and consequence as 'merely economic' ignores the ways in which gender/sexuality is "intricate[ly]…[imbricated] in the institutions of capitalist modernity (Ibid, p83). From this perspective, whilst issues of gender/sexuality may appear, and certainly feel, 'private' and 'personal', they have tremendous social importance, especially when, as an organizational principle, neoliberalism places particular emphasis on 'the individual' making responsible choices in a heavy deregulated market (Cheng & Kim, 2014; David, 2015, 2016; Duggan, 2003; Irving, 2007, 2008; Ludwig, 2016; Richardson, 2005; Vijayakumar, 2013).

Scholars in this field understand neoliberalism as a 'normalizing' project, thus reconciling queer interests in anti-normativity with traditional Marxist critiques of political economy. An example of this kind of work is Halberstam's (2005) *In a Queer Time and Place* and Meg Wesling's (2012) 'Queer Value', both of which, whilst being very dissimilar projects, convincingly trace the myriad ways in which spatio-temporal (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities are (re)produced as an effect of the historically specific ways in which capital invests in formations of gender/sexuality. Indeed, both look at how "the unpredictable constellations of [queer] desire, knowledge and practice become concretized into limited models of [gender/]sexual identity" (Wesling, 2012, p107) and how this process is "bound up in the way capital produces… subjects accommodated to its own needs" (Ibid). Meg Wesling (2012), whose work is explored in Chapter Six and Seven, does so by thinking about the 'queer value' which accrues from specific 'laboured performances of gender/sexuality'. Halberstam (2005), whose work is explored in Chapter Five, does so by thinking of queerness as "an outcome of strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices" (p1). From this perspective, the various (hetero- cis- and homo-) normativities which regulate gender/sexuality are not 'merely cultural' and a product of gender/sexual binaries, but intricately imbricated with the organization of political economy.

Scholars working on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism thus point out that neoliberalism is not simply "normalizing along the vectors of identity formation that have thus far dominated Foucaultian readings of biopolitics" (Winnubst, 2012, p88), but rather normalizing according to 'the social rationality of success', "emphasizing worthiness, value, and productivity" (Irving, 2008, p40) as requirements for intelligibility (Tyler, 2018). And whilst proponents of neoliberalism might herald the incorporation of (some) 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects into the fabric of capital as evidence of neoliberalism's 'progressive' and 'non-discriminatory' influences, critics argue that these seemingly benevolent developments are not only 'paradoxical' (Cheng & Kim, 2014), but also demonstrate "the ease with which capital continues to appropriate the oppressed minorities…into its accumulation strategies" (Irving, 2007, 2008, p54) and rests upon the shoulders of excluded Others and the (re)production of inequalities and exclusions elsewhere (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Bloom & Rhodes, 2018; Duggan, 2003; Irving, 2007, 2008; Rao, 2015; Tzanakou & Pearce, 2019). This undermines the potential for a politics of resistance by creating fractures within gender/sexuality communities "based on class, race, citizenship status, and ability (to name a few)" (Irving, 2008, p54).

Whilst, as explored (section 2.3.2) the discourse of LGBT-friendliness has not been entirely free from criticism, it is rarely situated within the context of neoliberalism (for an exception, see: Rumens, 2018; Tzakanou & Pearce, 2019; Ward, 2008). Yet, scholars working on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism have offered deeply valuable insights into the interweaving of 'LGBT-friendliness' in processes of gentrification (Bell & Binnie, 2004; Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014; Rushbrook, 2002), urban governance (Bell & Binnie, 2004), global (homo)capitalism[23] (Rao, 2015), empire (Puar, 2007), austerity (Di Feliciantonio, 2015) and the marketing of 'creative', 'cosmopolitan', 'entrepreneurial' and 'global' cities (El-Tayeb, 2012; Ludwig, 2016; Moussawi, 2018). We might even argue, as Rumens (2018) has, that the emergence and "prominence" (para. 13.37) of LGBT-friendly discourses is no coincidence but rather "comes at a time where there is a convergence between LGBT+ politics and neoliberalism" (Ibid). It is thus of mandatory importance for critical scholars of

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[23] A term which describes (and denounces) "the selective incorporation of some race- class and gender- sanitized queers into capitalism and the disavowal of others through a liberal politics of recognition that obviates the need for redistribution" (Rao, 2015, p47).

inclusion and queer OS to consider the manifold ways in which 'LGBT-friendliness' is being harnessed as a tool for the further entrenchment of neoliberal (in)equalities, securing inclusion for some performances of 'gender/sexual diversity' at the expense of those- unproductive, "undesirable, disorderly and messy" (Ibid, para. 13.50)- forms of embodiment that cannot be disciplined into profit. In particular, the concepts of 'homonormativity' and 'gentrification' offer remarkably fruitful avenues from which to pursue these questions. In what follows I outline these, and discuss how they will be mobilized in the thesis.

2.4.2   *Homonormativity & the neoliberalization of LGBT politics and activism*

The lack of critical engagement with neoliberalism by queer OS scholars is reflected in a concomitant lack of consideration of the concept of 'homonormativity' (for an exception, see: Benozzo et al., 2015; Rumens, 2018). Homonormativity is most easily elucidated as the privilege (social, economic, political, racial, classed, gendered etc…) that (some) LGBT* subjects "who were once sexual 'dissidents' now are supposed to experience" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p6). In its most politicized versions, 'homonormativity' helps us shed light on multiple ways in which the legislative, cultural and social gains of recent years- from gay marriage, to the 2010 Equalities Act (Hunter, 2017), to the emergence of 'LGBT-friendly organizations' themselves- "[r]egulate bodies and practices within neoliberal privatized norms" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p6) and 'normalize' or 'fold' LGBT* subjects' aspirations towards embodying the values, gendered expressions, and economic performance standards set by heteronormativity.

'Homonormativity' also describes a form of gender/sexual 'respectability politics' (Ward, 2008) which, emphasizing LGBT people's ability and desire for assimilation and willingness to contribute to society, "does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions…but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2003, p179). Coined by Duggan in 2003, the term has been used to explore how the politics of inclusion works

to sanitize, gentrify (Shulman 2012)- or indeed 'straighten-up' (as we will explore later in the Chapters)- 'undesirable' gender/sexual subjects and all those messy, wonky and/or unexpected ways of being and becoming which remain outside established lines and "can't easily be represented, professionalized, or commodified" (Ward 2008, p2). Homonormativity is thus a form of 'recognition politics' (Oswin, 2007) that "collaborates with neoliberalism insomuch as it maintains an equality politics that does not disturb existing relations of power or political structures grounded in hetero- and cis- normativity" (Rumens, 2018, para. 13.21)[24].

The concept of 'homonormativity' could be mobilized in inclusion studies and queer OS to demonstrate how the inclusion of gender/sexual 'diverse' subjects in organizations is couched "in terms of their productive capacity" (Irving, 2008, p44) and thus the ways in which it which "recognizes the materiality of human difference" (Rumens, 2018, para. 13.50) but only when this conforms to neoliberal norms regulating subjectivity. Moreover, exploring "how neoliberal, market-driven notions of LGBT+ difference are embedded in the discourse that LGBT organizations such as Stonewall adopt" (Ibid), the concept of 'homonormativity' also exposes that there are serious tensions between "this political strategy to secure equality and inclusion for LGBT+ subjects and the queer critiques that expose how it collaborates with neoliberalism" (Ibid). The thesis is particularly interested in unlocking the critical potential of 'homonormativity' but also recognizing that the normalizing logics of neoliberalism 'work' not through external imposition but often because they are decidedly 'seductive': they operate around the notion of 'choice' and 'freedom' and "demand a self-regulating and self-disciplining subject who has choices about how to fit into existing hetero- and cis-normative normative regimes" (Ibid, para 13.59). Thus, in ethnographically denouncing the ways in which neoliberal discourses dictate the norms of inclusion, the thesis also remains attuned to the manifold ways in which subjects willingly submit to these in an effort to live more live-able lives in an effort to attain their object(s) of desire (Berlant, 2006, 2011).

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[24] A similar argument is made by feminists who denounce the emergence of 'neoliberal feminism' as a forms of feminism which does not adequately address structural gender inequalities and which proposes 'leaning in' as a trickle down version of equality and emancipation which simply privileges white, middle-class women at the expense of those others who cannot perform these classed, gendered and racialized norms (Tzanakou & Pearce, 2019).

2.4.3 Gentrification

An interesting link between neoliberalism, the politics of gender/sexuality and homonormativity can also be made through the concept of 'gentrification'. The term was originally coined by Ruth Glass in 1964 to describe the "transformations in the class composition of previously working-class inner-urban neighbourhoods" (Bondi, 1999, p261) in post-war London. More recently however, it has been adapted and expanded to trace the effects of market-led urban redevelopment on the broader fabric of social, cultural and political life. For example, some have traced the effects of 'resurgent gentrification' on LGBT neighbourhoods or 'gaybourhoods' (Ghaziani, 2014), finding that these have been negatively affected by processes of gentrification, "struggling to maintain those identities" (Doan & Higgins, 2011, p20) and thus restricting "the ability of LGBT people to organize resistance to challenges facing their community" (Ibid).

Yet others have used the term 'gentrification' to denounce the effects of gay consumption practices (of primarily upper- and middle-class gay men) on the racial and economic make-up of 'mixed' neighbourhoods. An example is Rushbrook (2002), who explicitly uses the term to refer to the processes by which privileged upper- and middle-class gay men created "commodified zones of gayness" (p190) in response to historically-specific forms of oppression. Michael Brown (1997) similarly outlines how the gentrification of a Vancouver, British Columbia, neighbourhood by gay men displaced "both AIDS organizations and male and female sex workers" (Rushbrook, 2002, p198). From these perspectives, gentrification works in tandem with Duggan's 'new homonormativity', excluding "'undesirable' forms of sexual expression by reducing the 'gay public sphere' to consumption spaces and gentrified neighbourhoods only" (Bell & Binnie, 2004, p1811). More recently, Sarah Schulman (2012) has also expanded the concept to describe how minds get (affectively and politically) 'gentrified' by (physical and material) processes of urban redevelopment. Underpinning these critiques is an explicit denouncement of homonormativity, or indeed, how the privilege of (some) gender/sexual subjects is used to further inequalities and exclusions of Others. In the thesis, I draw from these (latter) understandings of 'gentrification' to shed light on how the recognition of 'difference'

can work to gentrify and/or and sanitize undesirable gender/sexual Others (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014).

Both the concept of 'homonormativity' and 'gentrification' demonstrate not only the relevance of queer interrogations to anti-capitalist projects, but also the importance of taking gender/sexuality seriously in critiques of political economy. In so doing, scholars working on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism have thus raised the stakes for critical and queer scholars of 'diversity', 'inclusion' and 'LGBT-friendliness' in OS, encouraging these to offer a 'materialist reading of [gender/]sexuality' (Wesling, 2012, p107) which undoes the celebratory 'up-beat naiveté' (Prasad & Mills, 1997) of 'merely cultural' understandings of LGBT inclusion whilst remaining attuned to the relevance of the questions posed by queer politics and theory in (re)thinking and troubling inclusion in the age of neoliberalism (Winnubst, 2012, p79). In the next Chapter I discuss my methodology, introducing the ethnographic field in its specificity and particularity, and argue that a multi-sited ethnographic methodology is an interestingly well-suited approach for the (queer*ing*) task of troubling the terms of LGBT inclusion in the age of neoliberalism.

CHAPTER THREE

A Queer*ing* & Multi-Sited Ethnographic Methodology: Three Problems and Possibilities

In this chapter I introduce the contours of the field constructed in light of the questions posed in Chapter One. Equipped with an ethnographic methodology, I designed my multi-sited fieldwork around tracing the shape of LGBT inclusion in the field across two 'social worlds' and multiple fieldsites, chosen and constructed by drawing on scholarly literature and ethnographic insights emerging from the fieldwork experience itself. The first is the 'diversity world' of business, comprised by various corporate networks of LGBT* professionals dedicated to the making of 'LGBT-friendly(ier)' and more 'inclusive' workplaces. The second is the social world of 'queer activism', comprised by a group of activists campaigning to oppose the closure of a local 'queer pub' by property developers and negotiate the Council's promise to offer a 'replacement LGBT venue' in the redevelopment on the site of the former pub.

From this project's inception, I struggled to deal with key questions about the ingress of 'queer' and 'ethnography' in the study of organizational genders/sexualities, as well as issues pertaining to the construction of 'the field' in which the discourse of LGBT-friendliness was going to be traced. In section 3.1 I will introduce some of these issues, before outlining the field and my fieldwork experience in section 3.2, and focusing on the process of data analysis in section 3.3. In section 3.4, I offer some reflections from the field and outline three queer*ing* possibilities (and problems) unlocked via this multi-sited, ethnographic and 'qualitatively messy' (Amit, 2000, p7) engagement. In writing this Chapter, I did not merely want to provide a description of the methods, that is, what I 'did' and the techniques of data collection, but actually focus on the methodologies adopted, which Browne and Nash (2010) define as "those set of rules and procedures that guide the design of research to investigate phenomenon or situations…the logic that links the project's ontological and epistemological approaches to the selection and deployment of… methods" (p10).

3.1   Queer*ing* the ethnographic field

3.1.1   Queer theory and ethnography

Given the ways in which it undermines the very ontology of a gender/sexual subject, the pervasiveness of qualitative methods in queer theoretical endeavours is unsurprising. Indeed, it seems "illogical to 'count' subjects once one has argued that a 'countable subject' does not exist" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p11). Yet beyond this initial consideration, it also seems that "the use of queer theory as a conceptual framework in OS scholarship…tends not to be accompanied by methodologies that queer the empirical field" (de Souza et al., 2016, p602).

The reluctance towards 'queer*ing* the empirical field' seems to have resulted in two methodological impasses: on the one hand, when the perceived tensions between queer's deconstructive epistemological project and the predominant forms of thinking about gender/sexuality 'out there' in the field are taken to be somewhat irreconcilable, queer endeavours have remained at the discursive level, focusing on the textuality of everyday life as opposed to its "bloods, bricks and mortar" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p1). On the other, when queer epistemological conceptualizations are imposed at an empirical level, queer endeavours often fall "into an essential[ist] trap of reifying research participants' identities" (de Souza et al., 2016, p602) and thus "reproduc[e]…the heteronormative discourses…[they] wish to disrupt" (Courtney, 2014, p387). The first results from taking queer theory's deconstruction of the field so seriously as to render empirical research methodologies obsolete, the latter from not taking it seriously enough (also see: Ghaziani & Brim, 2019 for a discussion of the methodological implications of 'queer').

Ethnography seems to offer one way out of these methodological impasses. Ethnography, or ethnographic 'fieldwork', has been central to the establishment of the discipline of anthropology. The term originated in 19th Century anthropology in which "ethnography was a descriptive account of a community or culture, usually one located outside the West" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p1). Since then, and after the so-called reflexive turn of the 1980s (O'Reilly, 2005), the ethnographic genre has addressed and come to terms with a number of issues relating to its conditions of

possibility, its colonial legacy, the assumption that Other cultures can be innocently represented, and, as we will see later, the prevalence of a far-away, 'exotic' and bounded 'field' as the anchor and container for fieldwork relations and activities (Falzon, 2009; Marcus, 1995). A certainly more critical, politicised, reflexive, multi-sited, and accountable mode of ethnographic inquiry is visible today, evident by the growing popularity of the genre across a multitude of disciplines (including OS), epistemological agendas, geographical locations and subject matters (Brooks, 2018; Gilbert, 2016; Juris, 2007; Mosse, 2006; Ruben & Maskovsky, 2008; Valentine, 2007). And although ethnographic studies of organizations "are [still] a minority within our discipline" (Zilber, 2014, p96), they are slowly emerging as valid endeavours, the establishment of *The Journal of Organizational Ethnography* in 2012 being but one example of this development (Brooks, 2018; Ford & Harding, 2008; Pecis, 2014; Rouleau et al., 2014; Ybema et al., 2009).

Whilst the meaning of ethnography can vary, for the purposes of this Chapter I understand it not so much a method of data collection and "not as simply a method of doing research" (Watson, 2012, p16), but as an attitude to knowing itself, as "*a style of research* that is distinguished by its objectivities…and its approach" (Brewer, 2000, p11, emphasis added), and which "draws upon the writer's close observation of and involvement with people…relat[ing] the words spoken and the practices observed or experienced to the overall cultural framework within which they occurred" (Watson, 2012, p16). A working definition of 'ethnography' could thus be imagined as:

"…[an approach] informed by a theory of practice that: understands social life as the outcome of the interaction of structure and agency through the practice of everyday life; that examines social life as it unfolds, including looking at how people feel, in the context of their communities, and with some analysis of wider structures, over time; that also examines, reflexively, one's own role in the construction of social life as ethnography unfolds; and that determines the methods to draw on and how to apply them as part of the ongoing, reflexive practice of ethnography" - O'Reilly (2012, p11)

Ethnography offers a useful methodological starting point from which to start queer*ing* the empirical field. Not only would I argue that there is something slightly anarchic and seductively 'queer' about the very doing of ethnography, as an opportunistic, reflexive, spontaneous, perpetually unfolding and messy project of knowing which

lacks exact recipes and fixed guidelines (discussed in more detail in section 3.2). But also, as Valocchi (2005) outlines, it shares a number of epistemological tenets with queer theory itself, such as an ambivalence towards 'objective' truth, which challenges the central concern of social science methods to make knowledge reliable and generalizable. But also, and beyond this shared post-modern unease, both ethnography and queer theory share an appreciation of the performativity of social reality- for queer theory produced through discourse, for ethnography as an effect of the research encounter itself- a scepticism towards gender/sexual classification systems- those used by researchers *and* those performed and reproduced by normative and dominant understandings of gender/sexuality- and an emphasis on the inability of these in "help[ing] elucidate practices, motivations, or interests of those who may be subsumed within those systems" (Ibid, p767). Deploying a queer theoretical perspective in tandem with an ethnographic approach thus seems to provide a useful methodological strategy with which to pursue this project's aim of queer*ing* the discourse of LGBT-friendliness whilst accounting for the lived and material experiences- the 'blood, bricks, and mortar'- of situated organizational gender/sexual subjects.

A queer*ing* ethnography of 'LGBT-friendliness' thus explores specific, situated, and local performances of organizational gender/sexuality even if it may mean or appear that our participants identify with the dominant taxonomies and categories that queer deconstructive projects wish to disrupt. At the same time, it also remains attuned to the multiple ways in "the[se] dominant taxonomies fail to capture the complexity of individual gender and sexual subjectivities and practices even among those who may define themselves…[through their] terms" (Ibid, p743). Ethnography gives us "the tools to identify, describe and understand…[the] incongruities…" (Ibid, p767) between the categories people have to describe themselves, those by which they are through the discourse of LGBT-friendliness and performances of gender/sexuality as they are lived and experienced in everyday practice. I thus set out to conduct a queer*ing* and ethnographic study of 'LGBT-friendliness', with particular attention to the ways in which organizational gender/sexuality is not only performatively constituted and in a constant state of becoming, as any dutiful queer theorist would do, but also in a constant "process of doing and undoing… that is located very precisely in time and space" (de Souza et al., 2016, p600, emphasis added). This

methodological approach thus also places particular emphasis on the specific locality(ies) in and through which organizational gender/sexuality is performed, to which I now turn.

3.1.2   *Multi-sited ethnography: queering the organization of 'LGBT-friendliness'*

At first sight it would appear that the 'locality' of the ethnographic field in which to carry out our queer*ing* ethnographic endeavour might the 'the organization'. After all, interrogations of 'LGBT-friendliness' have primarily taken 'the [LGBT-friendly] organization' as the locus of study, directing their analysis to the ways in which this is lived and experienced as a 'cultural whole' and as a spatially-bounded field, (Giuffre et al., 2008; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014; Williams et al., 2009). Yet, over the past decade, those doing OS become "increasingly suspicious of assuming integration, unity, and wholeness" (Jones, 2003, p504). Indeed not only are organizations becoming less "bounded and different from other spaces such as home or leisure spaces" (Dale, 2005, p672), disassociated from particular sites and locations (Sewell & Taskin, 2015), and formed by remarkably "spatio-temporally scattered actors" (Kallinikos, 2003, p603), but also the influence of poststructuralism in the discipline challenges the idea of 'space' as fixed reality which pre-exists our research exercise.

Moreover, as I began thinking about my research design, it appeared that the social phenomena that is 'LGBT-friendliness' was heavily implicated in a host of global, macro- economic, social and political realities (previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.4) making it an object which, whilst experienced and lived in local settings, transcended the physical and temporal confines of a single, bounded, research field. I thus suggest, in tandem with my previous reflections about the import of 'queer' and 'ethnography' in the field of OS, that studying the organization of 'LGBT-friendliness' from an ethnographic perspective requires that we *queer* the empirical field by questioning the centrality of 'the organization' in our ethnographic practices, using ethnography to study the larger context (Zilber, 2014, p96), or 'the system' (Marcus, 1995), and make trouble with "organization as a *process* and its regulatory effects" (Pullen et al., 2016a, p85, emphasis added).

I thus turned my attention to the very construct of 'the organizational field' by "giv[ing] full consideration to the broader 'social organization' as well as to the more local 'formal organization'" (Watson, 2012, p17) of 'LGBT-friendliness', problematizing the very existence and relevance of a place-focused concept of 'LGBT-friendly culture' (Amit, 2000; Hoskyns & Rai, 2007). Instead of 'finding data' about 'LGBT-friendliness' from *within* organizations, I pursued a series of methodological questions that attempted to move beyond a merely localized understanding and towards an interest in tracing the very production and circulation of emergent promises of LGBT inclusion, of the very *idea* of 'LGBT-friendliness' (Marcus, 1995) and what this tells us about "a slice of the world system" (Ibid, p113). These were questions and research interests that could not be pursued by staying in a single site, and I thus opted in favour of designing the project as a multi-sited ethnographic endeavour.

Multi-sited ethnography is emerging as an alternative way of doing fieldwork, yet, despite its diffusion in other disciplines, its use in Business Schools remains limited (for an exception, see: Pecis, 2014). The term was coined by George Marcus in an essay in 1995 and emerged alongside wider contestations of bounded and place-focused conceptions of 'culture' which permeated anthropology after the so-called reflexive turn. Whilst these somewhat threatened to undo the very enterprise of the discipline as the study of culture, they actually reinvigorated a number of importance debates about the performativity of research exercises and the laborious (and political) process by which subjects, communities and field sites are constructed (Abu-Lughod, 2000; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, 2010; Holmes, 2009).

Multi-sited ethnography deploys participation and observation to study or 'follow' a "social phenomena that cannot be accounted for by focusing on a single site" (Falzon, 2009, p9). It involves 'sojourning' in two or more 'social worlds' (Nadai & Maeder, 2005) with the aim of pursuing the 'circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space' (Marcus, 1995, p95 cited in Rajak, 2011, p110). Whilst a multi-sited approach was initially applied in contexts where the metaphor of tracking or following a material process was obvious, as in the case of migration, it was subsequently adopted to follow 'ideas' or 'concepts' which did not *physically* travel to an elsewhere (Candea, 2007; Coleman & Von Hellermann, 2011; Falzon,

2009; Marcus, 1995; Nadai & Maeder, 2005). It seems that this latter application is closer to our purposes here, for I am not merely following 'people' nor 'things'. Rather, what I set out to follow was a discourse and practice, a technology of power, rather than a material process in and of itself.

As Marcus (1995) himself has argued, the movement from field-site to field-site, from social world to social world enables a multi-sited ethnographic project to "cross-cut dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global', the 'life-world' and the 'system'" (p95). Here, the 'global' is not simply 'context' but an element that is "always already embedded within the object of study…an integral part of 'local' situations" (Ibid, p98). Yet, rather than fully doing away with the local, or to assume that 'LGBT-friendliness' is place-less, the point becomes to trace the ways in which our object of study unfolds in different fieldsites and align together phenomenon "that are *presumably* connected…but not always grasped within the purview of a single research site" (Zilber, 2014, p97, emphasis added). To do so, I designed my fieldwork around 'tracing' the discourse of LGBT-friendliness across multiple social worlds and localities, the sum of which make up 'the field', investigating the various organizational genders/sexualities enabled by these emergent formations.

3.2   Outlining the field and the fieldwork experience

In multi-sited projects "the ethnographic field cannot simply exist, awaiting discovery. It has to be *laboriously constructed*" (Amit, 2000, p3, emphasis added). Initially, I constructed this field around the 'diversity world' of business, guided by my institutional dwelling in a Business School. I read this world as the quasi 'natural habitat' of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness: where this emerged and thrived, and as one of the main fields for its production and circulation.

Yet alongside these theoretical and pragmatic motivation, the ethnographic endeavour was also decidedly shaped by my involvement- since 2012 in the years preceding, and during my doctoral journey- in various forms of 'queer activism' in London. This involved, amongst other things, organizing and participating in protests, activities and collectives which rejected a (neo)liberal politics of assimilation. I thus started

developing a set of parallel questions and concerns pertaining to the effect, relevance and circulation of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness beyond the 'diversity world' of business and into that of 'queer activism'. Eventually, this world took shape around the collective The Friends of the Joiners Arms (discussed in section 3.2.3). Whilst I had not initially intended to study this fieldsite, their fraught interactions with the discourse of LGBT-friendliness quickly became impossible to ignore. Over the last three years I have spent my time travelling (physically *and* conceptually) between the multiple sites which make up these two 'worlds', the sum of which make up 'the field' (see: Appendix A).

Made up of a multiple localities and fieldsites not bound together by single geographical site, I opted for understanding these 'sites' as 'social worlds', defined as a "set of common or joint activities or concerns bound together by a network of communications" (Kling and Gerson 1984, p124 cited in Nadai & Maeder, 2005, p237). Such a construction enabled me to conceive of these spatio-temporally dispersed sites as the locus of study, "where the practices and interactions… [I am] interested in can actually be observed" (Nadai & Maeder, 2005, p237), without making any of these specific localities into the object of study. Rather, the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism' became the contexts for the discourse of LGBT-friendliness, which was "the actual object of…ethnographic study" (Ibid). In exploring these two social worlds, I also ask, paraphrasing Michael Warner (2002, p9) in *Publics and Counterpublics,* how these relate, how to know where one ends and the other begins, how 'LGBT-friendliness' is experienced, what it does in each, whether there are any differences, why and how the differences matter and to whom.

The specific social worlds and the sites within them were thus selected on the basis of theoretical, personal and political subjectivities, "unfolding ethnographic insights" (Falzon, 2009, p11), and the pragmatism which eventually (and inevitably) determines all fieldwork endeavours. This process should be understood as lying somewhere between following a pre-constituted trajectory- resulting from the scholarly literature which encouraged me to look in some places more than others- and making pragmatic decisions about the location of these places- derived from "one's unfolding ethnographic insights on the ground" (Ibid, p11-2). It is in this in-between space of

literature and 'serendipitous encounters' (Halstead, Hirsch & Okely, 2008, p2) that the ethnographer, me, ultimately takes responsibility for the shape of their research project. As is customary in ethnographic endeavours, "the methods to draw on and how to apply them [were determined] as part of the ongoing, reflexive practice of ethnography" (O'Reilly, 2012, p11), and the data collection and the data analysis stage were deeply interwoven (discussed in section 3.2.2).

3.2.1   *The diversity world of business*

Starting in January 2017, I spent eighteen months conducting participant observation and ethnographic interviewing in the 'diversity world' of business. This world primarily unfolded in Canary Wharf, London's financial district located in the Borough of Tower Hamlets, and, more specifically, around various corporate LGBT events which catered to existing and aspiring LGBT* employees in a variety of professional contexts. The findings which emerge from this ethnographic engagement are discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Six. But before detailing the fieldwork conducted in this social world it is important to contextualise the engagement in relation to London's status as the 'financial capital of Capital'.

Attending to the local: London as 'the financial capital of Capital'

The City of London is often understood as a city "dominated by foreign financial corporations" (Moore, 2004) and/or as 'the financial capital of Capital' ("City of London: Capital of an invisible empire," 2017). Host to some of the world's major corporations, The City boasts an impressive portfolio of "glossy glass-and-concrete towers" (Moore, 2004, p4), lenient tax laws (Ibid) and lucrative networking opportunities (Ibid). So much that it seems that for many corporations, having "a London office offers symbolic status, indicating that the corporation has global presence" (Ibid). The financial prowess of The City of London has developed in tandem with the expansion of British imperial and colonial power, the traces of which are visible in the historical whiteness and middle-classness of its global financial elites

(Meier, 2016; Moore, 2004). Surprisingly, ethnographic studies of corporate (City of) London are lacking (for an exception, see: Gilbert, 2016; Moore, 2004). In a rare exception, Fiona Moore (2004) explains that "[w]hilst The City's physical boundaries are marked by statues of silver dragons, its symbolic boundaries are somewhat vaguer as an increasing number of companies are establishing positions some mile further east in Canary Wharf" (p4). Located in East London in the Borough of Tower Hamlets, this financial district, like Wall Street, is a site "widely deemed to be the epitome of the global" (Ho, 2005, p68). Here, the streets are "narrow and winding, but are cleaner and better lit than those in most other parts of London" (Moore, 2004, p4), and workers can be seen "walking around the streets dressed in near-identical suits" (Ibid). Whilst, as Moore (2004) herself notes, there "are few of the LED stock-market quote displays which characterise the financial districts of New York and Frankfurt" (Ibid), Capital is still omnipresent and "every building bears the name of a financial firm and boasts at least one security guard on reception" (Ibid).

Whilst, historically, the corporate sector has been dominated by norms of whiteness and hetero-masculinity, more recently it seems that corporations are increasingly embracing the rhetoric of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in constructing their 'global appeal'. A perfect example of the coming together of 'diversity' and the networks of financial capital described above might be HSBC's slogan 'Diversity is in our roots'[25], which connects the (imperial) history of the firm, "founded more than 150 years ago to finance trade between Europe and Asia"[26], to a modern day goal of "bring[ing] different people and cultures together"[27]. In particular, many of the corporate financial actors in The City have become explicitly supportive of and invested in matters of LGBT inclusion, becoming major sponsors of Pride in London (Barclays, HSBC, and EY, to name a few) and attending the parade with branded floats and gadgets to hand to the public. Clearly the image of the 'white, heterosexual, male' corporation is changing, and with it the association between corporations and the worst excesses of the free-market economy (and hetero-masculinity), as evidenced by the 2008 financial crash.

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[25] https://www.hsbc.com/our-approach/culture-and-people/diversity-and-inclusion.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

At the same time, as one participant interviewed for the thesis (David) suggested, we might want to read contemporary corporate interests in 'diversity' and 'inclusion' not as evidence of 'change' but 'continuation'. Indeed, David suggested that we read these as a sort of re-branding exercise in which (white, heterosexual, male) corporate actors' involvement in the crash could be alleviated (or 'pinkwashed', so to speak) by "hiring 'diverse' people, people who look different, people who don't look like the typical CEO"[28]. Thus, whilst corporations are certainly becoming more 'diverse', this may represent less the emergence of a more 'inclusive' and 'meritocratic' corporate world than the mere (re)organization of the various (gender, sexual, race and class) normativities which have, till now, defined these cultural and financial spaces (Hall, 2013).

Participant observation

I conducted participant observation in Canary Wharf at a number of LGBT corporate networking events organized by both LGBT staff networks (such as Glamazon at Amazon, or Spectrum at Barclays) and professional LGBT networks (such as OUTStanding and Stonewall). I also attended a number of industry-specific events (organized by networks such as InterTech for LGBT workers in technology, InterLaw for LGBT lawyers etc…) and noted the emergence of more 'intersectional' networking opportunities, where the dominance of 'White gay men' in LGBT spaces is acknowledged and challenged. The latter were organized by organizations such as LBWomen, a "dynamic network created to inspire, inform and celebrate the success of lesbian and bisexual women"[29] and Lesbians Who Tech, a professional network for non-binary and LGBTQ+ women and their allies working in technology[30] (discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.2.2). Most of the events featured panel discussion and/or TED-talk-style presentations by moderately senior LGBT* organizational subjects, enacted as 'LGBT role models' and 'experts' on a theme or topic (such as the value and/or importance of 'LGBT role models', visibility, authenticity, being 'out'),

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[28] Interview with David, March 2018.
[29] http://www.lbwomen.org/about-us/.
[30] https://lesbianswhotech.org.

preceded and followed by networking drinks and snacks. Some of the events were free (but necessitating registration), whilst others required payment. Access to these spaces was granted (rather unproblematically) on the basis of a shared interest in LGBT inclusion and my identifying as a lesbian given that 'being LGBT' was (often, but not always) a requirement for participation.

Equipped with pen and paper, I recorded my observations through the use of fieldnotes (of which I now retain over 150 pages), compiled meticulously and methodically both before (detailing the experiences of my arrival, both conceptual and physical, in these spaces), during and after (exploring further reflections) the events. In taking fieldnotes I focused on the goals (why are people here? For what purpose has this been organized? What interests lie behind the event?), the structure (what is happening? When?), the participants, their roles, and their interactions (who is here? Who is speaking, who is taking up space? Who is in charge? How are participants interacting with each other and the space?), the broader structures of inflecting their materialization (how is gender/sexuality being organized? What understanding of gender/sexual politics is being enacted? What roles are businesses being accorded within these matrixes? How is 'LGBT-friendliness' being understood? What is it doing?). I also transcribed fragments of conversations and encounters occurring in the field. All hand-written fieldnotes were subsequently transcribed and logged onto a computer.

Ethnographic interviewing

Whilst, as Zilber (2014) argues, ethnographic studies of these inter-organizational contexts "may yield indispensable insights about the social dynamics of the field, insights that cannot be discovered or analysed otherwise" (p102), they also carry some serious methodological limitations. One major limitation was that the scale and temporality of their occurrence meant that it was often hard to establish rapport with participants. Thus, prompted by a desire to know more about the lives of those studied, and undeniably self-conscious about the 'thickness' (Geertz, 1973) of the

ethnographic data, I resorted to 'ethnographic interviewing' (Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018) to complement participant observation.

I conducted a total of twenty-five open-ended, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with interested participants which had either volunteered themselves for interview, were recommended by others in the field, or were recruited at an event or via email. Participants included organizers, panellists and event attendees, LGBT* professionals who worked in 'an LGBT-friendly organization', LGBT 'leaders', LGBT 'role models' and 'straight allies', 'diversity & inclusion specialists', 'professional activists', LGBT network Chairs, trainers, and consultants (see: Appendix B). Interviews were used in order to explore in more detail some of the issues and themes emerging from the ethnographic fieldwork experience. Whilst preliminary questions instigated the discussion and worked to set the focus of the interview, I followed Hirst and Schwabenland's (2018) approach to 'ethnographic interviewing' and let participants decide what themes were important to them and what they thought we should discuss so as to not impose abstract theoretical categories or singular 'realities' onto their accounts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; McDermott, 2004).

A number of issues relating to the practice of 'ethnographic interviewing' are worth mentioning. Firstly, interview encounters can be highly performative situations in which we run the risk of reifying gender/sexual categories through the process of recruitment and/or interviewing. In response to this I consciously avoided requiring participants to identify as 'LGBT' in order to qualify for the study[31] and keenly followed and endorsed de Souza et al.'s (2016) suggestion to ask participants how they described their gender/sexuality and what this meant for them, foregrounding the ways in which not only do we "all use different terms to describe ourselves" (Ibid, p608), but that these terms also (may or may not) mean very different things to different people. Thus, during the interview itself, I focused on discrepancies, tensions, moments of ambiguity and contradictions at the expense of coherence, singularity and consistency, mindful of not taking for granted heteronormative alignments between sex/gender/sexuality in both discursive and embodied practices (speech, style, body language) Ibid). This approach was carried into the data analysis stage, conducted after

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[31] Most participants still adopted some letter or version of the acronym to describe their gender/sexuality.

each interview was transcribed and thoroughly examined (discussed in more detail in section 3.3.2).

Another issue at stake became how to conceive of data gathered through interviews. Indeed, if as queer thinking argues, "subjects and subjectivities are fluid, unstable and perpetually becoming…[how] can we gather 'data' from those tenuous and fleeting subjects using the standards methods of data collection such as interviews...?" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p11). In response to this, I followed others in adopting a queer*ing* method which understands 'the interview' as data *producing*, rather than (simply) data *collecting* (Ashcraft & Muhr, 2018; Ford & Harding, 2008; Lee, Learmonth & Harding, 2008; Riach, Rumens & Tyler, 2016; Rumens, 2012). An example of this is Daniel Conway's (2008) work, which analyses how "personal subjectivities of masculinity, race and sexuality were interwoven in co-created narratives during the research interview" (p347). In conducting interviews, I therefore do not intend to treat participants' accounts as revealing a 'transparent self' for "but rather a self who is constructed in the very process of speaking the narrative in the interviews" (Ford & Harding, 2008, p235). Thus, rather than merely treating 'queer*ing*' as a reflexive strategy "for analysing empirical materials already gathered" (Ashcraft & Muhr, 2018, p223), I follow Ashcraft and Muhr (2018) in conceiving of queer*ing* as a strategy which "begins the moment we enter the field and continues throughout the life of a project" (p223).

Ultimately, whilst I do not claim that interviews can "replace close involvement with people in their 'natural' setting…they can considerably enhance the richness of the insights which can be generated" (Watson, 2012, p16) by "throw[ing] new light on field dynamics…[and] raising new theoretical questions all together" (Zilber, 2014, p104). Nevertheless, some limitations remained. At times struggled with conducting 'ethnography by appointment' (Gilbert, 2016), whereby open-ended, in-depth, conversations become "intensely frustrating for those who have given up their scarce and valued time" (Ibid, p55), especially in light of my initial lack of knowledge of the particularity of the business structures and processes experienced by my participants. On more than one occasion I felt that these temporal limitations resulted in a pre-packaged, almost 'automatic' rendering of the self. This was evident when, after interviewing a relatively senior and 'visible' trans manager in a bank- someone who

(I assume), was often asked about their experiences of gender/sexuality and inclusion-I realized that the account I was given was almost identical to an interview they had previously conducted for a publication, available online. The discovery highlighted one of the major limitations of conducting interviews: that the orchestration of such an encounter permits (at best), and foments (at worst), the fabrication of programmed narratives of the self.

Also particularly relevant was the multiple ways in which my experience with 'queer activism'- and knowledge of queer theory and politics more broadly- positioned me as a sceptical listener and observer. I acknowledge that these interests and interest*ed* positionalities may have inevitably affected the interview encounter itself, perhaps determining what participants felt comfortable to disclose. Whilst I attempted as much as possible to keep an open mind, I cannot deny that at times my discomfort with participants' accounts of the world may have transpired, leading them to adjust some of their responses. Yet I also attempted to mobilize these competing positionalities by situating myself as an interface, relaying readings and observations collected and nurtured in the (academic and ethnographic) fields of 'queer activism' to participants in the 'diversity world' of business as a way of liaising and connecting two worlds which felt at once disparate yet related (discussed in more detail in section 3.3.3)

Ultimately, despite some of these limitations and tensions, treating the interview as an 'ethnographic encounter' between a researcher and a researched opened up a number of 'empirical dialogues' (de Souza et al., 2016) not only about how participants inhabited (or failed to inhabit) the gender/sexual taxonomies of 'LGBT-friendliness', but also how I, as a researcher, occupied the promises of inclusion I set out to study (discussed in more detail in section 3.3).

3.2.2   *The social world of 'queer activism'*

The second social world in which I decided to trace the discourse of LGBT-friendliness is that which I call, cautiously and tentatively, the social world of 'queer activism'. I say tentatively and cautiously as I, firstly, want to distance myself from the politically fraught affair of establishing binaries and hierarchies between what is-

and isn't- 'queer' (activism), and secondly because, as others have argued, the very the line between what counts as 'business' and what counts as 'activism' has become increasingly blurred, making the construction of a world of 'activism' and a world of 'business' ethnographically and conceptually untenable (Richardson, 2005; Rodriguez, 2009). Nevertheless, I have found the term useful for describing the activities and meaning-making practices of a collective which has significantly shaped my experiences of gender/sexuality, activism and politics in London. Not only do members of this collective often use the term 'queer' to describe themselves and what they do, but I would also read their activities and practices as guided by a recognizably queer denunciation and rejection (previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3 and 2.4) of the dominant assimilationist rhetoric and posturing of the professional and funded LGBT movement (Brown, 2007; Richardson, 2005; Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008). My experiences with 'queer activism' in London ultimately led me to the fieldsite that is The Friends of the Joiners Arms' campaign, which forms the central focus of Chapter Five and Chapter Seven. But before introducing the specific social world in which fieldwork was conducted, it is important to contextualise the methodological engagement in the geographical and socio-political landscape of London and, in particular, in relation to The Joiners Arms pub whose closure the campaigners sought to oppose: a working-class 'queer pub' located in East London, an area increasingly subjected to gentrification.

Attending to the local: LGBT spaces and gentrification in (East) London

LGBT spaces such as bars and pubs play an integral role in enacting and maintaining London as an 'inclusive' urban landscape (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Puar, Rushbrook, & Schein, 2003; Rushbrook, 2002). Understood as 'vital' components of the city's 'diversity appeal', these spaces are increasingly promoted as part of what Bell and Binnie (2004) refer to as 'neoliberal strategies of urban governance', which foster 'up-market', cosmopolitan and middle-class forms of investment, business and consumption, and encourage the state to act 'entrepreneurially' to regenerate or 'gentrify' poor and working-class urban areas to facilitate processes of capital accumulation (p1809; also see: Andersson, 2011; Kanai, 2014; Ludwig, 2016).

Yet, in recent years, LGBT spaces in the city have also been subject to numerous closures. Research conducted by the UCL Urban Lab and supported by the Greater London Authority (GLA) found that from 2006 to 2017 the number of LGBT venues in London fell from 125 to 53, a staggering 58% decline in just over 10 years (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, 2018). Optimistically, some read this as a positive side-effect of the increasing inclusion of LGBT people in mainstream society (e.g. *The Economist* (Smith, 2016a) article which opens the thesis). But evidence suggests that the bulk of the closures are a direct result of gentrification rather than the lack of demand or need (Campkin & Marshall, 2018). In particular, research shows that the vast majority of these closures have in fact been due to private property developments and/or steep hikes in rent prices, rather than the lack of demand or need (Campkin & Marshall, 2017; Ghaziani, 2019).

Campkin and Marshall (2018) argue that the closure of LGBT venues in London should be indeed understood in relation to various conditions. These include "the banking crisis of 2008 and an associated period of economic instability; the austerity programme of the Conservative-led coalition government (2010-2015)… and the same government's overall loosening [and neoliberalization] of the planning system in favour of development" (p93). A political-economic climate of austerity seems thus to have replaced "the more community-centred plans supported by the Greater London Council in the 1980s" (Ibid, p93). These policies are part and parcel of the 'neoliberal strategies of urban governance' discussed above, and promote gentrification by making local Councils increasingly dependent on private investments (whose underlying imperative is the maximization of profit accruing to land use) for the maintenance and 'revitalisation' of areas under their jurisdiction (Ibid). Elsewhere, Kristian Olesen (2014) refers to this as the 'neoliberalization of planning', a process which posits the logics of capital accumulation as serving public interests (p295; also see: Allmendinger & Haughton, 2018).

Institutionally, the recent closure of LGBT venues in London was framed as a threat to the city's 'diversity'. In a statement released to mark the anniversary of her appointment as London's first Night Tsar, Amy Lamé, whose job description is to "champion the value of London's night time culture" (Keens, 2017), says that "protecting… [LGBT] venues is key to boosting London's night-time economy"

(Eloise, 2017). Similarly, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, responded to the closures by saying that he "hold[s] LGBT+ venues in very high regard" (London City Hall, 2017b) and that "protecting them is an integral part of…[his] plans to grow London's night-time economy and culture" (Ibid). It thus seems that, embodying some of the paradoxical tensions which inflect neoliberal strategies and discourses more broadly (Cheng & Kim, 2014), LGBT spaces seem to be at once increasingly desirable *and* subject to growingly unfavourable conditions.

The Joiners Arms and the promise of inclusion

Not all LGBT spaces have been equally affected by closure and gentrification. Indeed, Campkin and Marshall (2017) find that community-oriented spaces seem to have been disproportionately affected, with respondents distinguishing (and favouring) these from more recent and commercially-oriented establishments "geared towards middle-class audiences" (Ibid, 19). In particular, East London, "an area…characterized… 'by a long-standing association with the city's immigrant and working-class populations'" (Kennelly and Watt, 2011, p767 cited in Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014, p601), and the Borough of Tower Hamlets in particular, who lost over 70% of its LGBT venues (Campkin & Marshall, 2017), stand-out as prime examples of the multiple "contradictory pulls" (Ibid, 82) which organize seemingly 'inclusive' neoliberal cities.

Home to "some of the most pronounced pockets of disadvantage in the UK" (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014, p601), violence and 'prostitution' (Andersson, 2009), the East End has over the past decade become target of considerable 'regeneration' efforts in an attempt to modernize and 'civilize' this 'problem place' and its "challenging' communities" (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014, p601). The financial district of Canary Wharf (built in 1991) and the 2012 London Olympics are but two examples of these efforts. As Hubbard & Wilkinson (2014) note, 'regeneration' in this area is often explicitly packaged and sold through the language and rhetoric of LGBT inclusivity and "linked to a wider project of neoliberalization" (p601) which aims to create "cosmopolitan gay-friendly space[s]" (p610) in areas traditionally associated with homophobic working-class and immigrant masculinities (Andersson, 2009; Hubbard

& Wilkinson, 2014). Whilst this 'new entrepreneurial paradigm' (Andersson, 2011, p88) is sold as a benevolent, progressive and 'inclusive' project, it appears to have participated in the creation of 'unhospitable' spaces, if any, for the East End's working-class communities and its "historical hidden location[s] of gay nightlife" (Ibid, p60): a number of venues "scattered" (Ibid, p63) across the area, which functioned as safe havens and cruising grounds for the working-class queers which lived in these 'dangerous' urban landscapes.

Amid these stood The Joiners Arms, around which the questions raised by this thesis are ethnographically investigated. The pub was opened by David Pollard, a working-class gay man from the North of England, in May 1997 on Hackney Road. Opposite the road, "rows of derelict, vandalized buildings flank[ed] the street" (Andersson, 2009, p63). As noted by Andersson (2009), the pub used to be populated by a heterogeneous combination of hetero- *and* homo- sexual subjects- from the working-class patrons and local bar staff, to the "stripper… from down the road" (p64) and 'the chavs'[32] (p58), to an ever-growing number of middle-class visitors, from the adjacent and rapidly gentrifying area of Shoreditch, in search of an adventure amidst the "ruins of the urban landscape" (p63).

Whilst the pub would later emerge as 'an LGBT venue', it was seen by all my key informants as a 'queer pub'. As one informant claims, "David [the owner] never called it an LGBT pub, no one ever called it an LGBT pub… it was just a pub for everyone"[33]. This is confirmed by Andersson (2009), who notes that the pub's slogan- 'Gay or straight but never narrow minded'- foregrounds that The Joiners Arms was a relatively "democratic space" (p65) that did not strictly define its clientele along the hetero-homo- sexual binary.

The pub operated as a late-license venue, and its "dicey atmosphere" (Ibid, [64]), its "unwelcoming exteriors" (Ibid, p65), "permanently flooded toilets" (Ibid) "haggard rainbow flag" (Ibid), "closed blinds" (Ibid) and "almost invisible entrance" (Ibid) all

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[32] As Andersson (2009) explains, the origin of the term is "contested, but some read it as an acronym for Council house and violent" (p58). Although often used as a pejorative term, 'chav' has also become "associated with particular forms of street fashion" (Ibid) and appropriated and eroticized by some parts of the London gay scene as a "playful adaptation of a role that is normally associated with danger and violence" (Ibid).

[33] Fieldnotes, April 2018; Jen, as we walk to the station together after David's funeral.

represented "an East End tradition of working-class pub culture" (Ibid, p64) that strongly contrasted with both "Shoreditch's more fashionable bar scene" (Ibid) and with the city's most famous gay enclave, Soho, seen as "cosmopolitan and classy" (Ibid, p65). Now, without limiting the (theoretical and political) potential of 'queer' by nostalgically and unproblematically attributing it to a fixed time and/or a place, the pub did nevertheless seem to (tentatively) offer an (economic and cultural, spatial and temporal) alternative to those 'queer subjects' which, as Halberstam (2005) describes, are 'queer' not merely by virtue of their being 'non-heterosexual' but by virtue of their living "(deliberately, accidentally, or out of necessity) during the hours when others sleep and in the spaces (physical, metaphysical, and economic) that others have abandoned" (p9) and who "inhabit[ed] time and time-bound narratives in necessarily *different* ways from straight people" (Ibid, emphasis added). The pub thus seems to have provided a time and a space for those queers who "live[d] outside the logic of capital accumulation" (Ibid) and refused a burgeoning homonormative politics of assimilation.

At the end of 2014, the pub was sold for a staggering £1½ million, and was just one of multiple buildings on the block due to be repurposed in a redevelopment plan managed by property developers Regal Homes, a firm that has been at the forefront of a number of (mostly residential) redevelopment projects in London, the most recent of which have been in East London. In December 2014, The Friends of the Joiners Arms held their first meeting with the intention of organizing a campaign to stop the closure and looming demolition.

In the midst of the campaign (which had, until then, primarily unfolded in the form of vigils held outside the pub and signed petition letters to the Council), in May 2016, the Council of Tower Hamlets, citing their commitment to "celebrating…diversity" (quoted in Eloise, 2017), established an agreement[34] with the property developers which outlined that a 'replacement LGBT venue' had to be included in the redevelopment as a condition for the project's approval. The agreement emerged after

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[34] In planning terms, the agreement fell under what is commonly referred to as a Section 106, a planning obligation clause which restricts or determines the redevelopment or use of a land in a specified way, acting as "a mechanism… [for making] a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not otherwise be acceptable" (Town and Country Planning Act, 1990).

a year of "extensive media and public discussion of threats to the night-time venues serving London's LGBTQ+ communities, prompted by a spate of closures" (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p83), including that of The Joiners Arms. The agreement became part and parcel of Sadiq Khan's 'plans' to protect LGBT venues from closure in the city and was celebrated by the media, the property developers and the Council, as an example of 'LGBT inclusion' and as a creative way of addressing the exclusionary effects of gentrification and redevelopment on the city's LGBT community. Indeed, planning operations have traditionally excluded LGBT people from documents (Doan & Higgins, 2011) and organized our sense of the public "around heterosexual constructs of family, work and community life" (Frisch, 2002, p256). Attempting to formally include LGBT subjects within the realm of urban planning, the agreement represented a move towards more 'inclusive' planning operations and a departure from the infamous days of Section 28 [35] . Nevertheless, the campaigners remained ambivalent about its intended aims and consequences, and despite the promise of inclusion, remained opposed to the redevelopment. The ethnographic story in this field explores how such a seemingly 'inclusive' and 'friendly' planning agreement became such a site of contention.

Participant observation: The Friends of the Joiners Arms

I attended my first meeting of The Friends of the Joiners Arms on the 28th of June 2017, in the basement of an anarchist library in Whitechapel. Immediately, I set out to trace, for the subsequent year and a half, how such a seemingly progressive, inclusive, or, indeed, 'LGBT-friendly', planning rule became such a site of contestation. I did so by 'following' the campaigners in a range of settings, from their internal meetings to their external engagements with the Councillors, the property developers and the media, logging over one hundred hours of participant observation and compiling over 100 pages of fieldnotes. Through these I noted what people said to me and conversations I overheard, as well as recording observations from specific events and

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[35] A clause of the Local Government Act (1988)- repealed in 2003- which stipulated that local authorities should "not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" (p16).

stories unfolding in the field (O'Reilly, 2005, 175). All hand-written fieldnotes were subsequently transcribed and logged onto a computer.

In following the campaign across multiple field-sites, I focused primarily on four members of the group. These are: Coleen, Reg, Max, and Dev. All are in the 30s, former patrons of pub, and identify as 'LGBT'. At the time of research, they all either lived in the Borough of Tower Hamlets or in the adjacent Borough of Hackney. They all met at The Joiners Arms, becoming close friends with David, the owner, with which they shared a passion for left-wing politics and story-telling. Somewhat representative of The Joiners Arms itself, all participants are White[36].Whilst I decided to focus on these four in light of the rapport established and their active involvement, the collective that is The Friends of the Joiners Arms encapsulated a number of campaigners, some of which were former patrons, some of which had never been or heard of the pub before.

The group established important connections and solidarities with other pubs and spaces affected by closure in London, such as the campaigns organized to re-open The Black Cap (Save the Black Cap) in Camden, or the campaign organized to oppose the demolition of the Latin Village in Elephant and Castle. Campaigners refer to these as their "sister campaigns"[37]. The campaign to save The Joiners Arms should thus be read as part of a larger complex of interrelated class struggles in London. These should be understood as contemporary forms of 'class war', understood by Halberstam (2005) in terms of "not simply owners exploiting labour or labour rebelling against managers but a struggle between those who value interclass contact and work hard to maintain those arenas in which it can occur, and those who fear it and who work to create sterile spaces free of class mixing" (14). The Friends of the Joiners Arms engaged in 'class war' by fighting against the sterilization and gentrification of an area and a space in which interclass contact was not simply present but encouraged.

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[36] Will, a gay Black man who was also part of the campaign, is adamant in reminding the campaigners- and other former patrons- not to idolize the pub as a queer utopia. Indeed he often refers to the pub's 'Whiteness' in an effort to urge the campaigners to be critical in their efforts to 'save' the pub.

[37] Fieldnotes, May 2017; Coleen, during a meeting at her house.

I did not conduct ethnographic interviews in the field, and decided nevertheless to complement participant observation by conducting a sort of 'ethnography of texts' (Ahmed, 2012a), focusing carefully on the production and circulation of texts amidst these encroaching LGBT-friendly discourses, thinking about who writes the texts and why, but also who takes them up and what they do with them. These included the objection letters submitted by the campaigners to the local Council, the agreement and the planning application itself, the email exchanges between the community organizations and other actors in the field (and between the campaigners themselves), the media coverage of the campaign, as well as the paper trail circulating amidst wider discussions about the loss of LGBT venues in the city and the value and importance of 'LGBT diversity' in London.

Like Weatherall (2019), my involvement in the field resembled that of the 'participant-as-observer', which meant that "I participated fully in the ongoing activities of the organization and all my colleagues [the campaigners] knew my identity as a researcher" (p3). I was indeed deeply involved in the labour required to run the campaign, which included reading documents, sending emails, drafting letters of objection, seeking legal advice on planning legislation, and acting as a facilitator for some of the internal meetings. I was part of the very material practices through which the group was reproduced and an active producer of the very 'stuff' I analysed (Brown, 2007; O'Reilly, 2012). The fieldnotes thus also included "personal reflection on emotional and experienced related to … [the] work that occurred outside of the time I was physically in the field…[as part of the] process of… continually reflecting on and deconstructing how I was thinking about myself in relation to my colleagues" (Weatherall, 2019, p3).

The affinities and enjoyment resulting from my experience of the campaign has inevitably shaped my reflections, readings and experiences of the field (Browne & Bakshi, 2011, 2013). Indeed, embedded, as I was, in a familiar and intimate reality, I (consciously or subconsciously) might have foregone a critique of the campaigners in exchange for a sense of closeness and belonging. Whilst, as noted, we would be naïve to assume this wouldn't to some extent be the case in all ethnographic engagements, I resolved to include these reflexive limits as part of my methodological claims, accounting for my research positionality, its instability and ultimately, its partiality.

Yet, whilst the concerns and insights developed in the subsequent Chapters were developed in conversations with other activists and through the discussions which occurred within the community organization, the observations, reflections and analyses are my own. As others before me have argued (Brown, 2007; Browne & Bakshi, 2011; Newton, 1993; Roseneil, 1993), this close and personal involvement has been central to the content and direction of this ethnographic project (discussed in more detail in section 3.3.1).

3.3   Data collection and analysis

Data was thus not so much 'collected', as if to imply a passive and (impossibly) objective relation to the 'things' studied, and more as 'co-produced' (Ashcraft & Muhr, 2018; Haritaworn, 2008; McDonald, 2016). This process involved treating subjects as "epistemic partners…not merely informing our research but who participate in shaping its theoretical agendas and its methodological exigencies" (Holmes & Marcus, 2008, p596). In fact the point here is not so much for the reader to take this account as a 'truthful' version of the world (though, of course, an element of ethnographic validity and credibility is still importantly strived for), nor to simply develop theory out of data. Rather, the ethnographic project of knowing is accompanied, firstly, by a recognition of the performativity of knowledge and the manifold ways in which the practices of research (of conducting it, as well as designing and theorising it) work to constitute and construct the objects and subjects of study, in the field (Borneman & Hammoudi, 2009). And secondly, by an understanding which posits 'knowing' itself as constituted through fieldwork encounters and experiences, understood as "modes of ethical engagement wherein the ethnographer is arrested in the act of perception" (Ibid, p18).

Thus, in terms of data analysis, as O'Reilly (2005) reminds us, "things are never straight forward" (p176). Indeed, whilst other forms of qualitative and survey research proceed in a linear manner by collecting, analysing, and presenting data, in ethnographic research endeavours, the processes of collecting and analysing data are inevitably connected, whereby unfolding insights on the ground are analysed in situ,

guiding where, when and why the research will take us elsewhere. The experience of fieldwork and of theory-building itself can thus "widen the reach of the research, or narrow it, or even change direction" (Ibid, p177) to the point where it would be impossible to neatly distinguish between what counts as 'collection' and 'analysis'. Therefore whilst this approach may at first resemble what many call 'grounded theory', I am hesitant to use the term to describe this endeavour because the ethnographic approach was remarkably more fluid, flexible, and iterative than current applications of grounded theory seem to be comfortable with.

I thus conceive of the process of doing fieldwork itself, of recording, of sorting, of following, as a form of analysis, which in turn "leads to writing up (preparing what you have discovered in a way that can be presented to others" (Ibid). This is an ongoing process of following, linking and chasing up ideas, "looking for other people and other facts that seem relevant" (Ibid, p203) to the topic of research in light of the research questions posed. Thus, rather than adopting a deductive approach where "a hypothesis is derived from existing theory and the empirical world is explored…to test the truth or falsity of the hypothesis" (Ibid, p26), I approached the field through an iterative-inductive approach "guided by what emerges from the data rather than establishing predetermined themes and coding categories…[which] are not treated as distinct and unconnected but relational and linked" (Rumens, 2012, p964) and where the researcher is not devoid from but "open about one's preconceptions" (O'Reilly, 2005, 26), allowing "theory to emerge from the data" (Ibid) but also using theory to inform guide, inform, and interpret data. Some moments- as "flashes of insight" (Ibid, p181) or "wonder" (Maclure, 2013)- stood out as especially generative and productive instances from which to begin making sense of the ethnographic fieldwork. Throughout the thesis I often offer these in the form of ethnographic vignettes in the Chapters.

Fieldnotes, interview transcripts and artefacts were 'sorted' according to the themes they embodied and the stories they told. Rather than 'counting' how many times something happened or a theme was covered, I was more interested in thinking about what the specific situated ethnographic encounter(s) could tell us about the discourse of LGBT-friendliness: what it was doing as well as how this was being experienced in the field. In the process of sorting, I then moved from a chronological approach to a

thematic approach, and begun looking for patterns. In sorting the data, I was thus also concerned in not removing the data from the situated and detailed context from which it emerged, and used descriptive data as a 'holder' and as a way of remaining 'there' even in the process of removing the data from its chronological embeddedness in the spatio-temporal construction that is the field. In what follows, I reflect on three possibilities (and problems) emerging from such a queer*ing* and multi-sited ethnographic methodology.

3.4   Reflections from the field: three queer*ing* possibilities (and problems)

3.3.1   *Possibility (and problem) 1: foregrounding the performativity of research, and gender/sexual subjectivities in the field*

We have come a long way in recognizing the relevance and significance of gender/sexuality in conducting fieldwork. Ever since feminist scholars' turned to reflexivity as a way of addressing uneven power relations in the field (e.g. Gibson-Graham, 1994; Newton, 1993), organizational diversity scholars have been mobilizing their 'insider identities' to gain access to and establish "closer, more direct connection[s]" (Browne & Nash, 2010, p135) with their participants and objects of study (Giddings & Pringle, 2011; Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009). But beyond this much-needed corrective to some of the dangers of the objectifying gazes, much is yet to be said about the ways in which our identities, as gender/sexual subjects *and* researchers, are 'pulled apart' and 'undone' in the process of research (for an exception, see Browne & Nash, 2010, Rooke, 2009).

I too, like Rooke (2010), experienced the ethnographic field as a process of undoing, as a 'journey without a map', as a "moving within and between categories, slipping out of the comfort of identities of 'lesbian', 'activist', and 'researcher'" (p39), all three of which provided (at once *and* in equal measure) a strategic possibility and a sense of unease. At times my 'lesbian-ness' was a condition of possibility for fieldwork itself. Indeed, given that 'being LGBT' was a pre-requisite for attending many of the events I attended in the 'diversity world' of business, it is not hazardous to assume that, ethically-speaking, I wouldn't have been able (and willing) to conduct participant

observation in these sites had this not been the case. In this field, I also strategically mobilized my gender/sexual subjectivity to establish a degree of rapport in the field, sharing anecdotes, stories and communicating a collective understanding of the pleasures and difficulties of LGBT life in London with participants. Thus, whilst I agree with Rumens and Kerfoot (2009) that we should not assume that a "shared sexual identity cultivates trust" (p771), in many cases it was clear that it was on this basis that participants were "willing to disclose their life and experiences and self-understandings to me" (Rooke, 2009, p152). Being a 'lesbian' in the 'diversity world' of business, that is, being a 'native', an 'insider', clearly had its perks, ethnographically speaking.

At the same time, moving in and between the social worlds of business and activism, it was clear that the amalgam of 'lesbian-researcher-activist' I performatively embodied in each was qualitatively, and politically, different. Not only did I originally join The Friends of the Joiners Arms as a former patron of the pub and as someone who was politically *and* personally concerned by the closure of yet another affordable (and queer) venue in London- and *not* as a PhD student researching inclusion. But, in doing so, I also entered a world inflected by and populated by (old and new acquaintances) and friends, ex-partners and (past and future) lovers with whom I'd been sharing a slice of 'queer London' since 2012. This field was thus inevitably modulated by emerging and existing (erotic, passionate, cordial, amicable, and political) relationships. It is *through,* and not in spite of, these encounters, that this ethnography reflexively engages with the issues and research questions at stake and on "one's own role in the construction of social life" (O'Reilly, 2012, p11).

Thus, whilst in the 'diversity world' of business I mobilized my gender/sexuality in pursuit of my research interests, the opposite seemed to occur in the social world of 'queer activism', where my research interests were initially secondary to the (political and affective) engagements I had cultivated, and where these were quite literally 'put to use' in the pursuit of the questions and concerns which had (originally) preoccupied 'lesbian and activist Olimpia', not 'researcher Olimpia'.

At the same time, for all that's been written about the research opportunities created by sharing an 'insider' identity with your participants, I have never felt more of an

'outsider' than in the boardrooms of the glass and steel buildings of Canary Wharf. Surrounded by hundreds of LGBT* people working in the city's top 'LGBT-friendly' corporate giants, it was only after my third or fourth networking event that I was (finally) able to meaningfully participate by mimicking, and definitely not mastering, the art of 'LGBT networking' which underpinned these events: a mixture of casual flirting, detailed accounts of professional aspirations and anecdotal and ironic evidence of our collective experiences as 'LGBT professionals'. Partly to blame for this sense of unease was my inability to shake off my scepticism towards the monstrous celebration of homocapitalism (Rao, 2015) that some of these events embodied. Whilst I, too, was a 'diverse gender/sexual subject' like the people in the room, I felt nothing like a 'native'. I thus clung onto my subjectivity as a 'researcher', mobilizing this 'outsiderhood' both to elicit responses and to ensure that the 'anti-capitalist' and 'critical' subjectivity I had been dutifully cultivating in the social world of activism remained intact.

Nevertheless, this strategy was not always successful. Take for example, when during an interview (Andrea), and specifically at a moment in which a participant interprets her having been sent to the 'LGBT role model' training program as a sign of organizational self-interest rather than genuine interest in LGBT inclusion, she says:

> "…in order to have more 'points' you need to have role models [in organizations], so because of that I've been sent to that thing. And *you* have been sent to that as well! You are part of… the system, yeah, you are part of the system! *Of course* you are part of the system!"[38]

Being hailed as 'part of the system' made me feel unsettled, deceived and vulnerable. Indeed, whilst I had attempted to create a level of distance between myself, the lesbian (and anti-capitalist) activist, and *those people* who attended these corporate events, being 'a *participant* observer' and 'a lesbian' (and thus an imagined target of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness) meant that I too was being folded into the very systems and processes I was attempting to study. By attending the program, I too had, at least on paper, become 'an LGBT role model'. I too could be 'counted' as part of

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[38] Interview with Andrea, March 2017.

the University's commitment to 'LGBT diversity' in order to 'have more points'. I too, was 'one of them'.

The experience of fieldwork was thus one where my personal, professional and political boundaries, my role as a 'diverse gender/sexual subject', a 'lesbian', a 'researcher' and an 'activist' were "gradually undone" (Rooke, 2009, p153) . Of course, this caused a number of existential problems, as I found the experience emotionally demanding and politically/ethically fraught. As I participated in the 'diversity world' of business, I felt unable to express my queer and activist concerns on the corporatization and commodification of 'diverse' genders/sexualities in contemporary regimes of neoliberal capitalism, and wondered whether such an omission could/should be read as a form of deception. In the social world of 'queer activism', whilst I felt able to openly voice my critical apprehensions, I struggled to tell the difference between what constituted as 'the research' and what constituted as 'the personal', finding myself perpetually 'in the field', and thus, consciously or subconsciously, perpetually researching. My personal and my research diaries merged as I struggled to enjoy my friends' (and lovers') company after a long day of thinking and writing about their experiences.

Yet, this messy multi-sited ethnographic engagement was also replete with ethnographic possibilities. On the one hand, the movement from social world to social world enabled a more nuanced appreciation of the complexities of "lived diversities in LGBT lives" (Colgan & Rumens, 2015, 18)- which can be located both in the corporate boardrooms which constitute the more 'traditional' sites organizational research on 'diversity', *and* in frequently overlooked dingy pubs and basements. On the other, it also worked to foreground, and do justice to, the fluidity and instability of gender/sexuality- not only the research subjects' as exposed by previous queer engagements with organizational 'diversity' (e.g. Benozzo et al., 2015; Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009), but also that of 'diversity researchers' themselves. The multi-sited ethnographic engagement thus unlocked the queer*ing* possibility of thinking about how the very construct of 'gender/sexual diversity' is contested, contextual, and fluid, always performed, always done *and* undone, unstable, in a perpetual state of becoming.

3.3.2 Possibility (and problem) 2: deconstructing (the organization of) 'LGBT-friendliness'

But beyond our multi-sited ethnography's accentuation of the performative labour that goes into negotiating multiple subjectivities in the field, it also seems that one of the greatest (and yet untapped) possibilities of moving between social worlds is to deconstruct a "place-focused concept of [LGBT-friendly] culture" (Hoskyns & Rai, 2007, 4).

As noted in my research diary, although often the sites which made up the social worlds of business and activism were remarkably spatially proximate to each other- an average of 15 to 20 minute cycling distance between them- and located in the same Borough, it was hard not to feel a strong visual and affective impact when travelling from one to the other (also see: Rajak, 2011; Valentine, 2007). On the one hand, the towering steel and glass structures which contain the brightly-lit open-plan offices, marketing suites and conference rooms of the banking and insurance firms which dwell upon the spotless shores of the river Thames in Canary Wharf, canapés and (decent) wine served. On the other, the dimly-lit pubs with sticky floors, flooded bathrooms with no windows nor toilet roll, chips and pints for dinner.

The affective and aesthetic incommensurability of these localities was more than just a contextual component of the ethnography. Rather, it revealed something about the broader socio-economic landscapes enveloping London, the effects of gentrification in the city, the existence and persistence of inequalities *within* LGBT community(ies), disparate forms of access to spaces and resources for community-building, uneven access to discourses of 'normality' etc… And it also revealed something about the paradoxes and contradictions which characterize 'LGBT-friendliness' itself (discussed and explored in Chapter Four and Five), particularly in the Borough of Tower Hamlets, where corporate displays of 'LGBT-friendliness' co-exist with the loss of queer bars, pubs and community spaces more broadly.

A multi-sited methodology thus unlocked two major deconstructive possibilities in relation to the study of 'LGBT-friendliness'. Firstly, to chip away at the very construct

of 'LGBT-friendliness' by aligning together phenomenon - such as the 'friendliness' and 'progressiveness' of its rhetoric and promises, and the 'unfriendliness' of gentrification and of London's socio-economic landscapes more broadly- that are "not always grasped within the purview of a single research site" (Zilber, 2014, p97). Moving from social world to social world and inhabiting both simultaneously meant that both these experiences could be understood as two sides of the same coin, whereby the 'macro' (the 'neoliberalization of activism' and 'gentrification') was read not merely as 'context' but as an "emergent dimension of arguing about the connection among sites" (Marcus, 1995, p99).

Secondly, the movement from social world to social world also enabled the deconstruction of various dichotomies ('the local' and 'the global', or 'the life-world' and 'the system', 'the organization' and 'society'), which have up till now defined our understanding of 'LGBT-friendliness' in OS. In this sense, a multi-sited ethnographic methodology does not simply provide 'more perspectives' on 'LGBT-friendliness', but rather, through "expanding what is ethnographically 'in the picture' of research" (Ibid, p102), it provides ethnographic grounds for the very deconstruction of such a thing as 'LGBT-friendliness'.

Of course this approach is also not without its problems. The number of fieldsites and (potential) participants inhabiting their confines meant that the standard ethnographic goal of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) had to some extent be sacrificed. This is not to say that ethnographic observations were merely 'superficial' but that some localities were inevitably explored in more depth than others, and I was not *always* able to establish the kind of field relations which have for decades been heralded as the normative standard against which all ethnographic endeavours are to be judged. Moreover, moving across social worlds also made the experience of fieldwork remarkably overwhelming. I often worried that, given the instability of the organizational field, I'd be accused of making arbitrary decisions as to where its boundaries lay (Falzon, 2009). I mitigated against the problem of ethnographic (un)accountability by mobilizing self-reflexivity throughout, as a way of accounting not only for the 'social location(s)' (McDonald, 2013) of research but also for its 'physical location(s)'. Whilst self-reflexivity does not bypass the problem of *how* to

choose the specific localities which constitute the field, it nevertheless worked to offer an account of the decisions involved in the process.

At times the problems of a multi-sited engagement manifested themselves in my embodied experience of space. One time, after an interview (with Ems), I was 'stuck' inside because the card I was given to enter the building only worked on that side of the complex and we had since moved to another wing[39]. In another instance, a participant (Anita) had forgotten to inform the security team that I was coming and I was prevented from entering[40]. After trying to conduct the interview in the main lobby of the building on a couch located in a corner of the room, we were asked to move. We ended up conducting the interview on a sofa located in a very busy shopping area, which rendered the sound quality very poor and undeniably affected the kinds of experiences my participant was willing to discuss. Moving between sites in order to deconstruct the organization of 'LGBT-friendliness' thus rendered me a perpetual and transient 'stranger' in the field, at the mercy of various gatekeepers and security measures, limiting the ethnographic scope of research.

3.3.3   Possibility (and problem) 3: ethnographic-activism

Last and certainly not least, a multi-sited ethnographic approach also seems to unlock a number of opportunities for activism with regards to how we study inclusion. Initially, a possibility for activism emerged through the very 'doing' of ethnography. Take, for example, an email I was sent by a participant (Reg) after attending a meeting with the campaigners, the property developers, and the Council:

> "Dev and I were talking on the way home about the effect of having someone in the role of 'documenter', and clearly typing what people are saying. I think it adds a huge layer to the 'performance' and makes them [the property developers] think - constantly - I am being watched here. Which does raise

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[39] Fieldnotes taken after an interview with Ems, April 2018.
[40] Fieldnotes taken after an interview with Anita, March 2018.

the question of how bad they behave when they don't think they're being watched!"[41]

In this instance, the role of the ethnographer finds an activist dimension in the role of 'documenter'. Indeed it seemed that observing the unfolding of events served to heighten the performative dimension of roles in the field and thus the property developers' need to 'behave'. Whilst this could certainly be read as undermining the traditional ethnographic goal of depicting social reality as it 'naturally is' (Brewer, 2000), it nevertheless unlocked ethnography's more *political* dimensions, enabling our engagement to be used to safeguard the very subjects of inclusion against the bullying rhetoric and intimidating practices that, as it emerged, were a central component of the property developers' tactics. In this case, and given the evidently asymmetrical balance of power which permeated relationships in the field- on the one hand, a self-organized campaign and community group, on the other, a company who sells properties at an average of £850,000 - studying 'LGBT-friendliness' from an ethnographic perspective involved abandoning the belief that being a good ethnographer was like being 'a fly on the wall' in favour of a more politicized understanding of 'observation'.

Moreover, in the social world of activism, I also deployed my status as a 'doctoral researcher in a Business School' to gain 'respectability' in the eyes of the Council and the property developers, quelling some of the campaigners' fears of simply being portrayed as a 'bunch of angry activists'. But, more broadly, my institutional dwelling in a University was also mobilized in the attainment of more menial tasks such as the printing of flyers, leaflets, and zines, as well as gaining access to academic publications about the intersectional issues and struggles faced by more marginalized members of LGBT community(ies). In both these instances, my role as 'researcher *and* activist' could be mobilized to further the campaigners' aims and to redress some of the imbalances, in terms of 'respectability' and access to resources, which separated the world of business and activism.

Another ethnographic possibility for activism was unlocked through the contradictory subjectivities, roles and positionalities I inhabited in each social world. In the

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[41] Fieldnotes, September 2017; email correspondence between Reg and I.

'diversity world' of business I often drew from queer and critical perspectives on 'diversity' and ethnographic insights collected in the social world of activism to query diversity managers' and senior professionals' assumptions about the straightforward benevolence of 'LGBT-friendliness'. Rather than simply challenging their perspectives, I mobilized these moments of tension to unpack participants'- and my own- worldview. For example, when talking to a participant in the field who worked for an organization which offers LGBT professional networking services what she thought about the claim that corporations were merely jumping on the 'LGBT-friendly bandwagon' for their own self-interest, she responded by saying that the fact that 'LGBT-friendliness' was now "a giant advert for companies"[42] was at once "sad"[43] and "important"[44] because whilst she would rather "not feed into the machine and just grow vegetables and live happily…that's not how the world works"[45].

Relaying my queer activist apprehensions in the 'diversity world' of business thus served the ethnographic goal of revealing something about participants' understanding of 'how the world worked'. But it also served a political goal, challenging some of my own taken for granted assumptions about the hegemony of capitalist logics. Indeed, what also emerged from this engagement was the existence of a desire to 'live happily' beyond the confines of capitalist exchange relations, which, as Gibson-Graham (1999) argue, is one step towards the opening-up of "alternative economic representations" (p82) of what the world could be. Ultimately thus, a multi-sited accentuation of the ambiguous performativities, positionalities and subjectivities adopted and engage-in in each field unlocked a variety of activities possibilities with regards to the study of 'organization' and to the Business School more broadly (discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine).

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[42] Interview with Rosy, April 2017.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

3.5   A note on ethics

All participants in the field were anonymised. Details which would risk re-identification have been removed.

One concern with 'ethics' developed in the field has been the role and way in which one can *do* critique. I recognize that this research was only made possible given the access, hospitality, and time given to me by often powerful and/or important figures in the field of 'LGBT diversity and inclusion'. Yet, rather than this indebtedness resulting in a shying away from critique, I resolved to make available and send all material to research participants and organization to whom this ethnographic project owes its existence. In doing so, I hope to open up critical spaces of discussion and conversation and mutual engagement, as opposed to mere distanced critique (Gilbert, 2016)

On the other hand, I have also struggled to deal with the ethics of doing observant participation with The Friends of the Joiners Arms because some of the knowledge developed in the field could jeopardize elements of the still (ongoing) campaign. I have resolved to embargo some sections of Chapter Seven in order to protect the campaign and the campaigners.

PART II

QUEER*ING* THE ORGANIZATION OF INCLUSION

CHAPTER FOUR

A Politics of 'Crashed Ceilings': The Promise of Inclusion in the 'Diversity World' of Business

"I feel like I've probably been more productive and had a better career just because I've turned up being me"[46]

"There's rock-star talent from the gay women's community. Turn to your neighbour and give them a high-five"[47]

"Lesbian Tech CEO and role model, all the ceilings, crashed"[48]

Across 2017 and 2018 I attended a number of professional networking events and panel discussions catered to LGBT* people working in businesses in London. These spaces are important sites of cultural transmission and construction of 'LGBT-friendliness', where its promise of inclusion is (re)produced, sold and consumed. Here, 'LGBT role models', 'senior LGBT leaders' and 'diversity & inclusion specialists', showcase experiences of 'being LGBT at work' with the aim of encouraging (especially more 'junior' and/or closeted, 'invisible' and 'inauthentic') LGBT* employees to "get involved…to create the right kind of culture"[49]. The sharing of these experiences - through stories and anecdotes of personal and professional success as told by those for whom things have 'gotten better'– creates veritable inspirational narratives and aspirational regimes about the value of 'being yourself' on the

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[46] Fieldnotes, March 2017; Alison, Managing Director and 'senior lesbian role model' at Barclays at LBWomen event.

[47] Fieldnotes, November 2017; Leanne, CEO and co-founder of Lesbians Who Tech at Lesbians Who Tech conference.

[48] Fieldnotes April 2017; Hayley, 'Lesbian Tech CEO' (Young-Powell, 2018) and co-founder of Werkin, "a woman-founded tech company dedicated to diversity and equity through inclusive mentorship" (https://getwerkin.com/), at LBWomen app event launch.

[49] Fieldnotes, March 2017; Alison, Managing Director and 'senior lesbian role model' at Barclays at LBWomen event.

workplace. After all, these are people who are "at work all day"[50], and it not only "makes it more fun to be who you are"[51], but also, under these circumstances, it can be challenging to "hide and pretend to be somebody else"[52]. Yet, it was not simply the challenges involved with the closet which seemed to buttress the importance of 'being yourself'. Indeed, senior LGBT* professionals and 'role models' were the first to admit that 'being yourself' is a remarkably worthy professional endeavour.

In what follows I draw from ethnographic material collected in the 'diversity world' of business to explore the organization of promises of inclusion in this field, reflecting the kinds of normativities these (re)produced, and, ultimately, the futures and spaces (and ultimately, politics) these promises are materializing and for whom.

Initially, I draw from ethnographic observations collected across a series of LGBT networking events and panel discussions to demonstrate how promises of inclusion in this field were organized around a series of neoliberal rationalities in which 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects are becoming included by being "praised as productive" (David, 2016, p401) (section 4.1). I then turn to explore the normativities around which these promises are bestowed (section 4.2). Drawing from ethnographic observations collected at the London chapter of the Lesbians Who Tech conference, I argue that promises of inclusion (re)produced a host of (homo)normativities that oriented LGBT* subjects towards economically desirable and 'successful' ways of being. Here homonormativity is not defined by desires for 'ordinariness' but rather operationalizes the language and temperament of 'queer' in pursuit of 'extra-ordinariness' and 'success'. I then explore the futures and spaces these promises are materializing and for whom by drawing from an ethnographic case study based on the story of a 'Lesbian Tech CEO' and developer of a 'role modelling' app for lesbian and bisexual women (section 4.3). I discuss the emergence of 'role models' as 'new ideal LGBT figures' (Hearn, 2014, p408) of inclusion, and argue that these represent the individualization, professionalization, and privatization of LGBT politics, where inclusion simply entails 'crashing ceilings'. I conclude by reflecting on three

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Fieldnotes, March 2017; Jules, Senior Vice President and 'senior lesbian leader' at Bank of America Merrill Lynch at LBWomen event.

contributions that the ethnographic study can make to extant critical discussions on inclusion and to the broader scholarly field of queer OS (section 4.4).

4.1   The promise of inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business

"We need to create an inspirational group of people who can show you that things are possible, who can show you the power of being *you*"[53], said Alison, a composed and confident White woman, as she sat on the stage. Alison is Managing Director at Barclays and one of the UK's Top 50 LGBT executives (Macleod, 2015). It's a Wednesday evening on the 31st and highest floor of Barclays' HQ. Around one hundred LGBT* professionals have gathered to hear seven "very visible lesbian and bisexual role models"[54] discuss "ways to support and advise organizations to create an environment where women can be authentic in work, be comfortable being 'out', and be much more confident in self-promotion"[55].

The event, like the majority of the ones I would attend in coming years, took place beyond the temporal boundaries of 'work'[56] and in the conference suites of one of the large glass and steel structures in Canary Wharf. Hosted by Barclays' LGBT staff network, Spectrum, and organized by LBWomen[57] (now LBTQWomen), the event offered canapés and refreshments, networking opportunities and impassionate speeches about the importance of being *you.* "You need a group of people everywhere to show you that this is real and every day"[58], Alison continued, standing up. "*Everyone* needs to get involved… only then will we start to create the right kind of culture"[59].

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[53] Fieldnotes, March 2017; LBWomen event.
[54] LBWomen event brochure.
[55] Ibid.
[56] As a Vogue issue covering Lesbians Who Tech (discussed in section 4.2.2) explains, "[t]he particular benefit of organizations such as Lesbians Who Tech… rises from forging connections *beyond* day-to-day work" (Heller, 2017, emphasis added).
[57] LBWomen is a network created to "inspire, inform, and celebrate success of lesbian and bisexual queer women" (http://www.lbwomen.org/about-us/). This has more recently been renamed 'LBTQWomen'.
[58] Fieldnotes, March 2017; LBWomen event.
[59] Ibid.

Alison's remarks touch on some of the central themes of LGBT professional networking events: 'authenticity', the power of individuals as agents of change and 'examples' of inclusion and a conceptualization of 'the problem of inclusion' in terms of changing 'cultures' and/or "mind-sets"[60]. These are also central themes of the LGBT diversity (management) and inclusion literature (Chapter Two, section 2.2). In what follows I explore these themes and argue that the "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2006, p20) through which inclusion acquired its shape in the field are based on neoliberal understandings of 'the self' as an enterprise and of 'culture' as a market (section 4.1.1). This reframes the question of 'management' in relation to a critical approach to inclusion as one of *self*-management, operationalized through a seductive promise of 'the good life' and the aspirations, ambitions, and dreams of LGBT* subjects themselves (section 4.1.2).

4.1.1 *'I've been more productive just because I've turned up being me'*

The idea of 'being yourself' was "absolutely and fundamentally at the heart"[61] of the promise of inclusion as it unfolded in the field. After all, given that being your 'true' (gender/sexual) self has historically been a central operating impulse of LGBT political, organizational and social life- and one the key promises of 'the LGBT-friendly organization' itself (previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.1.4)- it is perhaps unsurprising that the very essence of what it meant to be 'included' in the 'diversity world' of business unfolded around this pervasive truism. References to the new, healthier, ways of life unleashed by 'coming out of the closet' were thus common in the field, imbuing these events with a quasi-religious zeal for 'authenticity' (Bell & Taylor, 2003).

However, what seemed most striking about my encounter with the discourse of 'authenticity' was that this seemed to be not simply organized and oriented around the notion of 'being yourself', but crucially, around the idea that 'being yourself' is good for your career. "We've all seen the stats", announces Alison. "When you're authentic

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Fieldnotes, March 2017; Jules, Senior Vice President and 'senior lesbian leader' at Bank of America Merrill Lynch at LBWomen event.

and yourself, you are something like 35% more productive", she continues, striding across the stage. "And having been there, having had that, when you're trying to hide… I know being out throughout my career, not having to be conscious of it all the time, has enabled me to just do my job… I feel like I've probably been more productive and had a better career just because I've turned up being me". Appealing to the authoritative and world-making power of statistical knowledge, Alison establishes a distinction between 'hiding' and 'being me'. She also assumes the role of the 'sympathetic advisor' (Grzanka & Mann, 2014)- I've 'been there', I've 'had that'- appealing to a personal quality to metaphorically, and perhaps even literally, 'sell' authenticity as a professional game-changer, as one of the very reasons she is standing on this stage tonight, elevated from the rest of us.

Alison makes the case for inclusion in business terms, emphasizing that 'authenticity' is not simply good for social justice, but also, and crucially, good for productivity. Underpinning this narrative is a desire for a 'culture' which enables the logic of the market. Indeed, the 'right kind of culture', whose creation was a central organizing concern of the events attended was often understood as one in which LGBTs are not prevented from achieving their 'full potential'. This is a culture which is not simply modelled on, but whose central operating principle is to enable, market rationalities and mechanisms. A culture in which exclusion [read: not being yourself] should be circumvented because of the (avoidable) costs it places on the economy (e.g. not doing your job) (Rao, 2015). The sharing of these experiences worked through a series of (highly seductive) neoliberal promises for productivity and professional success (e.g. having 'a better career') in which inclusion was premised upon one's ability to "engage in the activity of the markets… on which post-Fordian capitalism flourishes" (Hunter, 2017, p131). In the field, these 'mantras' (e.g. 'authenticity makes you more productive') ultimately achieved their status as 'truth' through endless and performative repetition (Butler, 1999), requiring subjects to submit their 'full selves' to work with little or nothing beyond it. Whilst many of the subjects featured in this Chapter welcome this de-compartmentalization of 'the private' and 'the professional' and are heavily invested in the 'mantra of authenticity', not everyone is able and/or willing to understand the 'self' in such narrow terms. Indeed, as explored in Chapter Six, having interests outside of work and/or embodying forms of gender/sexual

'diversity' that do not unlock greater productivity makes some remarkably vulnerable to exclusion.

As others have noted, these understandings not only premise 'personhood on productivity' but also encourage LGBT subjects to relate to their lives in entrepreneurial ways (Ahonen et al., 2014; Ludwig, 2016; Miguel Kanai, 2014; Winnubst, 2012; Yurchak, 2003). Indeed, many if not all of the events attended in the 'diversity world' of business were organized with the explicit aim of coaching, training, mentoring, and inspiring LGBT* participants to manage their 'diverse' gender/sexuality in ways which 'unlocked' its 'full potential', and in which these subjects' "entrepreneurial nature"[62] could be "allowed to flourish"[63].

Take, for example when I attend an event entitled 'Board Readiness' in May 2017. The event was organized by OUTstanding, an organization which helps companies harness 'LGBT diversity' to "foster inclusive culture[s]" [64]. Members include corporations such as PwC, IBM, Amazon and BP. The event was organized with the aim of preparing LGBT employees "transition onto a board"[65] and "train the next generation of leaders on how to manage their 'diversity' as successfully as possible". I arrive at the offices of the insurance company in which the meeting is going to take place at 8am, and reach the 15th floor to find myself in a room of around thirty people socialising and networking over breakfast. As we wait for the meeting to begin, I meet Jack, a White gay man, senior manager in what he refers to as "a very LGBT-friendly bank", on his motivation for attending and what he's hoping to get out of it. Sipping a coffee, he explains he is here because he wants to "be a better role model", because he feels like he can "do more" to enhance his career prospects, and ultimately because he could "be much more strategic about how…[he] markets …[him]self in this world".

According to Jack, 'more can be done' to improve one's chances of success by investing time and energy in cultivating the right kind of self and connections. This breakfast meeting is one such opportunity. As we take a seat, Siobhan enters the room.

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] https://www.out-standing.org/about/.
[65] Fieldnotes, May 2017; OUTstanding 'Board Readiness' event (unless otherwise stated, all fieldnotes cited in the remainder of this section (4.1.1) were collected at this event).

Siobhan, who is donning a black blazer and white shirt, is the HR Director and Board Member at Mercer, the world's largest human resources consulting firm. She is also one of OUTStanding's 'Top 100 LGBT Business Leaders'. "Thank you for taking the time this morning to invest in yourself", she opens, not simply acknowledging but performatively enacting our presence in the room as oriented towards a desire to 'be[come] better'. I look around as participants in the room nod consentingly, almost grateful their efforts had been recognised. For the rest of the two-hour session, senior LGBT board members explain to us ways in which one needs to position oneself to be part of 'the corporate world', and how to manage one's gender/sexuality so that "people experience you positively and usefully".

The ways in which Siobhan and Jack both likened gender/sexuality to 'an investment' suggests that inclusion is here organized around the requirement to "evaluate all aspects of our lives in terms of the extent to which they do or do not contribute to such an inexorable trajectory of self-improvement and personal happiness through career enhancement and lifestyle maximization" (Rose, 1999, xxiv). The subject of inclusion is thus "an 'entrepreneur of himself or herself' who organizes different aspects of his or her life as the 'continuous business of living', and who constantly makes 'adequate provisions for the preservation, reproduction, and reconstruction of [his or her] own human capital" (Yurchak, 2003, p75). As scholars working on the cultural politics of neoliberalism have argued, this understanding of 'the self' "mark[s] a broad shift in the logic of everyday existence toward the 'managerialization of personal identity and personal relations' and 'the capitalization of the meaning of life'" (Ibid). 'The LGBT subject' in the 'diversity world' of business is thus imagined as a subject whom, whilst 'allowed' and 'permitted' to be openly LGBT* and a 'board member', must nevertheless carefully cultivate and (self-)manage their 'diversity' in order to be(come) 'included'.

4.1.2 *'Can you tangibly express the difference it has made in your success?'*

What emerges from an initial engagement with the 'diversity world' of business is that promises of inclusion in this field were organized around a series of neoliberal

rationalities in which 'diverse' genders/sexualities are becoming included by being "praised as productive" (David, 2016, p401). This demonstrates the relevance of the questions raised by scholars exploring the cultural politics of neoliberalism for the field of inclusion studies. Indeed, as explored in this section, promises of inclusion are organized around a remarkably neoliberal form of governmentality through which gender/sexual subjects are "governed as autonomous and enterprising" (Rumens, 2018, para. 13.37). This raises important questions for both mainstream *and* critical scholars of inclusion. In particular, it reframes the question of 'management' posed by critical scholars less in terms of domination, repression, and exclusion, but rather as operationalized through the very process of inclusion. Put simply, positing inclusion as an exercise in neoliberal governance problematizes the discourse of LGBT-friendliness not in terms of the ways in which it "assaults human difference" (Costea & Introna, 2006, p56 cited in Ahonen et al., 2014, p271) but in terms of the ways in which the (re)produces, individualizes and flexibilizes human difference according to the logics of neoliberal capital and (normative) aspirations for 'the good life'.

Take, for example, the testimony of a senior and successful "lesbian role model"[66] at a panel discussion organized by the LGBT network of Norton Rose Fulbright, a corporate law firm. The event was entitled 'Where have all the women gone? A lively discussion on female participation in LGBT professional networks', and once again featured six 'high profile' 'successful' lesbian and bisexual professional women. The event begins, and the Chair asks each panellist whether they thought that "coming out had been a positive thing" and whether they could "tangibly express the difference that it has made in…[their] success?" One of the panellist, a White woman and senior partner of the banking unit of a law firm, responds:

> "I personally think, I was made partner quite young because I am LGBT … you know, I was visible and authentic, and I got to know lots of different people because of that, so when that piece of paper…was sent out to every single partner globally and showed pictures of the shortlisted partners for that year, everybody knew who I was, even if they hadn't worked with me, rather than someone going 'I don't know who he or she

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[66] Fieldnotes, January 2017; Norton Rose Fulbright LGBT network event (unless otherwise stated, all fieldnotes referenced in this section (4.1.2) were collected at this event).

is', everyone knew who I was. So I think you can't underestimate, actually, there are many benefits"

Another member of the panel, another White woman who is a senior partner at EY, also explained that 'coming out' and being a 'visible' and 'authentic' in the organization benefitted her career by enabling her to socialise and network with more senior leaders:

> "When we have the [LGBT staff network] every year, I've had three senior leaders and they all wanted me on their table because they know I'm very involved. Definitely an 'only gay in the village' moment. But it was great! That has given me different things that I can do as a leader, be a role model, be out there, get involved, meet senior leaders, and that's added different parts I can play in the organization, to my life, and that's been quite career-enhancing"

In both these exchanges, 'coming out' enabled our panellists to 'enhance' their careers, to become partners 'quite young', to be(come) 'role models'. Both our panellists interpret their 'visibility' and 'authenticity' as career-enhancing and/or as having played a central role in being made a partner and thus be(come) recognized as valuable organizational actors. This suggests that "business arguments can be productive of agency and positive identity in those who are targets of equality and diversity policies" (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010, p105). Yet, rather than being welcome emancipative trajectories, these seem to be reconfigurations of 'management'.

On the one hand we might be tempted to read this reconfiguration as confirmation that gender/sexuality is being (ab)used as "management tool[s] to harness the energies of all organizational members for service in the global battle for organizational success" (Litvin, 1997, p182). Yet, this would not only not do justice to our subjects' lived experiences of gender/sexuality and inclusion[67], but also miss the theoretically significant point about the convergence between the idea of 'being yourself' and the notion of 'productivity' as it unfolded in the field: that the 'business' to which 'authenticity' seems to make a contribution to is not so much, or at least not only, 'the

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[67]As Zanoni and Jannsens (2007) argue, critical approaches to 'diversity' often tend to "fall into excessive determinism… and to underplay minority employees' agency" (1372) in negotiating and inhabiting the discourse of diversity and inclusion.

organization', as some critical scholars have lamented (e.g. Fleming & Sturdy, 2011), but rather 'the business of the self'. As Ahonen et al. (2014) point out, this represents a shift in governmentality not only away from the well-documented overtly 'repressive' and 'exclusive' forms of managerial control of gender/sexuality before the advent of 'diversity' (management) (Burrell and Hearn, 1989), but also away from the liberal governmentality which underpinned initial investments in 'diversity' that derived from social justice movements. Rather than being mere passive victims whose 'diversity' is (simply) being externally harnessed in the pursuit of organizational bottom lines (e.g. Litvin, 2002, 2006; Noon, 2007) the data reveals that LGBT* subjects are complicit participants, cultivating and managing their own 'authentic' and 'diverse' gender/sexuality as a form of human capital and as an entrepreneurial asset in the in pursuit of a 'good life' and their own aspirational goals.

Aspirations for 'a good life' often embody and (re)produce normative understandings of what 'a life' is and/or what it could be (Ahmed, 2010a; Berlant, 2011). Whilst these promises are highly seductive, living life as if it were an enterprise is not an easy feat. At times, doing so is a form of 'cruel optimism', where the very practices from which one derives a sense of self, an identity, fulfilment, are the very things that keep one from *truly* flourishing (Berlant, 2011). Ethnographically speaking this argument might be problematic because it distinguishes between one's 'true' [read: enabling] and 'false' [read: harmful] aspirations. At the same time, as explored further in Chapter Six, it is clear that these aspirational trajectories come at a cost. These are accrued both by those who, for whatever reason, fail to live their life as if it were a (successful) enterprise and thus fall short of its promises, internalizing failure as an individual shortcoming (Chapter Six, section 6.2). And those who are successfully deploying their gender/sexuality in pursuit of professional advantage(s), who leave work, if ever, exhausted and depleted (Chapter Six, section 6.1). Indeed, whilst at times I was seduced by the promise of a 'good' and 'successful' life, wondering if I too could mobilize my 'diversity' in pursuit of a (more) lucrative career in business to replace the financial precarity of my academic one, delving into the intricacies of participants' everyday life revealed that 'the good life' envisioned by these narratives, may in fact be rather perverse: a life in which 'work' is but the only form of self-fulfilment, a life

(almost) entirely submitted to the improvement of one's employability, a life of endless cost/benefit analyses, 'responsible' decisions and 'added values'.

From this perspective, question of 'management' in relation to a critical approach to inclusion (e.g. does inclusion *enable* or *assault* diversity and its subjects) is thus reframed as one of *self*-management, operationalized through a seductive promise of 'the good life' and the aspirations, ambitions and dreams of LGBT* subjects themselves. To make this point is not, as Immanuel David (2016) points out, to "cast blame on those responding to market mechanisms far beyond their control" (p401). Indeed, it is by no means only 'entrepreneurial business subjects' who are engaging in these practices, which are becoming increasingly widespread and necessary forms of survival in contemporary neoliberal societies (Cheng & Kim, 2014). Nor is it to imply that the 'antithesis' between social justice and business whose study and exposure lies at the centre of the critical management project has been seamlessly resolved. Of course, the narratives and performances of gender/sexuality witnessed in the field confirm that "gender/sexuality align with capital accumulation in important and powerful ways" (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014, p11). Yet, it seems that this 'alignment' unfolded less through managerial domination and/or organizational control, but rather through the operation of softer forms of power, which seductively incorporated LGBT* desires for inclusion within the discourse of productivity and success. The experience of the Lesbians Who Tech 2017 conference in London supports these preliminary conclusions, encouraging us to reflect on the specific ways in which the normativities governing subjective viability unfold in the field (section 4.2).

4.2   The (homo)normativities governing subjective recognition: desiring the (extra)ordinary

I arrive at Facebook's HQ in Euston for the Lesbians Who Tech conference. Founded by Leanne Pittsford in 2012, the conference, and the Lesbians Who Tech organization more broadly, has emerged in recent years as the worlds' largest congregations of

'queer women in Tech'[68], attracting speakers of the calibre of Hillary Clinton. Originating in California, it is the first year the conference is hosted in London and a significant level of excitement and anxiety emanates from the conference organizers, who greet me in the foyer of the building on Euston Road.

As we wait to be checked-in, I start talking to Amy, a middle-aged White woman who has worked in the tech industry for twenty years and is here today to "find some inspiration and maybe a new job… or maybe just to have fun"[69]. I sit next to a gigantic rainbow Facebook logo as Amy, who is wearing jeans and a white button-up shirt, explains why she decided to attend the event: "When I went to tech events it was me and a bunch of dudes. When I went to queer tech events, it was just me and a bunch of dudes". This event caters to people like Amy, promising to inspire and open up networking opportunities for the 'queer' women for whom these have primarily been curtailed by 'dudes'. After registration, we make our way to the 10th floor, where approximately two-hundred 'queer women and their allies'[70] who too, like me, gave up their Saturday to be here, are waiting for the conference to begin.

In what follows, I build upon reflections articulated in the previous section to explore the (homo)normativities governing the subjective recognition in the 'diversity world' of business. Initially, I detail the multiple ways in which the concept of 'homonormativity' can help us make sense of trajectories of inclusion by shedding light on the complicities between neoliberalism, self-management and the emergence of what David Halperin (2012) refers to as the "cult of gay ordinariness" (443). Drawing from ethnographic material collected at the 2017 Lesbians Who Tech conference in London, I then argue that the (aesthetic, rhetorical, and political) distinctions between 'queer' and 'normal' have become more blurry than queer desires for anti-normativity can account for, and that the deployment of 'diverse' and 'authentic' displays of gender/sexuality as forms of human capital thus poses serious questions with regards to claims, articulated by queer scholars, that homonormativity

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[68] I explicitly use 'queer' as this was the terminology used by the conference marketing material and the conference organizers.
[69] Fieldnotes, November 2017; Lesbians Who Tech conference.
[70] Lesbians Who Tech conference brochure.

is accompanied by the erasure of 'queerness' and the emergence of a desire for an 'ordinary life'.

4.2.1 *Homonormativity and the cult of gay 'ordinariness'*

As explored in the previous section, gender/sexuality emerges in the field as something that 'adds value' not simply to the organization but to the (entrepreneurial) self. This aspirational imperative to (re)produce and extract value from one's gender/sexuality as productively and authentically as possible has engendered various forms of (self-)management and (self-)governance which, as others have noted, have become central components of the manifold ways in which LGBT* subjects organize their way to inclusion (Benozzo et al., 2015; Priola et al., 2018; Richardson, 2005; Rumens, 2018; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014). It is through these processes of "neoliberal self-regulatory governance that require subjects to [authentically] know themselves" (Richardson, 2005, p529), and through the (self-)managed harnessing of the value which accrues from being one's 'true self', that LGBT* subjects are folded into neoliberal processes of capital accumulation, becoming "viable neoliberal subjects…proven to be flexible and fluid, self-sufficient, and major contributors to their… workplaces, communities, and societies" (Irving, 2008, p54).

Whilst it is important to recognize that cultivating 'diversity' as a form of human capital may enable previously excluded (gender/sexual) subjects to be(come) included and optimize their chances of professional success, queer scholars have argued that this (re)produces and embodies a host of (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities (Benozzo et al., 2015; Giuffre et al., 2008; Priola et al., 2018; Rumens, 2018; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014; Williams et al., 2009). In particular, as discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.4, scholars working on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism have shown that the various forms of (self-)management and (self-)responsibility engendered by the requirement to cultivate- or literally, invest in- one's (gender/sexual) self in order to unlock opportunities for success entails the "internalization of new norms of identity" (Richardson, 2005, p522).

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Queer scholarship initially addressed these concerns through the concept of heteronormativity, yet more recent work has focused on deconstructing the various *homonormative* arrangements and negotiations through which (some) LGBT* subjects become included in organizations (Benozzo et al., 2015; Hearn, 2014; Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008). Underpinning the concept of homonormativity is a denunciation of what David Halperin (2012) refers to as "the rise of a new and vehement cult of gay ordinariness" (443) and a desire to be 'just like heterosexuals'. As he explains:

"In an apparent effort to surpass straight people in the normality sweepstakes and to escape the lingering taint of stigma, gay people lately have begun preening themselves on their dullness, commonness, averageness. A noticeable aggressiveness has started to inform their insistence on how boring they are, how conventional, how completely indistinguishable from every one else" (Ibid)

From a queer perspective "the desire to be ordinary…[may mean] that the specificity of and distinctiveness of queer life is muted or expunged" (Rumens, 2018, para. 13.33), and with it "the very distinctiveness that is needed for queers to organize politically" (Ibid). The notion of 'homonormativity' and the identification and problematization of extant LGBT* desires for 'ordinariness' are thus particularly useful in thinking about the collusion between the discourse of LGBT-friendliness and an assimilationist gender/sexual politics.

Yet, the experience of fieldwork revealed that the concept of 'homonormativity' didn't go far enough in elucidating the complex ways in which LGBT*s were being promised inclusion by being hailed as "good capitalist subjects" (King, 2009, p15). In what follows, I draw from fieldwork conducted at the Lesbians Who Tech conference to argue that 'homonormativity' (as it has thus far been understood and applied in the field of OS and in broader discussions about queer theory's oppositional stance in relation to 'the normal' and 'the ordinary') ignores the ways in which the language and dispositions of 'queer-ness' are currently being utilized and mobilized by corporations to present the 'extra-ordinary' as 'ordinary'. This poses serious questions and challenges to our contemporary modes of (queer) critique (Kirby, 2015).

4.2.2 'There's rock-star talent from the gay women's community'

The Lesbians Who Tech operationalized the very discourses of 'queer' (linguistically, socially, and politically), and harnessed the transgressive discourse of anti-normativity to define its stated mission. This was evident in the explicit use of the word 'queer' to denote the constituency to whom the conference was aimed at ('queer women in or around tech'), and in the conference's own slogan ('Queer, Badass, Inclusive'). Indeed, the conference- and the Lesbians Who Tech organization more broadly- explicitly markets itself as 'un-ordinary', even "revolutionary" (Cushing, 2015): as an organizational space that, as desired by Amy, challenges the norms of 'maleness' and 'straightness'.

Take, for example, the opening 'scene' of the conference itself. At around 10am, we are encouraged to take our seats. The lights dim and the eight screens hoisted around the stage light up to read: "THIS IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL TECH CONFERENCE. There won't be a lot of this"[71]. At this point, the screens cut to a series of images. In an article published in BuzzFeed, Ellen Cushing (2015) describes these very images and 'scene' (taking place at the San Francisco chapter of the conference) as displaying "shots of white tech dudes in various poses of white tech *dudeness* [sic], before showing us what we were in for, namely, 'great hair', 'hula hoop contests', 'lesbians who look like Bieber', 'high-fives', 'geeking out', and 'more hugs than business cards'".

In juxtaposing images of 'white tech dudes' and 'lesbians who look like Bieber', a distinction is established between 'the normal' and *this* (un-ordinary, 'diverse' and 'inclusive') conference. In so doing, and through mobilizing the language of queer and intersectional politics more broadly in its marketing ('Queer, Badass, Inclusive'), choice of speakers (from Black Lives Matter co-founder, Patrisse Cullors, to queer pop icons Tegan & Sara, to Latinx Advocate Paula Ramos), and rhetoric (through words such as 'queer'), the conference harnessed the transgressive potential of

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[71] Fieldnotes, November 2017; Lesbians Who Tech conference (unless otherwise stated, all fieldnotes referenced in this section (4.2.2) were collected at this event).

challenging norms of whiteness, straightness and maleness, resulting in an explosion of inspiring displays of what it might mean to (be) 'queer' (in) tech.

After lunch, and just as I thought I had become adequately accustomed to the excitement and enthusiasm which accompanied each speaker, there came a drum roll. "And now…" announces the presenter, a Mancunian White woman in her 30s with blue hair, "our founder, CEO and lesbian leader… Leanne Pittsford!" The drum roll fades to Kanye West's 'Stronger' as Leanne makes her way onto the stage, met with expansive cheers. Leanne, a White lesbian woman, is a 'technologist, diversity leader, entrepreneur and risk taker', as her website attests[72]. She began her career working for Equality California, campaigning to overturn proposition 8. Since then, she has ventured into the world of tech, firstly co-founding the Lesbian Entrepreneur Mentoring Program, and more recently, Lesbians Who Tech in 2012 "Here comes the 'cyber hero' of the lesbians", whispers Amy, who is sitting next to me in the dark auditorium.

"Hello! Is this what 200 lesbians look like?" opens Leanne as the cheers are still lingering. I later find out, from watching some of her many YouTube videos, that she uses this line frequently in her 'entrances'. Her performance suddenly felt very staged. She continues:

> "We are the most diverse conference in tech, there's something so unique about all our identities. There's rock-star talent from the queer women's community. Turn to your neighbour and give them a high-five"

Encapsulated in this statement is the existence of a desire for recognition around the nurturing of 'rock star talent'. This reveals some of the limitations of the ways in which homonormativity has been currently understood in relation to LGBT inclusion. Indeed, there is thus nothing straight-forwardly 'normal' or simply 'ordinary' about the kind of constructions of gender/sexuality mobilized in order to make the case for inclusion in this field. There is very little that suggests, as the work of Williams and Giuffre (2011) does, that the only way to be "successful in gay-friendly workplaces… [is to] appear 'virtually normal', that is, *indistinguishable* from heterosexuals" (p553).

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[72] https://leannepittsford.com/.

Rather, the homonormative constructions of gender/sexuality mobilized in the field celebrated 'rockstar lesbian talent' and 'uniqueness' extending *beyond* the desire for normality or simply mimicking those of heterosexual or 'normal' life. Attending the Lesbians Who Tech conference thus exposed that we are not only witnessing, as Halperin (2012) explains, "the rise of a new and vehement cult of gay ordinariness" (p433 cited in in Rumens, 2018, para 13.33), but also a concomitant rise of queer, badass, *extra-ordinariness*. This not only puts into question the very operating principle upon which queer contestations have been built, but also seems to confirm Winnubst's (2012) suspicion that "the longstanding embrace of non-conformity as a mode of resistance to normalization [as]…neoliberal" (p94), and that perhaps we should "avoid assuming that 'deviation' is always on 'the side' of the progressive" (Ahmed, 2006b, p164).

Of course, often times the conversations I had in the field did (re)produce ways of living and being/becoming a gender/sexual subject which (the) queer theory(ist) would (happily and gladly) understand as forms of (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativity, such as "get[ting] married…hav[ing] babies…[a] career". And, of course, that is not to say that expressions of so-called 'anti-normativity' were not also 'contained', albeit in different ways. For example, on the one hand, the Lesbians Who Tech conference was not as 'de-sexualised' as discussions of homonormativity would have us believe (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Duggan, 2003; Priola et al., 2018; Richardson, 2005). This includes participants openly discussing the event as a way to meet potential sexual partners- "I'm not sure if this is a pickup event or a networking event, but either way, it's great" (Cushing, 2015)- 'hooking-up' with each other, flirting, and an environment in which allusions to lesbian sexuality (the bodily and physical kind, not just the identity), were not uncommon- "I can't believe there are so many lesbians in this room… and I am married". On the other hand, however, these displays did never really approach the radical potential of sex- public (Berlant & Warner, 1998), pharmacological (Loe, 2001; Preciado, 2008) post-human (MacCormack, 2009), cyborgian (Miyake, 2004), without gender (Martin, 1994b)- as envisaged by (the) queer theory(ist), nor did they challenge the (hetero)normative narrative through which we are all imagined to be on a quest in search for 'the one'

monogamous, ever-lasting, committed relationship which (often) results in (gay) marriage.

But the point here is less to establish a binary between the 'normal' and the 'queer', nor to say that the discourse of LGBT inclusion as it unfolded in the field was 'not normalizing'. Rather, what this ethnographic engagement reveals is that the operation of homonormativity seemed to be built less upon a binary between norms and deviances, between 'normativity/non- or anti-normativity' defined by identity categories and desires for 'assimilation' into 'straight' culture, and more in terms of "the social rationality of success" (Winnubst, 2012, p86). In what follows, I trace the implications of these preliminary conclusions to explore how 'the social rationality of success' and 'extra-ordinariness' is (re)organizing of the spaces of LGBT politics, the kinds of futures the promise of inclusion is materializing, and for whom. To do so, I draw from an ethnographic case study based the 'successful' story of a 'Lesbian Tech CEO', 'role model' and developer of a 'role modelling' app for lesbian and bisexual women in technology.

4.3   'Lesbian Tech CEO and role model, all the ceilings crashed!'

The first time I heard Hayley speak was at LBWomen event (discussed previously in the Chapter) in March 2017. "Lesbian tech CEO and role model, all the ceilings, crashed"[73] exclaims the Chair to introduce Hayley to the room. She is referring to Hayley's breaking down of barriers of gender and sexuality by climbing to the top of the corporate world of 'tech'. Hayley, a White woman in her 40s, begins talking and I immediately note that she is an incredibly charismatic speaker. She is funny, engaging, confident, and swears a lot. In my fieldnotes I record being seduced by her lifestyle and her stories of partying with influential people, taking impulsive trips to exotic locations, dining in fashionable restaurants. "I consider myself to be a high achiever"[74], she explains to the room. She came across as successful and self-assured: truly extra-ordinary.

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[73] Fieldnotes, March 2017; LBWomen event.
[74] Ibid.

Hayley is one of many LGBT* people I encountered in the field who describe themselves- and are described by others- as 'role models'. I was indeed often taken aback by the frequency and affective rhetoric with which 'LGBT role models' were posited as "agents of inclusion"[75] in the field, as "crucial contributors"[76] to the making of 'LGBT-friendliness', as LGBT subjects' whose visible emergence seemed to be *in itself* a sign that "progress has been made… or at least, it's possible now"[77]. Hayley is, too, a strong believer that 'role models' are the key to not only changing corporate cultures but also "impact[ing] on social, political and economic change"[78]. So much that she has dedicated her personal and professional life to developing an app designed to foster connections between more junior lesbian and bisexual women in and technology and more senior 'role models', with the aim of "opening doors to progress in organizations"[79] and ultimately, of "creat[ing] *big* change"[80].

In what follows, I explore the figure of 'the LGBT role model', as an example and embodiment of the 'rationality of success' which governs subjective recognition in the field, and what this might tell about the kinds of futures and spaces are that the promise of LGBT inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business is materializing and for whom (section 4.3.1). (Re)constructing Hayley's story of becoming a 'Lesbian Tech CEO', 'role model' and app developer through ethnographic material collected across a series of events in which she was a speaker - from panel discussions to the launch of the 'role modelling' app itself- as well as a detailed reading of media and news articles about her journey, I argue that the politics of gender/sexuality are becoming increasingly individualized, professionalized and privatized, delivering a ('trickle down') version of justice in which 'the political' simply involves 'crashing ceilings' (section 4.3.2). The implications of this 'version' of inclusion will be explored in the remaining Chapters of the thesis.

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Fieldnotes, February 2017; Stonewall 'LGBT role model' workplace training program.
[77] Fieldnotes, November 2017; Lesbians Who Tech conference.
[78] Fieldnotes, April 2017; LBWomen app launch event.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

4.3.1 Role models as diversity 'success stories'

Collected in Top 100 lists produced by the likes of OUTstanding, or showcased in Stonewall's annual Workplace Equality Index, 'LGBT role models' are constructed as LGBT employees that "provide others with an aspirational journey"[81], who show others (presumably closeted, inauthentic, invisible and/or unsuccessful and/or 'ordinary') LGBT employees "that all things are possible"[82] and that create "the idea of a 'possible self'" (Sealy & Singh, 2010, p9). In many ways 'LGBT role models' should be read as embodiments of the promise of inclusion, as diversity 'success stories' that prove that "success is possible" (Browne, 2014, p171) not simply despite, but often because of, one's 'diverse' gender/sexuality (previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.1.4).

Again, it was the 'business benefits' of becoming an 'LGBT role model' that gained particular traction in the field. Multiple times throughout the fieldwork experience participants discussed these in terms of "exposure", "meeting leaders", "increasing my network", and offering "fantastic networking opportunities". One participant, who sat on the panel of the Norton Rose Fulbright LGBT network event I attended in January 2017, described her becoming an 'LGBT role model' as "one of the best experiences I've had"[83] and something that "massively contributed to my professional success"[84]. Another participant, whose job is to create 'LGBT role models lists' for a large professionalized LGBT organization, also confirms that young LGBT* employees are increasingly using the role models lists she compiles "to their advantage"[85], as a "promotional opportunity"[86] and as a "platform to move ahead" [87]. In these narratives, 'LGBT role models' become the living embodiment of 'inclusion': they show others that you can be productive and successful not simply despite, but because of, your 'diversity'.

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[81] Interview with Vasily, April 2017.
[82] Fieldnotes, March 2017; LBWomen event (unless otherwise stated, all fieldnotes referenced in the remainder of this section were collected at this event).
[83] Fieldnotes, January 2017; 'Where have all the women gone?' LGBT staff network event.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

Whilst these shared 'success stories' and the opening of professional opportunities for LGBT* subjects in organizations (to become board members, CEOs, senior manager, role models, partners etc…) may surely *feel* and look 'empowering', there are a number of unanswered questions about what 'the social rationality of success' might mean for those unable and/or unwilling to be 'productive' and 'successful' in the ways dictated by market rationalities (Rao, 2015). For example, as Benozzo et al. (2015) note with regards to 'LGBT role models', whilst these figures are heralded as 'examples of inclusion' on the workplace, this has the unintended effect of recreating a "hierarchical system between those who come out and those who do not" (p294), (ironically) re-inscribing shame on those who cannot 'be themselves' easily, or those who cannot access 'professional success' and 'productivity' through being 'authentic'. In addition, and as explored in the next Chapters, it also appears that organizing inclusion according to neoliberal rationalities may work to marginalize those forms of 'diversity' that cannot be reconciled with processes of capital accumulation.

Moreover, whilst 'LGBT role models' clearly embody the promise of LGBT inclusion from a professional perspective (Benozzo et al., 2015), they also serve a wider political purpose. In particular, their emergence seems to represent a (re)organization of the meaning of gender/sexuality in relation to 'the political' itself, (re)orienting the spaces of LGBT politics not simply towards 'domesticity' (Duggan, 2003) but towards 'the boardroom', delivering a neoliberal version of inclusion in which 'the political' simply involves 'crashing ceilings'. Hayley's account of how she became a 'Lesbian Tech CEO' and 'role model' sheds light on this process of (re)organization.

4.3.2   *Inclusion as a politics of 'crashed ceilings'*

Hayley's story begins when she realizes that her gender/sexuality is not irrelevant to her career, but actually a core part of her professional cache. As she explains in an interview with *The Guardian*, whilst initially she "couldn't wrap [her] head around" (Young-Powell, 2018) her sexuality, a change of industry. from finance to food & drink, created "a big change… not in organization but in [her] head" (Ibid). By "connect[ing] with people who were different" (Ibid), Hayley recognised that the idea

that "work didn't involve who I was in a relationship with" (Ibid) was "a flawed theory" (Ibid). The moniker of 'Lesbian Tech CEO' embodies these (re)organized understandings of the meaning of gender/sexuality in relation to 'work' and locates her sexuality right at the centre of her professional identity. Emerging as a sort of cyborgian-entrepreneurial neoliberal subject (Haraway, 1999)- part lesbian, part Tech CEO/machine- Hayley thus decided to embrace her 'lesbian-ness' as "a benefit" (Young-Powell, 2018) and get involved in "things around unlocking one's potential by understanding who they are and creating that dream job for them" (Ibid). For this purpose, she develops an app that matches and nurtures connections between lesbian and bisexual women 'sponsors' (senior mentors, role models) and 'sparks' (junior mentees, 'followers').

In April 2017 I attended the launch event of the app in the offices of the company. At the entrance, I am greeted by Hayley's assistant, a friendly and charismatic Australian White woman, who directs me to Hayley's office on the first floor. The stairs lead to a small balcony from which I can see the entirety of the office: open-plan, decorated with colourful armchairs, plants, big windows, and beanbags. "It breaks away some of the hierarchy to have it like this"[88], exclaims Hayley as she sees me observing the space from the balcony. "I guess", I answered. Mostly, it just felt exposing and intrusive, like a Panopticon from which employees' every movement and sigh could be recorded. "Come in", she says, gesturing towards the door. "We are about to begin".

During her presentation, Hayley explains that the app serves a professional purpose: to create "meaningful connections", "opportunities for professional development" to "'open doors' to "progress in organizations", "get a seat at the table" and "increase visibility at senior levels". But what struck me most about Hayley's impassionate speech about why the app should revolutionize our thinking around LGBT inclusion was the explicitly political dimensions of its stated mission, or, indeed, the ways in which the apps' 'professional' dimension was so deeply tied to its 'political' one. As Hayley explains after detailing the app's professional purpose(s):

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[88] Fieldnotes April 2017; LBWomen app launch event (unless otherwise stated, all fieldnotes referenced in the remainder of this section (4.3.2) were collected at this event).

> "If we can do that [the professional purpose] it will impact on social, political, and economic change. Everything is driven in the corporate world, and in doing that we can create big change, it's about what culture exists, who is visible, that is the thing that will shift the dialogue. This is nothing short of political, of creating and reaching the world that we perceive you want"

The app itself serves to (re)enact 'LGBT role models' and the "uber successful…lesbian[s]" (Young-Powell, 2018), which Hayley claimed she lacked, as the proper sites of LGBT politics. This is a politics that is not simply 'anchored in domesticity' (Duggan, 2003), as queer scholars have lamented, but that is nevertheless homonormative in the sense that it privileges a remarkably 'narrow' understanding of 'the political' and of 'social, political and economic change' as 'driven in the corporate world'.

Indeed, I would argue that the emergence of 'LGBT role models' represents the 'professionalization', the 'privatization', and the 'individualization' of LGBT and, more broadly gender/sexual, politics. On the one hand, its professionalization and privatization by (re)organizing the spaces and places of LGBT politics away from the streets and into privatized spaces such as the corporate boardroom. As Richardson (2005) has noted, the trend towards professionalization is visible across a number of sites, from LGBT organizations- whose leaders are increasingly skilled middle-class professionals- to the media- which heralds these as the 'public face' of the LGBT movement- to the academy itself- exemplified by the institutionalization of 'sexuality studies' and 'queer theory' across a number of University departments in the UK and the US. This represents, at once, a breakdown of historical forms of heteronormativity, but also the reconfiguration of 'the political' as the mere ability to secure professional opportunities in private organizations and spaces from which LGBT subjects- especially lesbian and bisexual women, as the app's stated aims exemplify- have been historically excluded. This scenario is thus at once 'more inclusive' and 'more exclusive', given that not everyone gets to enjoy its benefits (as explored in Chapter Five and Six).

On the other, the emergence of 'role models' also represents the individualization of politics, given that 'the political' is being premised upon the responsibilized individual achievements of LGBT* subjects to be(come) 'visible' and 'shift the dialogue'. Here the emphasis is on individuals 'opening doors' and 'crashing ceilings' in pursuit of a 'trickle down' or 'neoliberal' version of LGBT inclusion, which, much like corporate feminism, focuses on the achievements of individuals as opposed to meaningful systemic change. The politics of LGBT inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business is thus a politics of 'crashed ceilings'. The goal of such a politics is not to overturn structures of inequality but to celebrate those who can and have mastered the ability to, as a sceptical participant interviewed after an 'LGBT role model training program' puts it, "inhabit a fundamentally really shitty space"[89]. Ultimately then, the world that 'role models' like Hayley and Leanne (discussed in the previous section, 4.2.2), 'perceive… [we] want' is a world in which professional success is not only a barometer for a 'good life' (Berlant, 2011), but also what counts as 'good politics', a world in which 'progress' is measured in terms of individual LGBT* subjects' desires for 'extra-ordinariness', a world in which the promise of being able to be one's true self, as successfully as possible, is "framed as the ultimate [political] freedom" (Ludwig, 2016, p421).

In this sense, 'LGBT role models' could be read as the 'new ideal LGBT figures' discussed by Hearn (2014) when speculating on potential 'future scenarios' for organization sexualities. Hearn (2014) envisages a scenario of "organization sexualities…[becoming] more complex formations…[where] state and corporate organizations are less explicitly heteronormative, with a variety of sexual rights asserted and affirmed, along with a burgeoning of multiple, less hierarchical sexual-social movements and sexual identities and positionings" (p408). At the same time, as he continues, this can have "surprising consequences" (Ibid), revealing the 'contradictory' nature of these developments as "simultaneously less hierarchical but sexually excluding" (Ibid).

In the next section, and by way of conclusion, I reflect on the broader experience of fieldwork to think about the implication of this Chapter's findings for how we

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[89] Interview with Ibeyi, March 2017.

understand LGBT inclusion, and the contribution that the ethnographic engagements proposed in this Chapter can make to broader field of critical and queer OS.

4.4   Discussion: queer*ing* the promise of LGBT inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business

A number of interesting points thus emerge from tracing the implications of this ethnographic engagement for the critical understanding of inclusion and the broader field of queer OS. Firstly, the experience of fieldwork revealed that whilst scholarship on homonormativity provides a useful entry point from which to engage with the (re)organization of gender/sexuality in relation to the discourse of LGBT-friendliness, it seems that trenchant forms of homonormativity do not simply enable access to the institution of domestic privacy but allow some aspirational LGBT* subjects access to inhabit and extend into corporate spaces and places in ways which do not necessarily entail that their 'LGBT-ness' has to be sacrificed (Casey, Mclaughlin & Richardson, 2004; Richardson, 2004).

Indeed, whilst as Rumens (2018) notes, one "offshoot" (para 13.25) of the rhetoric of inclusion is that it implies LGBT* subjects "no longer need demarcated LGBT+ spaces or 'cultures' that previously served as muster stations for organizing politically and as contexts for providing support and intimacy" (Ibid), the experience of fieldwork would reveal that LGBT spaces and 'cultures' were still sought after and desired. Whilst these were not simply erased by efforts towards assimilation, they were accentuated in remarkably neoliberal ways. Ultimately then, it seems that a much more fruitful use of the concept of 'homonormativity' in the field might be unlocked if this is used not merely to merely denote- and denounce and oppose- 'normativity' (Brown, 2012), but to 'pluralize' (Love, 2015; Martin, 1994a) it, and understand the ways in which it is ethnographically operationalized, organized and laboriously performed and inhabited. This will be explored in Chapter Six and Seven.

Secondly, understanding inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business as a politics of 'crashed ceilings' encourages us to think about the spatial dimension of inclusion and, in particular, on the nature of the spaces and places in which this is *done*. Whilst a lot

has been written about the spaces and places of work, with a growing interest in the socio-materiality of labour and the role of architecture in (re)producing inequalities and exclusions (Dale, 2005; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), it is still unclear how this relates to inclusion (for an exception, see: Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018). These questions are especially important not only given the multiple ways in which the "normalization of lesbians and gay men through a number of key sites including the military, the market, 'marriage' and 'the family' suggests that 'old' public/private boundaries are breaking down" (Richardson, 2004, p405), but also in light of queer critiques of the ways in which neoliberalism privatizes, de-politicizes, domesticates, or indeed gentrifies, the sites of LGBT politics.

All of the events attended in this field took place in the privatized spaces of large transnational corporations. These spaces and places re-inscribed the importance of 'visibility' and 'authenticity', which represents an interesting link between architecture and the requirements of contemporary labour processes (Boxenbaum, Jones, Meyer & Svejenova, 2018; Dale, 2005; Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Open-plan offices, vast lobbies, indoor fountains and trees: being in these spaces often felt like being 'outside', in 'the public'. At the same time, these spaces were also heavily regulated and controlled. Whilst, in theory at least, the events were mostly free and could be attended by anyone, their boundaries were often policed by gatekeepers, security and 'borders' of various kinds. These borders not only created hierarchies between those who belonged- with tickets, appropriate documentation, and/or guest passes provided by other employees- and those who did not, but were also replete with moments of failure, in which I was denied entry and/or was 'stuck' inside (as previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 3.3.2).

In addition, whilst these were constructed as 'inclusive', performing gender/sexuality in successful, entrepreneurial and 'professional' ways seemed to be a requirement for participation. As the work of Jane Ward (2008) exposed, what counts as 'professional' is often determined according to normative class logics. Ultimately thus, whilst, as previously argued, these spaces *could* serve as "muster stations for organizing politically and as contexts for providing support and intimacy" (Rumens, 2018, para. 13.25), we could argue that the forms of support, intimacy and ultimately 'solidarity'

these spaces provided can only extend to those who 'belonged'. It thus seems that the private continues to shape "the very ethos of neoliberal homonormative conceptions of freedom- free to consume and to possess despite the hordes of [excluded] lives and bodies fenced out of these extremely private and privatized domains" (Manalansan, 2005, p151).

What might this mean for the shape and direction of LGBT politics and inclusion, given that these (privatized) sites seem to have become the central locations of LGBT politics in the UK- as evidenced, for example, by Stonewall's symbiotic relationship with many of these corporate actors? Whilst we can thus far only speculate about these implications, it would appear that these spaces, whilst mobilizing the language and temperament of 'queerness', worked against a socially progressive queer politics. In particular, we might want to speculate that this could work against class solidarity and addressing issues which do not make 'good business sense'. As Berrey (2014) has argued in one of the rare explorations into how the discourses of diversity and inclusion (re)produce class biases, hierarchies and inequalities, 'breaking glass ceilings' is often done by 'ignoring dirty floors', in which issues of economic inequality are often side-lined in favour of 'business-friendly' versions of social progress and justice.

Moreover, we might also want to speculate on the democratic character of these spaces and the fact that the kind of politics they enabled is mediated through 'the corporation', a seemingly public but ultimately private entity which lacks the democratic mechanisms which regulate public life. Relating back our discussion to the various debates and historical shifts discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.1.4), what appears to be happening is a shift of LGBT politics away from the trade unions- the dominant focus and locus of LGBT workplace activism in the late 1980s and through the 1990s- to the LGBT network (Colgan & McKearney, 2012). Whilst we may agree that this move may have been strategic, and that mobilizing the business case and including "benefits to the organization and not just to LGB [sic] employees" (Stonewall, 2005, p22 cited in Colgan & McKearney, 2012, p362) may give traction to 'inclusion' in the corporate workplace, this also limits the autonomy and democratic character of the spaces and places of LGBT politics, effectively under the control of corporate

structures and thus lacking operative accountability of more public notions of 'the LGBT community'.

Ultimately, as Bloom and Rhodes (2018) have argued in *CEO society*, we could argue that we are witnessing today is a 'corporate takeover of everyday life', where the very grounds upon which socio-political life unfolds has shifted to the realm of business. This is a realm which proposes a fantasy of meritocracy, and, engendering highly seductive narratives (of success, recognition, happiness), encourages us to think that we can all achieve this, if only we work hard enough, if only we attend the training programs, events, and workshops organized. Indeed, the experience of fieldwork revealed that the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' is accompanied and "reflect[s] different constructions of the public sphere, what can and cannot be done there, as well as assumptions about who can legitimately occupy such spaces" (Richardson, 2004, p405). This has important consequences beyond the 'diversity world' of business itself. Indeed, as noted by Rahul Rao (2015), conceptualizing 'the problem of inclusion' in privatized and gentrified terms enables corporations to construct homophobia as 'merely cultural' (Butler, 1997), that is, as something that can be redressed by "changing mind-sets"[90] rather than addressing the broader (economic, political, and social) structures through which some expressions of gender/sexuality are rendered abject (Puar, 2007; Rumens, 2018). This poses serious questions about what inclusion might mean *beyond* the 'diversity world' of business, where, as Rumens (2015) notes, "a culture of austerity…[has] not just stifled 'good practice'…but…also reversed it" (p184) (discussed in Chapter Five). As discussed in the next Chapter, in the social world of 'queer activism'- whose members were concerned with, poignantly, opposing the *closure* of a 'queer pub' by property developers- the promise of LGBT inclusion was experienced as, in the words of a participant, a "Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag"[91], a phenomenon characterized by a number of (discursive, physical, and political) 'closures', and which ultimately worked to side-line important redistributive issues engendered by processes of privatization and gentrification.

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[90] Fieldnotes, March 2017; LBWomen event.
[91] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, outside the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

CHAPTER FIVE

A 'Trojan Horse Draped in a Rainbow Flag': The Promise of Inclusion in the Social World of 'Queer Activism'

> "We are excited to deliver a development that has a place for everyone"[92]

> "We don't want gayness. We want wholehearted massive queerness"[93]

> "It's a Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag"[94]

In the previous Chapter I argued that inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business is a neoliberal 'politics of crashed ceilings': a 'trickle down' form of justice which, unfolding through the aspirational stories of remarkably 'successful' and 'extra-ordinary' 'LGBT role models', focuses on the achievements of individuals as opposed to meaningful systemic change. Here the anti-normative potential 'queerness' is harnessed and reworked to fit business-driven understandings of 'diversity' and of life itself, (re)organizing the sites of LGBT politics away from 'the streets' and into 'the boardroom', and positing corporations as 'friendly' allies in pursuit of a more 'inclusive' societies and cultures. Building on Rumens' (2015) observation that doing inclusion in "a culture of austerity" (p184) may prove to be problematic for forms of difference that cannot be reconciled with business-driven understandings of 'diversity', in this Chapter I follow the discourse of LGBT-friendliness beyond the 'diversity world' of business to explore the organization of promises of inclusion in the social world of 'queer activism'.

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[92] Property developers' statement (in Neate, 2017a).
[93] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Max, during a campaign meeting at his house.
[94] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, outside the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

As discussed in both Chapter One and Three (section 3.2.2), the ethnographic story through which these questions will be addressed unfolds around a 'queer pub' (The Joiners Arms) and a campaign organized to oppose its closure (by The Friends of the Joiners Arms). Precisely, I focus on a specific turning point three years into the campaign: the establishment of an agreement, known in the field as 'the Section 106'[95], which promised the inclusion of a 'replacement LGBT venue' as a way to mitigate against the redevelopment project's impact on 'the LGBT community'. Whilst narrated as a sign of institutional and corporate 'LGBT-friendliness' and an effort which would deliver a "development that has a place for everyone"[96], an ethnographic exploration of the organization of this promise- its intentionality, orientation, the normativities it (re)produced, and the kinds of futures and spaces it ultimately materialized and for whom- reveals a far more complex story.

In this Chapter, I initially reflect on the terms of inclusion and the specific constructions of 'diversity' mobilized to make the case for inclusion (section 5.1). I argue that the agreement organized inclusion according to the notion of 'sufficient gayness', and, mobilizing market-driven understandings of 'diversity', worked to reconcile this with the business logics driving redevelopment. In the second section (5.2) I draw from empirical data co-produced with the campaigners to question the kinds of gender/sexual subjects that were allowed to temporally and spatially exist within its confines. I demonstrate that this promise failed to extend its commitments to gender/sexual subjects which deviated from the middle-class spatio-temporal norms and the logics of 'safety' which underpin gentrification. I then argue, following the campaigners' own understanding, that the promise of inclusion in this field should be understood as a "Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag"[97] which ultimately worked to 'straighten-up' the full extent of and myriad "strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices" (Ibid, 1) which patterned The Joiners Arms' existence (section 5.3) (previously discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.2.2). Finally, I conclude by reflecting on the broader experience of fieldwork and draw points of convergence between, and preliminary conclusions about, the promise of

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[95] See footnote 34.
[96] Property developers' statement (in Neate, 2017a).
[97] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, outside the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism' (section 5.4).

5. 1   The promise of inclusion in the social world of 'queer activism'

I attended my first meeting with the Friends of the Joiners Arms in May 2017 in the basement of an anarchist social centre in Whitechapel (Borough of Tower Hamlets). The room was small, with two couches, a few chairs, a kitchenette and a piano. Its walls were covered in graffiti and posters bearing anti-capitalist slogans. There, six people, members of the campaign, made tea, rolled cigarettes, cracked open cans of beer and tore away at the crisps and Babybels on the kitchenette counter. After introducing myself as a researcher and activist, the meeting began.

Being a relatively active member of the so-called 'queer activist scene' in London I was already familiar with the campaign. I knew that the campaigners had been holding meetings and protest vigils outside the (now closed) pub, on weekends, collecting (physical and virtual) signatures for an open letter calling on the Council to halt the redevelopment and re-open the venue, and going to another pub down the road to share stories of The Joiners Arms' heyday. I also knew that, up until that point, the Council had not taken much interest in the campaign nor the closure, and that the campaigners' encounter with the property developers had been limited to two (off-the-record) meetings in which the developers had attempted to intimidate the campaigners into putting an end to the vigils and the open letter. Apart from that, as Coleen would later attest, "nothing happened for [the] two years"[98] spanning the closure of the pub in January 2015 and that warm late-afternoon in May.

But that afternoon, I learnt, something *had* happened. I learnt from Coleen, who started the meeting by providing an 'update', that the Council had recently contacted the campaign to announce that it was going to establish a planning obligation clause which would ensure that a 'replacement LGBT venue' would be included in the redevelopment. I learnt that this would be posited as a condition for planning approval

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[98] Fieldnotes, May 2017; Coleen during a campaign meeting at the London Action Resource Centre (LARC).

that had to be met in order for the redevelopment project to be deemed 'acceptable'. I also learnt that this was explicitly framed as a way to mitigate against the impact of the closure on the LGBT community and on London's 'diversity' more broadly. Finally, I learnt that the agreement would be negotiated with the property developers, and that whilst campaigners would be 'consulted', the Council could not assure their demands would be accommodated. A draft of the agreement would be sent to the campaigners in the coming weeks.

In this section, I argue that the agreement organized inclusion according to the notion of 'sufficient gayness', ultimately rendering gender/sexuality and The Joiners Arms into legitimate objects and targets of (diversity) management: things that could be measured, legislated, and maintained through the use of rainbow flags and marketing strategies (section 5.1.1) I also argue that the agreement appealed to 'happy' understandings of 'diversity' and worked to render the redevelopment project 'acceptable' and imbue it with a harmless appeal (section 5.1.2). This not only discursively reconciled the Council's commitment to 'equality' with the business logics driving redevelopment, but also de-depoliticized extant conversations (previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.4.3 and Chapter Three, section 3.2.2) about the deleterious effects of gentrification on the social fabric of London's 'diverse' gender/sexual communities and subcultures.

5.1.1   A 'sufficiently gay' replacement venue

A draft of the agreement detailed the criteria and process through which the 'LGBT venue' would be established, stating that "a lease granted to an Interested Party shall include a covenant requiring the Public House to be operated as a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender -focused venue for the duration of the Lease"[99]. The promise of inclusion was here organized around two key claims. The first was that which specifically defined the 'Interested Party' as an LGBT operator, that is, "any organization which proposes operating a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender -

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[99] Draft of the agreement.

focused venue"[100]. The way this was going to be achieved was by offering LGBT operators something called 'a Right of First Refusal', that is, a contractual right to claim the lease for the venue before any other (non-LGBT) third party sought to take up the unit. The second is that which defined 'an LGBT-focused venue' as "a venue which adopts the LGBT+ Venues Charter published by the Greater London Authority"[101]. The LGBT+ Venues Charter (London City Hall, 2016a)[102] is a 'toolkit' 'designed by the GLA in response to the decline in LGBT spaces in the capital.

The Charter was originally designed for property developers and pub operators who, after purchasing land or property which included an LGBT venue, would like to maintain the venue's use as 'LGBT-focused'. As confessed by an informant who was part of the consultation (and who wishes to remain anonymous), the Charter was "not intended for activists, it was meant for property developers"[103]. A number of organizations were 'consulted' in drafting the Charter, including Stonewall and The Raze Collective[104]. The Charter was part and parcel of the plans (discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.2.2) devised by Sadiq Khan and the GLA to curb the closure of LGBT venues in the capital. As Mayor Sadiq Khan explains, the Charter's intention is to "send a clear message that London is a global beacon of diversity" (London City Hall, 2016a). Since its establishment, a number of venues have signed up, including venues managed by two of London's biggest pub companies, Greene King and Stonegate. Signing up to the Charter is entirely voluntary.

Three key points worked to establish the terms upon which 'an LGBT venue' was to be defined. Firstly, the Charter stated that 'an LGBT venue' should have "a visible rainbow flag…displayed on the outside of the venue". Imagined as "a universal symbol of the LGBTQ+ community", the rainbow flag- or "alternatively a sign, sticker, or other physical signifier"- would stand to indicate the venue's 'LGBT character' and its 'orientation' towards LGBT people. Secondly, the Charter also stipulated that the venue should be explicitly "marketed as an LGBTQ+ venue"

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Herein after referred to simply as 'the Charter'.
[103] Fieldnotes, July 2017.
[104] Raze Collective is a charity that "supports, developers and nurtures queer performance in the UK" (http://www.razecollective.com/).

whereby LGBT-ness is "an integral part of the venue's business plan". Finally, the Charter explained that 'an LGBT venue' must "welcome anyone regardless of background or identity, religion, race/ethnicity, gender identity or expression, disability, age or sexual orientation" and that staff "should be LGBTQ+ friendly". In this regard, the venue would simply need to abide to existing anti-discrimination legislation to count as 'LGBT'.

The Charter embodied some of the key tenets of LGBT political rights discourse in Britain (and in the West more broadly). As others have noted, this is a political discourse which places great emphasis on 'rainbow visibility, understood as preparing "the ground for gay civil rights protection" (Hennessy, 1994, p31), on market recognition, and on liberal values of tolerance, acceptance and equality. The organization of inclusion around these three tenets is also reminiscent of that in the 'diversity world' of business. Indeed, there too, 'visibility' (via rainbow lanyards and/or showcasing role models) was posited as a key component in the quest for more 'inclusive' workplace cultures and market recognition petitioned as crucial to inclusion.

From a queer perspective, this understanding of 'inclusion' introduces gender/sexuality to other, perhaps more subtle, domains of power. Firstly, queer activists have argued that whilst visibility may function as a form of inclusion for some- primarily privileged, white, middle-class, cis- and/or passing members of the LGBT community- for others it may be a 'half-opened door' (David, 2015), riddled by (societally-induced) anxieties pertaining to one's gendered embodiment and the (paradoxical, perhaps) safety offered by *in*visibility[105]. Moreover, as Hennessy (1994) argues, visibility must also "be considered critically in relation to capital's insidious and relentless expansion" (p32), and specifically, to the making of signs of 'LGBT-

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[105] One night in October 2014 I went to The Joiners Arms and met a Haredi Jewish man wearing the traditional long black suit, a white shirt, and a Spodik- the hat worn by (married) Haredi Jewish men. He told me he mostly lived his life as a full-time Haredi except for those two or three nights a month in which he would come to The Joiners. I asked him whether anyone in his community knew that he liked to frequent this particular pub, a 'queer pub'. He said, "of course not… no one could know this pub is 'gay'. There's no rainbow flag outside". Whilst this interaction occurred years before the start of my doctoral journey, it exemplifies the limits of visibility in relation to a pub like The Joiners Arms, which catered to gender/sexual subjects who could not afford to frequent more markedly 'gay' and/or 'LGBTQ+' areas like Soho.

friendliness' (e.g. the rainbow flag) into a commodity for selling goods on the marketplace, as in customary of corporations, from Burger King to Absolut Vodka, during Pride month celebrations. Indeed, as previously discussed in the methodological Chapter (Three, section 3.2.2), the Charter was explicitly framed and promoted with the specific understanding that 'LGBT venues' are not simply good for 'the LGBT community', but are, perhaps above all, businesses that greatly "contribute to London's economy" (Amy Lamé quoted in Eloise, 2017). Organizing inclusion according to market-driven understandings of 'diversity' might thus exclude those who fail to embody marketable forms of difference.

Moreover, also reminiscent of mainstream understandings of 'diversity' in organizations, class is wholly omitted from the agreement and the Charter[106]. Indeed, despite the fact that, as previously discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.2.2, the venue the agreement was supposedly intended to protect was clearly a working-class pub situated in a working-class area of London, class is not mentioned as one of designated forms of difference against which the venue must not discriminate. As Yvette Taylor (2018) points out, this may be one of the limits of legislative changes, protection, recognition and ultimately, progressive narratives of LGBT inclusion. Indeed, to the extent that class is not a 'protected characteristic' in the same way that gender, sexuality, ethnicity and/or disability are, the Charter might perhaps be "unable to reconcile profound socio-economic injustice within a frame of recognition" (p1380).

The Friends of the Joiners Arms were not consulted throughout the process, leading one of the campaigners to ask: "… if [the agreement] was solely for the purpose of ensuring LGBT-ness and protecting The Joiners Arms…how did they not consult us?"[107] Moreover, given the nature of the pub the agreement was supposedly intended to protect- a working-class pub with an 'almost invisible' rainbow flag that was did not define its clientele along strictly identitarian lines, nor was understood by its patrons as 'LGBT' in any simply terms- it is unsurprising that the campaigners were taken aback by the terms and conditions of this promise. The irony is thus that, whilst

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[106] We might want to speculate on whether 'background' (mentioned in the Charter) might be a less politicized way of referring to class. Yet, it is clear that even within this category, class and its politics seem are de-emphasized.
[107] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Dev, during a campaign meeting at Coleen's house.

framed as an effort to 'save The Joiners Arms', I doubt whether the pub itself would have ever made the cut in such an administering of 'LGBT-ness'. Indeed, as Dev writes in an email sent to fellow campaigners, whilst the agreement promised to guarantee "an LGBT future…the Joiners Arms had not such guarantees despite having operated as such for nearly 20 years"[108].

Amidst the arguable arbitrariness of some of these designations, it was even rumoured that an inspector from City Hall would come in to check the venue was 'sufficiently gay'. The rumour was eventually reproached as a thoughtless remark made by a lower-level GLA employee over the phone, and quickly retracted. Yet, the moniker 'sufficient gayness' lingered in the field and was often used by the campaigners to mock the agreements' definition of 'an LGBT venue'. Indeed, through this promise, 'gayness', gender/sexuality and, ultimately, The Joiners Arms, were rendered into legitimate objects and targets of (diversity) management: things that could be measured, legislated, and maintained through the use of rainbow flags and marketing strategies. As Rumens (2015) observes with reference to Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index, which seeks to rank businesses' degree of 'LGBT-friendliness', whilst efforts at measuring inclusion are surely commendable with them come "a number of unanswered questions that relate to how the term 'gay-friendly' is being understood, measured and deployed as well as what it means to those it is intended to 'speak to'" (p185). 'Sufficient gayness' also echoes 'inclusive' business organization's understandings of 'diversity' as something that can and should be visible so long as it is contained (Giuffre et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2009). This ultimately results in its de-radicalization. Indeed, as explored in the next sections, bestowing the promise of inclusion in terms of 'sufficient gayness' not only rendered its 'queerness' unintelligible. But it also side-lined the obviously classed dimensions of the pub, which, as argued, provided a space and time for those queer subjects who "live[d] outside the logic of capital accumulation" (Halberstam, 2005, p10).

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[108] Fieldnotes, August 2017; email correspondence between Dev and the other campaigners.

5.1.2 'A development that has a place for everyone'

The agreement was widely celebrated by the Council, the property developers and the media as the first time in UK history that the 'LGBT-ness' of a space- or elsewhere, that "the sexuality of people using a space" (Abraham, 2017) – was used as a planning condition that had to be met in order for a redevelopment project to be granted approval, and framed as a creative way of ensuring planning and redevelopment can be made more 'inclusive'.

In fieldnotes taken after the establishment of the agreement, I note three ways in which 'diversity' was mobilized in the field to make the case for inclusion. Firstly, 'diversity' was constructed as something to be celebrated and as something that 'added value' to the redevelopment project and to the wider area. In a press release, Regal Homes claimed that the firm was "committed to keeping this space within our development…as an LGBT+ venue" (in Neate, 2017a) and that they were excited "to deliver a development that has 'a place for everyone'" (Ibid)[109]. Moreover, the developers openly included the 'replacement LGBT venue' in their marketing material, and often stated that they supported providing 'an LGBT bar' because this would 'add value' to the redevelopment[110]. This might be problematic for it seems that "as in most marketing strategies, money, not liberation, is the bottom line" (Hennessy, 2000, p34). Moreover, an interesting parallel can also be drawn between the redevelopment project and the fantasies of 'the good life' explored in the previous Chapter. Indeed, we could even argue that in promoting itself as 'LGBT-friendly' and 'inclusive' , the redevelopment project is, too, participating in the creation of fantasies of 'the good life', of a life 'regenerated' and 'renewed', a life which includes, of course, a 'dream home'. Here 'diversity' is thus being used to market the redevelopment as 'modern' and 'desirable'.

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[109] Here we might want to reflect on the 'everyone' implied by the property developers, and the 'everyone' denoted by Jen, a campaigner, when claiming that "David [the owner] never called it an LGBT pub, no one ever called it an LGBT pub… it was just a pub for everyone" (see footnote 33). Whilst in both cases the pub is imagined as a space 'for everyone', two very different understandings of 'community' and 'space' underpin these mobilizations: on the one hand, a space that 'tolerates' gender/sexual Others yet reifies class hierarchies and inequalities in the process thus delivering a space where interclass contact is virtually impossible, and on the other, a space which values and promotes interclass contact through 'queerness'.

[110] Fieldnotes, September 2017; redevelopment marketing brochure.

Likewise, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs, released a statement of support to the agreement saying that "Tower Hamlets Council is committed to celebrating our great diversity, which includes serving the needs of our LGBTQ+ community" (in Eloise, 2017). Reminiscent, once again, of business-friendly understandings of 'diversity' as an organizational asset and/or a property of an organization (e.g. '*our great diversity*'), here 'diversity' is de-linked from "histories of discrimination" (Ahonen et al., 2014, p272), "antagonism and struggle" (Ahmed & Swan, 2006, p96) and rendered into something to be celebrated. Mobilizing the language and the rhetoric of 'happy diversity' the agreement thus appealed to 'positive feelings' and worked to give the redevelopment project a harmless and "generous feel… [a] welcoming, inclusive and embracing" (Caws, 1994 cited in Swan, 2010, p93) appeal. Whilst this depiction surely 'feels good', it can also "function to 'conceal' inequalities from view" (Swan, 2010, p93), operating as a 'strategy of containment' (Ibid) in which the happiness of 'diversity' is used to (non-)performatively silence opposition (explored in more detail in section 5.3).

Secondly, 'diversity' in the field was also understood according to "fixed notions of identity" (Bendl et al., 2008). For example, the agreement was often discussed to in the media with reference to "the sexual orientation of a venue's customers" (Neate, 2017a). Diversity is here understood according to the 'modern idea' that people *have* a sexual orientation, which, as queer scholars have argued (Chapter Two, section 2.3), reproduces heteronormative inequality by making 'homosexuality' into a species (Ahmed, 2006b; Foucault, 1978). Moreover, 'diversity' also emerges, again and primarily, as an identity of a consumer group, and gender/sexuality defined according to market-driven understandings.

Thirdly, the agreement mobilized 'diversity' as something not simply compatible with, but that actually legitimated and justified the process of redevelopment. In an article published in the *Local Government Chronicle*, Gareth Gwynne, the planning officer, explains that whilst the Council has "policies to protect public houses [pubs]… planning does not normally concern itself with the character of a pub or who uses it". In this sense, as he continues, the agreement presented the Council with "an interesting link between conventional planning considerations and the Council's equalities duty" (Gwynne, 2017). The promise of inclusion is here posited as enacting a 'win-win'

situation in which both the interests of the property developers and those of 'the LGBT community' can be accommodated within a common framework. In so doing the agreement served to reconcile the Council's (legally enforced) 'equalities duty' with the process of gentrification by making the redevelopment project 'acceptable' and (thus) 'approvable' by including LGBT subjects within its folds. This brought "conflicting views and 'politics'…into a common frame" (Olesen, 2014, p295), thus de-politicizing extant conversations about the deleterious effects of gentrification on the social fabric of London's gender/sexual communities and subcultural life (discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.2.2).

Like the Charter, the agreement could surely be read as a commendable effort to ensure that LGBT venues are not simply closed as a result of gentrification, "a concrete step in assisting LGBT activists to influence public policy" (Grundy & Smith, 2007, p302). Yet, as explored in the next section, the production of this knowledge also helped to make some worlds (and not others) visible. Indeed, constructing 'diversity' in these terms proved to be problematic for the inclusion of forms of 'difference' that did not fit into these understandings (section 5.2.1). This raises serious questions about the potential of doing inclusion in the context of gentrification and in tandem with processes of capital accumulation, and whether 'equalities duty' can be indeed be meaningfully reconciled with business interests (section 5.2.2).

5. 2 The (homo)normativities governing subjective recognition: how 'sufficient gayness' normalized 'queerness'

In the weeks following the establishment of the agreement, the campaigners held a number of meetings. These were held in pubs, the campaigners' living rooms, or the anarchist social centre in Whitechapel. Over pints and crisps, the campaigners drew from pro-bono legal advice and from their own reading of planning legislation and the agreement to discuss the terms of inclusion and to draft a formal response to the Council. Indeed, the 'inclusive' redevelopment application would be discussed in September, and the campaigners had to decide whether to oppose the application- and risk losing any vestige of 'an LGBT venue' altogether as the area might not

redeveloped whilst the property developers would still be its legal owners- or support the application and thus accept the proposed terms of inclusion. What emerged from the meetings was that, despite the promise of inclusion, the campaigners were going to remain opposed to the redevelopment.

In this section, I draw from empirical data co-produced with the campaigners in the months following the establishment of the agreement to shed light on the various (homo)normativities governing the subjective recognition of gender/sexual in the field. I reflect on this by tracing the campaigners' points of opposition and desires for 'queerness', desires which were rendered unintelligible by the agreement's petitioning of inclusion in terms of 'sufficient gayness' (section 5.2.1). I then reflect on the spatio-temporal normative logics engendered by the gentrification and privatization of the area (section 5.2.2). I argue that the promise of inclusion embodied by the agreement was intended for and oriented around commercial and privatized uses of time and space, failing to extend its commitments to gender/sexual subjects who deviated from the middle-class spatio-temporal norms and the logics of 'safety' which underpin processes of gentrification.

5.2.1 'We don't want 'sufficient gayness'. We want wholehearted massive queerness'

Campaigners might remember the period spanning May 2017 to September 2017 as the most eventful since the campaign's establishment. Meetings were held more than once a week, at times on consecutive evenings depending on the insistence of the tasks at hand, and lasted various hours. A foreboding sense of imminent disaster interchanged with a hopeful optimism seeped the rooms in which we met as we ploughed our way through heaps of documentation, architectural floor plans and planning legislation. I attended most of the meetings in which the agreement was discussed, engaging both as a 'campaigner'- and thus performing my portion of labour- and a 'researcher', taking detailed fieldnotes of the proceedings. The notes often served as 'minutes' for the meetings, and helped campaigners write an 'objection letter' which contained the main points of opposition.

In my fieldnotes I noted that the campaigners' key points of opposition revolved around a number of issues pertaining to the agreement's (limited) understanding of 'an LGBT venue'. Firstly, the campaigners challenged the supposedly 'inclusive' nature of the redevelopment by questioning the kinds of 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects that would be included within its folds. During one of the first meetings organized in response to the agreement, held in the anarchist social centre in early August, Reg claims that "the terms are crap"[111] and challenged the agreement's definition of 'an LGBT venue' by saying that:

> "…the new venue runs the risk of just becoming a venue with LGBTQ+ programming…it runs the risk of becoming just another white gay pub… it doesn't serve the LGBTQI community… you could deny a community group like this for a fucking capitalist pig like Anthony Michaels"[112]

Although the argument which underpinned the agreement was that the redevelopment would now serve the interests of 'the LGBT community', Reg challenges this assumption by questioning the kinds of 'diverse' sexual subjects which would benefit from such a space ('just another white gay pub'). He does so by establishing a distinction between two ways of operating the space, as a 'community group like this', or as a 'fucking capitalist pig like Anthony Michaels' [a pseudonym], who runs a commercial LGBT nightclub in Soho, reading the agreement as privileging homonormative operators and commercially-oriented as opposed to community-oriented venues.

Moreover, campaigners also queried the process through which 'an LGBT operator' would be chosen. Indeed, the agreement posited the GLA as a 'secondary party' which would be welcome to "provide comments on the Selection Criteria of the Owner [Regal Homes], without any specification as to who within the GLA this applies to and what obligations they are under to consult with or consider the interests of the LGBTQI community"[113]. The agreement thus left ample room to disregard "specific and important feedback on their selection criteria or decisions as to who should be

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[111] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Reg during a campaign meeting at Coleen's House.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Objection letter written by The Friends of the Joiners Arms to the Council, August 2017 (unless otherwise stated, all quotes referenced in this section were taken from this letter).

granted the lease". In particular, there were fears that "the future usage of the venue will [not] serve all sections of the community to anywhere near the extent to which the Joiners Arms did". These fears were compounded by the fact that in the (legally required) Equalities Assessment which accompanies all planning applications, planning offers included "nothing specific about the trans community…[and] the lesbian community", who are both "woefully underserved" and "often marginalized" by many so- called 'LGBT venues' (also see: Campkin & Marshall, 2017).

Relatedly, there were also concerns that the agreement did not account for 'the open market rent' which the property developers would charge to use the space. Campaigners argued that this did "not take account of the nature of the venue and the community benefit it will bring", and ultimately, that "…under existing proposals it would be run as a prohibitively expensive daytime pub that would ultimately have to cater to non-LGBTQI markets to survive, thus undermining the impetus to serve the LGBTQI community". In both these cases, it seems that enshrining the property developers as the 'legal Owners' of the venue and offering a 'merely cultural' (Butler, 1997) form of recognition which failed to address pressing redistributive issues emerging from the process of gentrification and privatization, the agreement would, yes, deliver 'an LGBT venue', but that this would probably exclude the most vulnerable members of the LGBT community, and ultimately, the working-class and queer subjects which once populated The Joiners Arms. The agreement could thus be read as a form of homonormativity in that it re-inscribed and re-produced the (social, economic, political, racial, classed and gendered) privileges that some LGBT subjects enjoy at the expense of more marginalized members of the community.

In constructing their opposition, the campaigners indeed highlighted the incongruity between the kind of 'LGBT venue' promised by the agreement and the venue which it was supposedly intended to 'replace' and 'protect'. This incongruity was also manifest at an aesthetic level. As part of the agreement, the property developers produced a computer-generated image of what the future LGBT venue would look like after regeneration. The image depicted a clean and well-lit space with large floor to ceiling windows and an impressively noticeable rainbow flag hoisted above its entrance. I watched as the campaigners opened the image on their laptops during a

meeting, visibly cringing at its sight. "We don't want a fucking gastro-pub"[114], responded Coleen after seeing the image. "Rainbow flags… that's a secondary thing, that's not gonna make space", she continued. Indeed, I too noted in my fieldnotes the contrast between the image provided by the property developers and The Joiners Arms, whose "haggard rainbow flag" (Andersson, 2009, p65) and "almost invisible entrance" (Ibid), as discussed (Chapter Three, section 3.2.2), is precisely what distinguished the pub from "Shoreditch's more fashionable bar scene" (Ibid) and Soho's "cosmopolitan and classy" (Ibid) LGBT scene.

Finally, the campaigners' opposition challenged the very premising of inclusion on 'sufficient gayness'. "We don't want 'sufficient gayness'…we want wholehearted massive queerness"[115], Max tells me at one of the meetings, in his living room, the night before the Development Planning Committee Meeting in which the plans that would see The Joiners Arms demolished and replaced by a 'new' LGBT venue are due to be discussed. The Joiners Arms is the first item on the agenda. The second is the refurbishment of a local swimming pool. After a late-night strategizing and making protest banners in his living room, Max pulls out a pen and a cardboard sign and writes: 'Is the swimming pool sufficiently gay?' He wonders whether the Councillors will 'get it'.

Pitting 'queerness' against 'sufficient gayness', and, ironically, against a 'sufficiently gay swimming pool', Max criticizes both the very idea of 'sufficient gayness', that is, the notion that 'gayness' is something that can be established through the use of 'Charters', and the rendering of 'queerness' into something static and tangible. Here Max understands 'queerness' as something that cannot be legislated or measured in the way that 'sufficient gayness' can, something that cannot be brought under the purview of state promotion in the same way that 'an LGBT venue' can, something that cannot be rendered intelligible and thus include-able according to the terms around which inclusion in the redevelopment was organized. Indeed, as explored in the next section, what emerges from the fieldwork data is that the redevelopment rendered (un)intelligible those queer and working-class ways of being which challenge the spatio-temporal logics of capitalist normativity, raising serious questions about the

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[114] Fieldnotes August 2017, Coleen, during a campaign meeting at her house.
[115] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Max, during a campaign meeting at his house.

progressive potential of doing inclusion in tandem with processes of capital accumulation.

5.2.2 *'I don't want a pub till 4 in the morning'*

Reflecting on the ethnographic data, I note that one of the most serious points of opposition articulated by the campaigners was the agreement's failure to (re)provision a late-license for the replacement venue. Indeed, whilst The Joiners Arms had operated for 18 years as a late-license venue, the promised 'LGBT venue' had no such guarantees. As highlighted by Dev at one of the meetings in which the issue of the late-license was most vehemently discussed, the presence of a late-license "provided so much of the benefit to the community"[116]. Indeed, the campaigners argued that the pub had catered to a wide range of sexual subjects and workers- those involved in alternative economic temporal practices beyond a 9-5, "early to bed, early to rise" (Halberstam, 2005, 5) logic (such as bartenders and sex workers, for example)- precisely because it would stay open late. As Coleen explains to a reporter from *The Guardian* ahead of the Development Planning Committee meeting in which the application was due to be discussed, "with… a recommendation from the officers that [the venue] closes early 7 days a week, we cannot possible hope to have a space resembling or replacing the important role the Joiners Arms played in our community"[117]. The campaigners thus understood the late-license was thus an integral component of the pub's 'queerness', that is, it's ability to cater to those queer and working-class ways of being that deviate from middle-class spatio-temporal norms (Halberstam, 2005).

The (re)provisioning of a late-license was not only absent from the agreement, but there also seemed to be an active resistance towards its inclusion in any revised arrangement. The resistance seemed to stem from the increasingly gentrified character

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[116] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Dev, during a campaign meeting at his house.
[117] Press release from The Friends of the Joiners Arms, August 2017
(https://thejoinersliveson.wordpress.com/2017/08/07/press-release-lgbtqi-community-reject-landmark-planning-condition-in-defiance-of-property-developers/).

of the area itself, as the luxury flats that would now occupy the space above it would require a limitation on the sound levels and operating hours.

I attended a roundtable discussion, facilitated by the Council, with the property developers and the campaigners. The meeting was held in the Tower Hamlets Town Hall on a late Monday evening in September and would be an opportunity for the developers to respond to the campaigners' concerns. Indeed, much to the dismay of the developers, their application was deferred at the first Development Planning Committee by two Councillors who had not been convinced that 'the LGBT community's' concerns had been given adequate attention. The meeting began with an impassionate speech by Paul Eden, CEO of Regal Homes, explaining to the campaigners that they "are committed to diversity and to the LGBT community"[118]. Yet, during the meeting, it emerged that whilst the property developers' were willing to accommodate some of the campaigners' considerations- such as, for example, offering a year-free rent for the future venue and contribute £130,000 towards fit-out costs in order to encourage bids from community-oriented LGBT operators- the issue of the late-license was non-negotiable. As Eden continued during the meeting:

> "I don't want a pub till 4 in the morning… it's gonna disturb the residents. And if you think about it, over the past few years there's been nothing opposite there but a derelict car wash and derelict factories, and now you've got a built-up community, there'll be people living in flats, lights in the flats, you know, the whole thing's changing, so it is a slightly different feel to what you've been used to, in a better way from a security aspect"[119]

Here the 'built-up' community enabled by the redevelopment is petitioned as more desirable and 'secure' than the dereliction which had previously afflicted the area. Yet, paradoxically, it is this very 'built-up community' that is cited as a reason for failing to (re)provide a late-license. Particularly salient here seem to be the notions of 'safety'. Indeed, conflicting understandings of 'safety' were mobilized by the property developers and the campaigners. On the one hand, property developers deemed the

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[118] Fieldnotes, September 2017; roundtable discussion with the property developers at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.
[119] Ibid.

changing character of the area as providing more safety than the 'dereliction' and abandonment which previously characterized Hackney Road. On the other, what emerges from the data is that this 'dereliction', representative of the area's marginality vis-à-vis processes of capital accumulation, provided a safe(r) space for those queer subjects which were unable and/or unwilling to live according to middle-class spatio-temporal logics (Halberstam, 2005). Indeed, as others have demonstrated (Delany, 1999; Halberstam, 2005; Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014), it is not uncommon for neoliberal gentrification and privatization efforts that attempt to 'face-lift' areas to be framed in terms of 'public safety'. The paradox here is that 'the public' to which this definition of safety applies to is constructed in relation to a 'normal' way of inhabiting space and time. As Halberstam (2005) argues, this should be understood in relation to middle-class logics of spatio-temporality, working to privilege the 'new inhabitants' of the area at the expense of its original working-class and queer denizens. Here we see how the version of 'the good life' the redevelopment is 'selling' is dictated by class(ed) normative logics which work to the detriment of queers who are unable and/or unwilling to access it.

In a de-brief meeting after the roundtable discussion, held at the run-down Marquis of Landsdowne pub[120], Coleen, too, links the lack of the (re)provision of a late license to the changing character of the area by saying:

> "They don't like the late license [because] they want us to entertain people in the office. They want some swanky little bar"[121]

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[120] Coleen's local (and run-down) pub which too, like The Joiners Arms, offers spaces for 'interclass contact'. Indeed, the pub is independent, a fact which distinguishes it from the 'Brew Dog' opened across the street in 2016. Moreover, it serves no food except for crisps (it is not a 'gastro pub'), employs local working-class residents and/or migrants from Southern Europe, and has maintained relatively affordable prices. At the same time, it is also increasingly frequented by some of the middle-class gentrifiers living in the adjacent areas of Dalston and Stoke Newington. Its eclectic clientele is reflected in the range of music blasting from its jukebox: from classic rock (the Bruce Springsteen, David Bowie and Tina Turner type, Coleen's favorite), to metal (for the local metal heads, mostly White men in their 50s and 60s), to folk and pop (for the White yuppies and the students). Campaigners frequently met in this pub, citing its scruffy leather couches, cheap pints, unpretentious clientele and 'sticky floors' as motivations to keep returning. "It's not The Joiners of course", explained Coleen, "but it's fun, cheap and it can get a bit messy", she continued.
[121] Fieldnotes, September 2017; Coleen, during a campaign meeting at the pub The Marquis of Landsdowne pub.

Her comments are here reminiscent of Bell and Binnie's (2004) observations of the ways in which changing neoliberal regimes of urban governance produce LGBT spaces as "spectacles for straight observers" (p1816), where difference is included but only on the basis that it doesn't disrupt the 'normal' rhythms of work and play in the city (Stockton, 2011). Yet whilst Bell and Binnie understand 'straight' as synonymous with 'heterosexual', Coleen's 'straight observers' are the 'people in the office'. In so doing, she detaches 'straightness' from 'heterosexuality' and instead reads it as a specific(ally middle-class and homonormative) way of inhabiting a space and a time, in the office, that abides to and (re)produces the logics of capitalist (re)production. Thus, in contrast to work on urban planning and LGBT populations what emerges from the findings is that gentrification need not entail the 'de-gaying' of space (Doan & Higgins, 2011; Ruting, 2008). Rather, 'LGBT-ness' can be preserved through- and even reconciled with- the process of redevelopment. Yet, gentrification imposes severe limits on the kinds of 'diversity' that can be(come) included, casting doubt on whether the Council's 'equalities duty' can be indeed be meaningfully reconciled with business interests.

5. 3   A Trojan horse draped in a rainbow flag

What emerges from the fieldwork experience is thus that the promise of inclusion was not simply intended for commercial, privatized and homonormative uses of time and space but that these were part and parcel of the very process of redevelopment which the agreement rendered acceptable [read: approvable] to begin with. The promise of inclusion thus engendered a host of spatio-temporal normativities which excluded the very subjects it was supposedly intended to protect. In this section, I explore the kinds of futures and spaces (and ultimately, politics) the promise of inclusion thus 'opened-up' and for whom, drawing points of connection between the experience of fieldwork and extant critical understandings of inclusion and the broader field of queer OS.

Initially, and following the campaigners' own understandings, I argue that thinking of the promise of inclusion in this field as a 'Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag' is a fruitful way of thinking about the limits of inclusion, showing how inclusion partly

works by (non-)performatively silencing opposition, concealing power relations, and ultimately acting as a means through which the imperatives of business can be achieved (section 5.3.2). Drawing from Sara Ahmed's (2006a, 2006b) work on 'queer phenomenology', I then argue that inclusion can also be read as a 'straightening device' that 'straightened-up' the 'wonkiness' of gender/sexuality in pursuit of profit (section 5.3.1). This contributes to a critical(ly queer) (re)conceptualization of inclusion by shedding light on the specific ways in which 'diversity' becomes recognized and included in the context of neoliberalism, and showing the potentialities that can be unlocked by committing to a queer(er), 'wonkier' and 'anti-capitalist' model of inclusion.

5.3.1   *The promise of inclusion as 'a Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag'*

Trojan Horse (noun)[122]

1. (In Greek mythology) a hollow wooden status of a horse in which the Greeks are said to have concealed themselves in order to enter Troy.
2. A person or thing that joins and deceives a group or organization in order to attack it from the inside.
3. Someone or something in a system, organization, etc. that at first seems to be helpful, but then causes harm.

"It's a Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag"[123]. This is how campaigners ultimately settled to understand the promise of inclusion in the field. The moniker emerged after a long meeting, held in Coleen's living room. During this meeting campaigners reviewed independent advice received from the Campaign For Real Ale (CAMRA), a consumer organization which promotes pubs across the UK as "social centres and part of the UKs cultural heritage"[124]. What this revealed was that agreements similar to the one drafted to 'save' The Joiners Arms were often used by property developers to render redevelopment projects acceptable in planning terms, by securing approval

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[122] https://www.dictionary.com/browse/trojan-horse?s=t.
[123] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, outside the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.
[124] https://www.camra.org.uk/about/about-us/who-we-are/.

from the Council, but which often deliver unusable spaces: spaces which, as Reg put it, "could never be realistically used as pubs"[125]. For example, in one specific case cited by the organization, former operators were offered a 'replacement venue' only to find out this had no storage space, effectively rendering it 'unviable' as a pub. In this case, labelling the agreement a 'Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag' exposed that 'inclusion' and 'LGBT-friendliness' were, too, being used as a tactic by the developers to get their application approved, but which would deliver a space which did not, and could not, resemble the 'queerness' remembered, envisioned, and intentioned by the campaigners.

Conceptualizing the promise of inclusion as a 'Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag' offers useful entry point from which to reflect on the kinds of futures and spaces 'LGBT-friendliness' is 'opening-up' and for whom. In particular, this conceptualization is reminiscent of Sara Ahmed's (2004, 2012) observations on the non-performativity of diversity, or indeed, how diversity is often done in ways that "do not bring into effect that which they name" (Ahmed, 2012, p119). Ahmed's (2012) investigation indeed alerts us to some of the dangers of diversity (and inclusion) discourses, whereby commitments to these can be used to block action, to conceal 'exclusion' and to silence resistance.

The metaphor of 'The Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag' exposes the ways in which a commitment to 'LGBT-friendliness', embodied here by the spectre of the 'rainbow flag', whilst appearing as a 'benevolent', 'benign' and 'friendly' effort to 'protect' an LGBT venue from closure, may enshrine remarkably 'unfriendly' dynamics. Indeed, unfolding in tandem with processes of gentrification, it appears that the promise of inclusion ultimately resulted in the closure and demolition of a previously 'queer' space. Here a commitment to inclusion is not simply used to silence resistance (explored in Chapter Seven), but also to render gender/sexuality palatable, 'safe', to empty gender/sexuality and space of its 'queerness', and ultimately, to act as a way through which the imperatives of business can be accomplished. Thus, while Rhodes (2017) claims that 'the business case' for diversity and inclusion can become a 'Trojan Horse' by acting as "a means through which justice can be achieved" (p542;

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[125] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Reg, outside the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

also see: Jones & Stablein, 2006), the opposite seems to hold true in this case: that social justice was used as a means through which business interests were be realized.

Dhawan, Castro Varela & Hochschule (2016) are thus partly right in pointing out that doing diversity "within the historical and economic landscape of neoliberal pluralism and global capitalism…consumes difference as an alibi so that it does not make a difference" (p6). At the same time, we might extend this by speculating on the *difference* that this 'Trojan Horse' might have made: whether the application would have nevertheless been approved without it (no difference), or whether, as previously explored, its emergence was precisely how the Council succeeded in 'reconciling' its (legally required) commitments to 'diversity and equality' with the redevelopment, and the redevelopers in making a previously 'unacceptable' application approvable. The experience of fieldwork seems to suggest that the latter is the case, and that doing inclusion in tandem with processes of capital accumulation may not simply fall short of its stated goals and outcomes but may actually exacerbate exclusion by participating in the closure of 'queer spaces' and the erasure (or 'straightening', as explored in the next section) of the queer forms of life which these enabled.

This alerts us to some of the limits of inclusion. In particular, the experience of fieldwork revealed that whilst inclusion may surely be "compelling" (Tyler, 2018, p49), it may also involve a merely "instrumental recognition of difference on organizational terms" (Ibid, p55). I would argue that this is particularly evident if inclusion is situated in relation to neoliberal processes of capital accumulation and the 'unfriendly' dynamics engendered by privatization [not "*our* space" [126]] and gentrification. Thus, whilst some critical scholars of inclusion are devoting attention to 'making inclusion work' (Katila et al., 2010) and/or expanding the 'inclusionary potential' (Dobusch, 2017) of diversity, I argue in the next section that a more compelling approach to inclusion might rather entail a making inclusion strange and 'wonky', and ultimately, reconciling a critique of inclusion with anti-capitalist projects.

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[126] Fieldnotes, September 2017; Coleen, at the roundtable discussion with the property developers at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

5.3.2 'There's nowhere wonky left to go': inclusion as a 'straightening device'

I am sitting in The Glory, a gay pub in Hackney, with Max, waiting for a reporter from the BBC to interview him for a segment on the agreement. Max recognizes one of the bartenders as a former patron and bartender of the Joiners. He leans over to talk to her, she recognizes him and they start talking, reminiscing, about the pub. "What did you like about the Joiners?"[127] asks Max. "I don't know", she responds. "It was wonky... and there's nowhere wonky left to go".

Thinking about 'wonkiness'- and its relationship to 'straightness'- offers another useful framework from which to offer some concluding remarks on the key findings emerging from the empirical material. In particular, I argue that thinking about promises of LGBT inclusion as 'straightening devices' (Ahmed, 2006a, 2006b) enables us to think about the specific ways in which gender/sexuality becomes implicated in neoliberal processes of capital accumulation and expand the critical potential of queer theory by thinking about the costs of making gender/sexual diversity knowable, manageable and include-able according to the normative regimes explored in previous sections.

In her 'queer phenomenology', Sara Ahmed (2006a, 2006b) thinks of 'queerness' as a form of 'wonkiness' that is rendered unintelligible by the 'straightness' of normativity. Normativity is herein conceptualized in terms of the 'straight line', or rather, in "terms of the requirement to follow a straight line, whereby straightness gets attached to other values including decent, conventional, direct and honest" (2006b, p70). Thinking of 'straightness' in these terms detaches gender/sexuality from identity. Indeed, 'straightness' here is not synonymous with 'heterosexuality', but rather an effect of things lining up with the straight line. 'Wonkiness', on the other hand, is seen as an effect of things coming 'out of line' with the 'straight line': one is 'wonky' when one is "oblique" (Ahmed, 2006a, p565) and/or 'off-line' (Ibid).

Thinking of 'queerness' as a form of 'wonkiness' thus enables us to theorize the specific ways in which inclusion takes place by reading queer desire in such a way

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[127] Fieldnotes, August 2017 (unless otherwise stated, all fieldnotes cited in this section (5.3.2) refer to this exchange).

that "bring[s] such desire back into line" (Ahmed, 2006b, p72). Indeed, crucial to this understanding is that the 'straight line' is not merely given. Alignment in fact depends on what Ahmed calls 'straightening devices', which keep things in line by re-reading the slant of queer desire, by lining up and by correcting, queer or wonky moments. In Ahmed's words (2006b) straightening devices are forms of reading that:

"…follow the straight line or even 'can only see straight', given how they conflate this line with what is right, good, or normal. The straight reading, in other words, 'corrects' the slantwise direction of queer desire" (Ibid).

In a remarkably powerful ethnographic moment, the interaction documented between Max and the bartender exposes the costs of doing inclusion according to 'straight' norms. Indeed, the bartender remembers The Joiners Arms as 'wonky': a space that did and does not fit into the (rather straight) acronym 'LGBT', an unpredictable, oblique space of infinite possibilities beyond the neat confines of identity politics.

We could thus read the promise of inclusion as a 'straightening device' inasmuch as it worked to 'correct' the wonkiness/queerness of The Joiners Arms. Here previously 'queer' ways of extending and inhabiting space and time are not only made intelligible and manageable from within the logic of (diversity) management, given a form and a name as a 'sufficiently gay LGBT venue'. But also, these were brought 'back into line' with the normative logics of gentrification and capital accumulation. The 'wonkiness' of The Joiners Arms encapsulated in the ethnographic vignette above is thus straightened-up to fit a celebratory and market-driven narrative of diversity and LGBT-ness. As Ahmed (2006b) would argue, "[t]o read queer desire in these terms is to bring what is 'slantwise' back into line" (p79). Ultimately, it is only by becoming 'straight' and thus foregoing its 'wonkiness' that The Joiners Arms can be(come) included in the redevelopment. Such a reading exposes how inclusion is thus not simply 'exclusionary' by omission. Rather, it is *through* inclusion that the queer potential of 'wonkiness' is disciplined and 'straightened-up' in pursuit of profit.

Posited in these terms, the goal of critical inclusion scholars should be that troubling inclusion not by fighting for the recognition of a wider range of 'diverse' LGBT identities, but by becoming committed to a twisted or wonky path of unexpected possibilities and potentialities. As Judith Butler (1993) explains in her essay 'Critically

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Queer', if 'queer' is to become "a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is…never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes" (p19-20). We can extend these theoretical ruminations to the term 'inclusion' and argue in favour of a 'critically queer' conceptualization of inclusion that would involve "collective transforming (in ways that cannot necessarily be predicted in advance) the substantive uses" (Davis, 2013, p403) of inclusion and insist that "such a system is never as good as it gets" whereby the task becomes to imagine "bodies and desires otherwise" (Ibid) (further discussed in Chapter Eight, section 8.3).

Future critical(ly queer) inclusion research might thus benefit from investigating how we can oppose the 'straightening logics' of inclusion and challenge the insidious ways in which neoliberalism exploits our need for recognition (Tyler, 2019). Ultimately, what the forms of queer theory and activism considered here emphasize is, firstly, the need to trouble the terms of inclusion and reconcile our critical endeavours with a critique of political economy in order to explore the manifold ways in which "capital produces [normative gender/sexual] subjects accommodated to its own needs" (Wesling, 2012, p107). Secondly, to consider "at what expense and for what purposes the terms are used, and through what relations of power such categories have been wrought" (Butler, 1993, p20). And lastly, to commit to a queer(er) or 'wonkier' model of inclusion which 'works the weakness in the norm' (Davis, 2013, p401) to trouble the 'straightness' and predictability with which narratives of inclusion demand we give a ('sufficiently gay') name and a label to our (wonky) desires and spaces. The question and possibilities for resistance will be further discussed in Chapter Eight.

5. 4   Discussion: queer*ing* the promise of inclusion in the social world or 'queer activism'

Whilst the increasing recognition of the value of 'LGBT diversity' might suggests that urban planning might be becoming an 'LGBT-friendly' project, the findings reveal that a breakdown in heterosexual norms may not necessarily entail more 'inclusive'

experiences of urban space. Indeed, it seems that LGBT inclusion in the field operated as a 'technology of power' which rendered 'diversity' governable and manageable and was organized according to neoliberal norms of intelligibility which privilege gender/sexual subjects that embody middle-class, white values (Duggan, 2003). This failed to include the 'wholeheartedly queer' ways of being which thrived in the pub the agreement was supposedly intended to protect, rendering unintelligible the campaigners' lived experiences of sexuality in their "intersectional complexity" (Prasad, 2012, p585).

The findings both complement and extend extant discussions on the exclusionary pressures which accompany inclusion. On the one hand, they complement these by showing that inclusion is indeed often 'peripheral' (Rennstam & Sullivan, 2018) and/or entails the silencing and suppression of forms of difference that cannot be included according to the norms governing recognition (Steidl & Brookshire, 2018). On the other hand, the study also extends these by showing how, from a poststructuralist perspective, these 'LGBT-friendly norms' are (re)produced as an outcome of the very processes by which 'diversity' is rendered intelligible and managed. The study thus partly confirms Berrey's (2014) and Zanoni's (2011) findings that diversity management initiatives rely on and reinforce class hierarchies, yet extends these to the discourse of inclusion which is often petitioned and imagined as embodying less "instrumental and individualizing tendencies… [than] its US-originating predecessor, diversity" (Tyler, 2019, p49). The ethnographic data discussed in the Chapter thus adds an important dimension to extant critical discussions of inclusion in the field by i) emphasising how these must acknowledge the ways in which class inflects and organizes the ways in which inclusion is experienced, on the ground, by those 'diverse' sexual subjects to whom it is intended to speak to, and ii) reflecting on the ways in which class politics are (re)produced in the specific ways in which 'diversity' is managed, classified, governed in order to be(come) included.

Of course, we could argue that even an 'assimilatory' form of inclusion may offer opportunities for (some) LGBT subjects to be(come) included, to be(come) visible, to live 'ordinary' lives. As Gavin Brown (2012) has argued in his trenchant critique of the concept of 'homonormativity', queer scholars must be careful not to underestimate

the importance of being '(homo)normal', and the seductive allure of these market-mediated and consumer-driven narratives. Moreover, it is fair to say that not everyone enjoyed or remembered The Joiners Arms as fondly as the campaigner's did. For some, 'a working-class pub experience' may be far from desirable, synonymous with whiteness, excessive drinking, and/or threatening forms of masculinity (Ward, 2008)[128]. But the data shows that inclusion in the context of redevelopment was done not simply by including some (homonormative) subjects over others. Rather, inclusion was done by literally emptying gender/sexuality and space of its 'undesirable' or 'queer unwanted' class dimensions (Binnie, 2004).

Here we see the importance of considering the politics of LGBT inclusion in relation to a critique of political economy and in the context of gentrification, as a neoliberal process of urban redevelopment which brings previous derelict areas into an "entrepreneurial, neo-liberal frame" (Bell & Binnie, 2004, p1815). In particular, we might want to reflect on normative regimes of intelligibility engendered by gentrification. On the one hand, gentrification was one of the conditions of possibility for the emergence of The Joiners Arms as a target for the promise of inclusion. As Bell and Binnie (2004) note, queer spaces have "historically grown 'organically'…located in parts of the city that were seen as beyond the control and active policy-making reach of the state…[and/or] policed and subject to planning controls… in a negative sense" (Ibid). Through gentrification, these spaces are rendered 'intelligible' and brought into the frame of capital accumulation, becoming targets of active and positive state promotion.

In being made 'intelligible' these spaces can be 'protected' from the exclusionary dynamics of gentrification. Yet, the data reveals that gentrification imposes severe limits on the kind of 'diversity' that can be(come) included and intelligible. Indeed, as the example of the late-license demonstrates, 'queerness' is rendered unintelligible in terms of the normative regimes imposed by the redevelopment, as an extension of gentrification and thus of the logics of neoliberal capital. This emptied the area of

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[128] As Andersson (2009) points out, the area on Hackney Rd in which The Joiners Arms was located was the site of one of the most serious assaults experienced by Jon Binnie and described in his doctoral thesis (59). Thus, whilst for some, living amid the 'ruins of the urban landscape' (Ibid, p63) may be a necessity- perhaps even a desirable one- for others it may be a remarkably dangerous feat.

queer ways of being which, as others have shown, are deemed too 'unsafe' and 'disruptive' to be reconciled with the resurgent forms of 'LGBT-friendly' middle-class consumption engendered by gentrification (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002; Ward, 2008a). Thus, whilst Doan and Higgins (2011) suggest that one way of countering the 'demise of queer space' might be for planners to more readily include and "recognize the existence of [the LGBT community]" (p21), the findings suggest that this might not be enough to counter the reproduction of inequalities and exclusions in the context of neoliberalism. Indeed, the promise of inclusion is here not simply 'exclusionary', it does not simply promote some lifestyles over others. Rather, it entails the active disciplining of gender/sexuality and space in "an attempt to engineer specific urban outcomes" (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2014; p3-4).

A number of interesting insights emerge if we reflect on these key findings in relation to arguments and issues explored in the previous Chapter (Four). In particular, I would argue that there is are striking similarities between the promise(s) of inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism'. Firstly, in both social worlds corporations were petitioned as benevolent and 'friendly' forces. Here 'inclusion' is understood in 'merely cultural' (Butler, 1997) terms, that is, as something that can be addressed through recognition of 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects within a system of capital accumulation. In the 'diversity world' of business, this argument was explicitly made with reference to the aspirational and successful career journeys of 'LGBT role models', heralded as examples of 'inclusion', or rather, as examples of what a 'good life' could look like if only one were to rid themselves from the shackles of 'the closet' and be(come) 'authentic'. In the social world of 'queer activism', the argument was (more implicitly) made by organizing commitments to 'LGBT venues' and LGBT inclusion more broadly in terms of "ensur[ing] all Londoners, regardless of ethnicity, race, sexuality, disability or gender are able to fulfil their potential in the capital and that the city is a welcoming, open place for everyone" (London City Hall, 2017d). And, more explicitly, in positing the 'redevelopment' as a welcoming and 'friendly' place 'for everyone'. In both these understandings, corporations emerge as 'allies' in the fight for more socially just and progressive gender/sexual scenarios and 'cultures'. Yet, inclusion in these terms entails the privatization of the sites of LGBT politics and the "sweeping away of many

distinctions between private and public" (Harvey, 2000, p90) by reconciling the (private) interests of business and (public) notions of 'equality', with severe consequences for forms of difference that cannot be reconciled with processes of capital accumulation and emergent 'LGBT-friendly normativities' geared around the notions of safety, productivity, success and 'extra-ordinariness'.

Secondly, conducting ethnography in both social worlds also revealed that, rather than simply erasing 'LGBT-ness', trenchant forms of homonormativity operate by accentuating gender/sexual diversity in remarkably neoliberal ways. In the 'diversity world' of business, as explored, it seemed that the deployment of 'diverse' and 'authentic' displays of gender/sexual as forms of human capital was not necessarily accompanied by a desire to be(come) "indistinguishable from heterosexuals" (Williams & Giuffre, 2011, p553) but rather by the deployment of a 'diverse' gender/sexuality in pursuit of 'extra-ordinariness'. In the social world of 'queer activism', whilst the 'queerness' desired by the campaigners was ultimately expunged, this was done not so much through 'de-gaying' (Doan & Higgins, 2011) the space but rather by 'straightening up' the radical potential of 'wonkiness' in pursuit of profit. Thus, in both fieldsites it appears that neoliberal processes of capital accumulation and attendant "neoliberal regime[s] of gay normality" (Drucker, 2015, p58) operate by harnessing the transgressive potential of gender/sexuality as a means of facilitating and achieving business outcomes.

Lastly, both in the social world of 'queer activism' and the 'diversity world' of business, inclusion is understood as something that can measured and legislated through the use of various 'technologies of power' in the form of statistics, 'rainbow lists', documents, charters, 'commitments' and 'consultations'. This works to render 'gender/sexuality' into a target of diversity management, representing an 'assimilatory inclusion of ready-made identities' (Tyler, 2018, p34) which essentially determines what bodies are included- and include-able- and what bodies can become "increasingly disposable, dispossessed by capital and its exploitative excess, uncountable and unaccounted for" (p29). In bestowing these promises according to 'ready-made identities', inclusion thus (pre-)determined the forms queer lives "must take in order to count as lives worth living" (Ahmed, 2006b, p84).

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The experience of fieldwork in the social world of 'queer activism' thus reveals that contradictory dynamics shape the organization of inclusion in London. On the one hand, in the 'diversity world' of business, the discourse of LGBT-friendliness can be read as 'opening up' spaces for LGBT* subjects to 'come out', be(come) 'extra-ordinary' and 'successful'. On the other hand, in the social world of 'queer activism', this was experienced as a phenomenon characterized by a number of (discursive *and* physical) 'closures', as a 'Trojan Horse draped in a rainbow flag' which ultimately contributed to the 'straightening' of a previously queer and wonky space. These contradictions raise serious questions about the possibilities of 'making inclusion work' (Katila et al., 2010) within a capitalist framework. Indeed, the findings suggest that the recognition of 'diverse' gender/sexual identities without redistribution might "essentially be the ruse through which neoliberal capitalism pretends to become more inclusive" (Rao, 2015, p44). The data thus ultimately shows that commitments to LGBT inclusion cannot simply be about recognizing and incorporating 'diverse' gender/sexual identities but need to consider- and problematize- the intricate imbrication of gender/sexuality "in the institutions of capitalist modernity" (Duggan, 2003, 83). In the next two Chapters (Six and Seven), I trace the specific ways in which gender/sexuality becomes implicated in processes of capital accumulation by shedding light on the labour that 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects have to perform in order to inhabit these (increasingly privatized) spaces and promises, and the value and costs which accrues from its performance.

PART III

QUEER*ING* THE VALUE & THE LABOUR OF INCLUSION

Day Jobs, Gay Jobs & the (Failed) (Re)Production of Queer Value in the 'Diversity World' of Business

"A day job is obviously what you get paid to do…The gay one is everything that I do on top of that" [129]

"…there's a kind of dissonance between that congratulatory email, and at the same time being resistant to giving me a job on the basis of 'you're a bit of a radical'"[130]

"…in order to 'do' the transgender approach, they say 'oh we need a name for people to call you…you need to decide what pronouns you want to use' and everything like that, which I understand but it's not something I was initially interested in…"[131]

In Chapter Four and Five I reflected on the ways in which promises of inclusion (re)produce and (re)configure various (homo)normativities, and on the kinds of spaces opened-up by these (seemingly) progressive and 'friendly' commitments to 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects. I showed that promises of inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business worked to 'open-up' a number of (privatized) spaces for gender/sexual subjects to 'come out of the closet' and be 'successful' and 'extra-ordinary'. On the other hand, in the social world of 'queer activism', a promise of inclusion was experienced as a "Trojan horse draped in a rainbow flag" [132], a phenomenon characterized by a number of 'closures' and which participants read as being mobilized to (non-)performatively silence and side-line their demands and concerns (Ahmed, 2012a). Ultimately, I argue that commitments to inclusion cannot simply be

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[129] Interview with Eli, March 2018.
[130] Interview with Anita, March 2018.
[131] Interview with Andrea, March 2017.
[132] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, outside the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

about recognizing and incorporating 'diverse' gender/sexual identities but needs to consider and problematize the intricate imbrication of gender/sexuality "in the institutions of capitalist modernity" (Duggan, 2003, p83).

In this chapter I return to the 'diversity world' of business to trace the specific ways in which gender/sexuality becomes implicated in processes of capital accumulation. I do so by shedding light on the labour that 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects have to perform in order to inhabit these (increasingly privatized) spaces and the value and costs which accrues from its performance. Drawing primarily from data co-produced through eight in-depth interviews with participants in the field, all of which are employees in so-called 'LGBT-friendly organizations', I explore the specific laboured performances of gender/sexuality engendered by the discourses and practices of inclusion and how these serve particular value-producing functions (David, 2015). I explore the production and extraction of 'queer value' (Wesling, 2012): initially where it succeeds' (section 6.1) and subsequently where it 'fails' (section 6.2). In the conclusion, I trace the contribution(s) and implication(s) of this ethnographic engagement for the broader critical field of inclusion and queer OS (section 6.3).

6.1   Laboured performances of gender/sexuality and the (re)production of 'queer value'

In 2018 I attend an event organized by Amazon's global LGBT+ Staff Network, Glamazon, to celebrate Trans Visibility Day. Held in the new HQ of Amazon UK in Shoreditch, the event is organized around a panel of trans and non-binary 'leaders', 'role models' and 'expert on trans inclusion'. The panel discussion itself followed a familiar script (discussed in Chapter Four). However, comments made by one particular participant, a White trans man, unlocked an ethnographically remarkable insight pertaining to the contemporary implication of 'diverse' genders/sexualities in relation to work and processes of capital accumulation:

> "Lots of businesses are talking about change and innovation,
> and trans people are the most obvious experts on change and
> transformation, of course, so if companies want to have

change-oriented behaviour they would just look at trans talent"[133]

Here it seems indeed that promises of inclusion are inhabited by 're-packaging' those forms of self-knowledge and 'expertise' which accrue from being a 'diverse' gender/sexual subject as organizationally valuable (queer) resources (Benozzo et al., 2015; David, 2015; Hofmann & Moreno, 2016; Hunter, 2017; Irving, 2007; Richardson, 2005; Rumens, 2018; Wasser, 2016). It is through the re-deployment of these as 'talents'- which, in the case above, emerge from trans experiences of 'change and transformation' – that 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects can be(come) included in neoliberal processes of capital accumulation as "viable neoliberal subjects…proven to be flexible and fluid, self-sufficient, and major contributors to their… workplaces, communities, and societies" (Irving, 2008, p54).

This process of incorporation suggests, firstly (and as previously argued in Chapter Four, section 4.2) that queer organizational scholars should be wary about positing expressions of non-normative gender/sexuality as an *inherently* emancipative phenomena and/or transgressive force (Hunter, 2017). Secondly, it also suggests that critical scholars of inclusion should consider the specific ways in which gender/sexuality is currently becoming incorporated into process of capital accumulation. Indeed, whilst this process of incorporation is often understood as a remarkably 'smooth' phenomena (e.g. Irving, 2007, 2008; Richardson, 2005) in which the demands of capital seamlessly assimilate those LGBT* subjects who are able and willing to embody desirable performances of 'diversity', work in this area tends to not pay enough attention to the actual lived experiences and the labour performed by these subjects themselves in order to be(come) included (for an exception, see: David, 2015; Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016; Wasser, 2016).

In this first section of this Chapter, I draw from material co-produced during four interview encounters (with Kostas, David, Eli and Kaneila) to redress this limitation, focusing on the 'laboured performances of gender/sexuality' (Wesling, 2012) required in order to be(come) included and the forms of (queer) value, and the costs, which accrue from their (successful) performance. I argue that becoming 'included' depends

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[133] Fieldnotes, March 2018; Glamazon event for Trans Visibility Day Event.

on performing gender/sexuality in the 'right way' and putting one's 'diversity' to use in the (re)production of 'queer value' (section 6.1.1). I also argue that the performance of these laboured performances of gender/sexuality rests on these subject's ability to (self-)manage multiple competing demands and expectations with problematic implications not only for those who are not willing and/or able to perform this kind of labour (discussed in more detail in section 6.2), but also for those who are (section 6.1.2 and 6.1.3). Ultimately, focusing on the laboured performances of gender/sexuality engendered by, and required, in order to be(come) included enables us to not only move away from managerial understandings of 'LGBT-friendliness' as something which delivers an automatic 'path' towards inclusion, but also sheds light on the often unacknowledged, painstaking and relentless labour performed by those who appear, and desire, to be(come) included.

6.1.1   Kostas, the 'right kinda gay guy'

I meet Kostas, a White gay man who is Head of Sales and co-Chair of the workplace LGBT staff network, in the HQ of the bank for which he works. Kostas is listed in OUTstanding's top 50 LGBT+ Future Leaders list (2017 and 2018)[134], and I was introduced to him through another participant (David), who describes him as his 'mentor' and 'role model'. As we make our way up from the lobby and into the office floor, he bumps into a colleague and introduces me as "an LGBT researcher who is interested in my story"[135]. "I told you I was quite the gay celebrity around here"[136], he explains to his colleague, jokingly, before leading me into the small glass room located in the centre of the floor which he has booked for the interview.

We begin the interview and immediately I am impressed by his professional accomplishments. At only 28, he manages around 50 employees and has made it to the senior leadership team. "The youngest one after me is 42"[137], he explains, proudly.

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[134] A list compiled with the purpose of "recogniz[ing] the leaders of tomorrow who are…breaking down barriers and driving diversity" (https://www.out-standing.org/nominations/)
[135] Fieldnotes, April 2018.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (6.1.1) are drawn from my interview encounter with Kostas, which took place in April 2018.

Intrigued by his 'success story', I ask him why and how he thinks he has made it this far up in the organization. His response revealed a remarkable level of self-conscious, strategic and 'highly invested' (Wesling, 2012) labour performed to *use* his 'gayness' and to stylize, re-package and promote himself as 'the right kinda gay guy':

> "My dad always had one advice to me when I came out: use what you've got. And when I joined [the bank], it was all about 'use what you've got'. And if I think about it, that's when I started getting really involved in LGBT, cause I'm a white guy, that doesn't make me a minority. And I'm a man in a corporate environment, that's an asset but still, nothing special. So there's nothing making me stand out. You can be high performer, but the reality is, you're gonna be a really good performer one year, [but] you're not gonna have every single year being the top … for me this was a painful realization, because I started at [the bank] and my first 3 years were amazing and then we just had a really bad year and I was like 'oh, I'm not used to this', so what I had was that I was the white, immigrant, gay guy in a pretty inclusive firm. So I was that guy. And I started working on that. I started toning it down in some places, I started learning how to speak, slower, controlling my emotions, just being the right kinda gay guy you know? Being gay can be a good thing, but only if you know how to use it, because that is how the game is played. But obviously it needs to look natural"

Meg Wesling's (2012) reflections on the notion of 'queer value' (introduced and discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.4.1) offer a useful entry point from which to understand the significance of Kostas' detailed and self-reflective account of the labour required in order to 'play the game' in a 'pretty inclusive firm' Drawing from Gayatri Spivak's (1985) work, Wesling (2012) re-conceptualizes the performance of gender/sexuality as a form of labour which accrues "both material and affective value" (p108), thus suturing "together two domains too often understood to operate autonomously: the psychic realm of desire and the material realm of accumulation and exchange" (Ibid, 107). From this perspective, Kostas' gender/sexuality emerges not so much as 'authentic' attribute of the self but as a product of labour, a labour that is "highly invested" (Ibid, p108), self-conscious, strategic and intentional but also "affectively necessary" (Ibid), to compensate for the 'really bad year'. This is a labour

which thus (re)produces, at once, not only "a corporeal and desiring subject" (Wasser, 2016, p58)- the 'right kinda gay guy'- but also 'queer value'.

The 'queer value' that Kostas' performance of gender/sexuality (re)produces takes many forms. On the one hand, it (re)produces affective value for Kostas himself as he struggles to come to terms with the 'painful realization' that 'you're not gonna have every single year being at the top'. On the other hand, as he explains, 'if you know how to use it', and especially, as Wesling (2012) too explains, if it 'looks natural', this form of labour also (re)produces material value. Indeed, as he explains after being asked whether performing 'the right kinda gay guy' has contributed to his professional success:

> *"Has it actually helped me open doors that I didn't think I'd be able to access before? Absolutely. A prime example, is… so our group CEO has been around for three and a half years. During these three and a half years, I've met him 5 times. 2 times with another 3 or 4 people. The other 3 on a one-to-one basis…purely on a basis of talking about diversity and inclusion…I also met the CO for the corporate investment bank, and that was the funny thing, my boss was the global head of the business, but he met him about 6 months after I met him. He had to wait for his turn. But I met him two months in. There was a video that we made for 2017, we were showcasing our achievements [with the LGBT staff network], and we engaged the very top of the house, and there's two pictures: me with the group CEO, and me with the CO of the corporate investment bank! Can you understand what that does, for me personally? That's why I really milk it"*

The laboured performances of gender/sexuality engaged-in by Kostas clearly accrue value for him as an individual by 'opening doors'. At the same time, they also (re)produce (queer) value for the organization. Firstly, we could argue that Kostas' involvement with the LGBT staff network and talking to the CEO about 'diversity and inclusion' constitutes a form of (unpaid) labour which is ultimately valuable for the ('LGBT-friendly') organization, especially given the multiple ways in which these networks are currently being (re)organized and (re)written to fit into managerial models and business case agendas (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.1.4 and

Chapter Four). Secondly, as Kostas' interview continued, he also explains that he laboriously deploys his 'diverse' gender/sexuality on the senior leadership team as a form of 'normalization' and to keep his employees 'entertained':

> "On the senior leadership team, I tend to overdo it in terms of the 'gayness'. And the camp-ness. And on the floor, I overdo it…so I actually overdo the camp-ness. You know, not many people will be as extravagant as me, and I think if you are here [raises his hand], and it's over the top sometimes, people who are never gonna be there [gestures with hand], they're here [lowers hand], they'll be comfortable being themselves. More importantly, if people on the floor see that this is benchmark of what gay means, and somebody else has something more normal, they'll actually say 'oh, that's cool'. They see that the other person is normal. And also of course sometimes it entertains them. It can get pretty boring around here"

Here Kostas performs an excessive [read: 'camp'] version of 'gayness'- on the senior leadership team and 'on the floor'- to elevate the 'benchmark of what gay means' and thus enable other- 'more normal' (read: less camp)- employees to 'be comfortable being themselves'. In some ways this is reminiscent of Williams et al.'s (2009) discussion of the ways in which LGB employees in gay-friendly contexts are faced with a choice: "being so-called normal…or being visible" (p42). Yet whilst Williams et al.'s (2009) participants' choice seems to be 'forced', Kostas' laboured performances are more 'intentional', self-reflexive and strategic. Indeed, he is highly aware that this adds 'queer value' both for other LGBT* employees but also for the organization itself by performing a task that is central to discussions and constructions of 'LGBT-friendly organizations' as places in which LGBT employees feel comfortable being themselves (see Chapter Two, section 2.1.4).

But also, reminiscent of Emmanuel David's (2015) discussion of 'purple-collar', Kostas' laboured performance of 'stereotypical expectations' (Ibid, p183) akin to those necessitated in other, less 'professionalized', forms of gender/sexual labour - such as drag, for example –produces queer value for the organization by cutting through the boredom of banking life, buttressing his managerial role with 'campness' and helping to keep his team 'entertained' and thus (perhaps) even motivated.

Ultimately then, it is by engaging in various laboured performances of gender/sexuality that Kostas 'puts to use' his 'diversity' in the (re)production of 'queer value' and in order to be(come) included in 'the LGBT-friendly organization'.

Yet, arguably Kostas' 'campness' is at least partly enabled by his Whiteness and his class privilege, all of which somewhat 'immunize' him from the most trenchant forms of misogyny. As Jane Ward (2015) argues in *Not Gay,* heteromasculinity is often buttressed and reinforced by Whiteness in ways which not only render 'gayness' 'safe' but which also embody forms of 'homosociality' which, rather than breaking down existing forms of White heteronormativity and class privilege, actually reinforces them. In particular, Kostas' detailing of the interactions he had with his boss, such as, for example, when he told me about complimenting the size of his boss' penis in one of the office changing rooms and using such an interaction as evidence of his boss' 'friendliness' towards his performances of gender/sexuality, are reminiscent of 'locker room talk' and white forms of masculinity such as the 'frat boy' (Ibid). This suggests that 'campness' in this case might actually reinforce rather than challenge (his boss') heterosexuality and status.

Yet, other participants' transgression of gender norms (explored in the next sections) is not so effective. In particular, and as will emerge from an exploration of Emad's and Anita's experiences (discussed in section 6.2.2), it appears that other participants' performances of excessive forms of 'diverse' gender/sexuality are not so well-received but rather disciplined by virtue of their class and/or racial Otherness.

6.1.2 *'I have my day job, and I have my gay job'*

The performance of this kind of labour led some participants to refer to the existence of a 'gay job' alongside their 'day job'[138]. "I have my day job. And then I have my day job"[139] explains Eli, a White gay man, public affairs executive, Chair of a

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[138] One participant also referred to the existence of a 'T job' alongside their 'day job', referring to the work she does as co-founder and chair of a professional network for trans- people in the UK (Fieldnotes, March 2018, Glamazon event for Trans Visibility Day).
[139] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (6.1.2) are drawn from my interview encounter with Eli and David, which both took place in March 2018.

professional LGBT network and co-Chair of the workplace staff LGBT network. I met Eli at one of the events he organized through the professional LGBT network[140] and subsequently arranged to meet him in a café for an interview. I ask Eli to elaborate on his understanding of 'gay job' and 'day job', to which he responds:

> "A day job is obviously what you get paid to do. The work you do for the organization. The gay one is everything that I do on top of that, all the stuff with diversity and inclusion. I'm Co-Chair of [the professional LGBT staff network] and of the workplace LGBT network, so we have meetings, organize events and panel discussions. For the staff network sometimes we talk to senior management and HR and sometimes even the CEO, and the Stonewall submission of course, but the D&I team also does that. And let me tell you, it's not easy. But I love it. I have a passion for it"

Eli's 'gay job' is 'all the stuff' he does for LGBT diversity and inclusion- internally for the organization but also externally, for the professional environment in which he works - 'on top' of his 'day job', which he 'gets paid to do'. Ultimately, whilst his 'gay job' is not remunerated and is 'not easy', Eli performs it because he 'loves it' and has 'a passion for it'. But in order to fully understand what motivates our participant to engage in this kind of (unpaid) labour, we must once again return to the question of (queer) value. Indeed, alongside his 'love' and 'passion' for LGBT diversity and inclusion, what motivates Eli to perform his 'gay job' is that is 'adds value' to his 'day job'. As he continues:

> "I always thought about it in terms of having my gay job and my day job. But to separate those two is obviously ludicrous because the skills and the passion I have for the work I do outside of work clearly benefits for me as a person, the organization, and my day job. For example, when I worked for a couple of years for an agency in Westminster, the entirety of that skill set was learnt from my gay job. The fact that I was having media exposure and [was] in touch with different departments… that is a skill set that only benefits my day job. When people get involved with [the professional LGBT professional network]… I tell them that. And, I mean, it's the

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[140] I refrain from referencing the event to maintain anonymity.

only thing you can offer someone when they get involved 'cause I can't pay them… so yeah, I would be completely naïve to say that it hasn't benefitted by everything I've done outside of work"

Eli comments on the interrelatedness of his 'day job'/'gay job' and 'the personal'/'the professional' in the sense that the skills and forms of expertise nurtured through his 'gay job' ultimately add value to his 'day job'. This is, at once, affective *and* material value, and benefits him both 'personally' and 'professionally'. Moreover, the (re)production of 'queer value' is also the rationale and mode of compensation with which he encourages and remunerates other LGBT* employees to get involved given that he 'can't pay them'. It thus seems not only that 'doing inclusion' depends on this kind of (unpaid) gender/sexual labour, but also that this labour becomes a valuable resource and an asset that benefits one's 'day job'.

<div align="center">***</div>

David, a White, gay, senior project manager and co-Chair of the LGBT staff network who introduced me to Kostas and is also featured in OUTstanding's Top 50 LGBT+ Future Leaders list (2017), explains that the performance of his 'gay job' "adds value to…[him] personally", through "endorphin release, or feeling good". He also, interestingly, establishes a distinction between just being 'out' and 'authentic', and performing another kind of labour, that of "participat[ing] and contribut[ing] from a diversity standpoint", which he believes is "where that added value comes in":

> "I think that the contribution that I make through the [LGBT Network] 100% adds value. It adds value to me personally, endorphin release, or feeling good…I'm not sure that simply coming out adds value to your day job. It probably just levels you out with everybody else … [but] if I choose to participate and contribute from a diversity standpoint, that's where that added value comes in. First you need to get everybody comfortable. Then you need to have some people there who are role modelling and adding value in turn to make it truly inclusive. There's a lot of people who see it as a tick-box exercise. And that's okay, they have other commitments. But I don't'. I literally live in that building over there [points to a

<div align="center">162</div>

> building outside]… that's what drives me to want to make a
> change and ultimately what adds the most value"

David takes pride in the (wilful) labour he performs 'to make a change'. Once again, like in Kostas' case, it seems that this 'work' is assigned more value when, or at least when it seen to be, performed not as 'a tick-box exercise', but naturally and voluntarily. He also recognizes the 'queer value' this (re)produces for the organization, making it 'inclusive', and for himself, through 'feeling good' and 'personal development'.

Yet whilst the performance of this labour might 'feel good' and 'add value', we could argue that it has problematic consequences for those LGBT* subjects who are unable and/or unwilling to participate. Indeed, to the extent that, as previously discussed, the (re)production of 'queer value' is a key component of inclusion, we might want to ask what this might mean for those who 'have other commitments', those who do not live in close proximity to work 'in that building over there', those whose mere contribution is simply 'coming out' and 'being authentic', simply being as productive as everybody else, or perhaps those who, for whatever reason, cannot, or struggle to, be 'authentic' (discussed in section 6.2.3).

But also, making inclusion dependent on the (re)production of 'queer value' and thus on these forms of voluntary and unpaid labour also has implications for those very subjects who, like David, Kostas and Eli, appear to (have) be(come) included. As David continues:

> "In my current role I integrate it into all of my interactions. I
> don't see a distinction between the two [my day and my gay
> job]. I had a call today for 30 minutes for example. But yeah,
> that means that I was in at quarter past 7 this morning, and I
> won't leave till 6 o'clock in the evening, and that I will pick
> stuff up for the weekend. And that's my choice, but as long as
> my boss is happy and my boss' boss is happy, they let me. If
> it ever started to interfere with my day job, then I'd have to re-
> evaluate. I'm getting more protective of my day to make sure
> I'm adding value to my day job. I don't know how long I can
> continue coming in so early and leaving so late. But my boss

> would never ask me to do that. I choose to do that. Trying to
> do it all. Eventually my head will pop off"

Whilst David's boss would 'never ask him to' come in so early and leave so late, it is nevertheless clear that this is what is expected and required of him in order to perform his 'gay job' in a way in which does not interfere with his 'day job'. Thus, whilst the blurring of the boundary between personal and the professional allows LGBT* employees to integrate some aspects of their gender/sexuality into their 'day jobs', this does not necessarily entail greater freedom, autonomy, or emancipation. In reality, this "flexibilization of work time" (Kallinikos, 2003, p595) and the harnessing of gender/sexuality as "new raw materials of capital" (Wasser, 2016, p59) has its limitations and seems to usher in multiple, competing and exhausting expectations through which the LGBT* subject are required to accurately (self-)manage their gender/sexuality in the (re)production of 'queer value'. In the next section (6.1.3), I extend this last point by detailing Kaneila's responsible yet reluctant engagement with the discourses and practices of LGBT inclusion.

6.1.3 'I just feel responsible'

Kaneila- Director in Professional Services and co-Chair of the staff LGBT network- is featured on the Pride Power List (2018)[141] and an active participant of LBWomen (discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.1 and 4.3). It is at one of their events that we first meet. She identifies as a "non-White woman"[142] and understands her sexuality as "very fluid". Six months after our first meeting, Kaneila and I arrange to meet for an interview. What emerges from our conversation is that, unlike Kostas, Eli and David, who seem to perform the labour of inclusion passionately and deliberately, Kaneila's involvement was neither straightforwardly deliberate nor very passionate:

> "When I came out at work, in a more public way, it was sort
> of, it wasn't really deliberate. I mean it was sort of deliberate,

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[141] A list (published online) compiled with the purpose of "celebrating the achievements of influential LGBT people" (http://www.pridepowerlist.co.uk/pride-powerlist-2018.html).
[142] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (6.1.3) are drawn from my interview encounter with Kaneila, which took place in June 2018.

in that I wanted to be a better role model. There was a gay guy that worked for me and he was in the closet. And I thought that was utterly tragic. There was a woman co-chairing the LGBT network at the time and she was having a terrible time in trying to get women to turn up to things. So she persuaded me to come to an event. So I went to my first networking event in Canary Wharf and there were 200 people there and four of them were women. And I was like… this is hideous, so I left. So that was the start of the journey. I never made plans to out myself at work"

Kaneila's story partly harks back at the 'inspirational' narratives explored in Chapter Four in which becoming your 'authentic self' at work, that is, 'coming out', is posited as an intentional decision stemming from an individual(istic) desire to be 'more productive'. Moreover, whilst like David and Eli she desires to make a change in the workplace by 'being a better role model', the language she adopts is decidedly more negative, using words such as 'tragic', 'hideous' and 'terrible' to describe her initial engagement with inclusion. Ultimately, she explains that she "never made plans to out…[herself] at work", which partly explains her surprise, and reluctance, in becoming Chair of the LGBT staff network:

> "…the funny thing is, and I realize this in hindsight, is that there are so few 'out' women in senior management roles in corporates that inadvertently [in coming out] I became the Chair of the network and somebody who people are always depending on to do stuff and make stuff happen…to listen to their LGBT problems, advise them. Unfortunately my personality is such that if no one is doing it, I will do it… I just feel responsible. So, you know, it's only just my irritation that no one else will step up…I didn't ask to become Chair of the network. They didn't have women and they had a problem getting women into the network. So I inadvertently ended up as the Chair, and felt a responsibility to go out and do stuff, which I have done, but… ugh [shrugs her shoulders]. I just felt so unprepared… I feel ambivalent. It's exhausting"

Kaneila's 'coming out' in a context where 'there are few 'out' women in senior management roles' inadvertently and unintentionally means she becomes the Chair of the LGBT staff network and 'somebody people are always depending on to make stuff

happen'. Thus, whilst she initially decides to get involved to be(come) a 'better role model', ultimately her involvement stems less from an 'entrepreneurial spirit' to use her 'diversity' to create 'queer value', nor a "passion" for change, than a sense of 'responsibility' and 'irritation' with the fact that 'no one else will step up'[143].

On the one hand this sense of 'responsibility' is undeniably symptomatic of neoliberal forms of "self-regulatory governance" (Richardson, 2005, p523) which require LGBT* subjects to 'step-up' and make responsible decisions to be(come) included. Indeed, as Rumens (2018) and others have noted, what is remarkable about inclusionary discourses of LGBT-friendliness is the role these play in constructing, and enabling, LGBT* subjects to "make the 'right' choices' about fitting into extant spaces and institutions" (para. 13.38). This is symptomatic of neoliberal forms of governance, which, as argued in Chapter Two and Five, rest upon individuals' internalization of normativities through self –discipline and –responsibility.

Yet, on the other, whilst Kaneila could thus be read as 'neoliberal subject', she does not passionately embrace responsibility, nor does she seem to enjoy the commitments and burdens it entails. She is thus an 'ambivalent' and 'inadvertent' unprepared and reluctant 'neoliberal subject', and, ultimately, resistant to, although involved in, the very forms of 'expertise' and 'self-knowledge' which Richardson (2005) identifies as evidence of (homo)normativity:

> "You know, the best [example] was when they asked me to speak on this panel. And I was like, 'right, you want me to go speak on this panel about gender diversity issues that I have no understanding of? I don't even know what half the words mean!' I'm not an expert on LGBT in any shape or form, although I'm trying to learn so I can be more responsible… So the only thing that I can do is talk about my own personal experience. That is the only value I have to bring. And I know

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[143] Here we might want to reflect on one of the major limitations of interviewing as a method of collecting data (discussed in Chapter Three) in that it may not in fact offer an 'accurate' depiction of reality. Indeed, we could argue that, given that the fact that the labour of 'inclusion' acquires even more value when it is perceived to be 'natural', the account provided by Kaneila may not be 'truthful' but an attempt to construct this labour as 'voluntary' [read: not self-interested]. Yet, whilst this certainly might be true, here I am less interested in ascertaining the 'validity' of her claims than in shedding light on her own interpretations of this labour.

that therefore I have to be happy to share my deeply intimate personal experiences…So, anyway, I talked about my experiences in coming out at work, I don't even remember what I said, and this woman comes up to me afterwards and wants to meet me and I'm just like 'okay, she might just want to follow up on something I said', and we met and she just poured her life story to me, about her relationship and her confusion with her sexuality and the fact that nobody knows, and it was like… an hour and a half of like… therapy. It was exhausting. I didn't know what to say!"

Her reluctance not only casts doubt on conceptualizations of LGBT 'voice', 'participation' and 'representation' in organization as desirable and automatically 'inclusive' organizational goals (Bell et al., 2011; Priola et al., 2014). But also, therefore, on the critical utility of simply condemning those LGBT* subjects who reluctantly, and unpreparedly, become responsible in order to be(come) included, for themselves and for others.

6.2   Failing to be(come) included

In shedding light on the laboured performances of gender/sexuality, and the 'queer value', required in order to be(come) included, section 6.1 has attempted to speak to both managerial and critical readings of LGBT inclusion. On the one hand, focusing on the ways in which emergent discourses of LGBT inclusion are experienced, negotiated and engaged, I problematized managerial readings of 'LGBT-friendliness' by showing how 'doing inclusion' comes with expectations about how a 'diverse' gender/sexuality is to be laboriously performed and "put to work in the expansion and accumulation of global capital" (David, 2015, p169). On the other hand, I have also attempted to problematize critical readings by arguing that LGBT* subjects are not merely "*subordinate*…[and] *subjected* to essentialist discourses" (Benozzo et al., 2015, p302, emphasis added) but rather actively, creatively, strategically, exhaustingly and reluctantly *engaging with* these discourses and practices in order to be(come) included.

Yet, whilst engaging with LGBT inclusion appears to create ambivalent and contradictory responses and experiences for some (included and 'includeable') LGBT* subjects, not everyone is even willing and/or able to (successfully) perform this kind of labour. In this final section I draw from four ulterior interview encounters with participants who are also employed in so-called 'LGBT-friendly organizations' to explore moments in which this labour of inclusion 'fails', resulting in participants feeling 'exposed' and 'vulnerable' (Clem, 6.2.1), 'getting stuck' (Emad and Anita, 6.2.2) and feeling that they don't 'fit' (Andrea, 6.2.3).

6.2.1 *'In an inclusive space…you're exposed, you're vulnerable'*

Clem is a White non-binary Marketing Manager, LGBT Staff Network Representative and one of the organizers of the London chapter of the Lesbians Who Tech conference (discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.2), where I met them in November 2017. We arranged to meet for an interview in their office in January 2018. In what follows I focus on Clem's experiences of the work they did for the conference, and, in particular, on their experience of being expected to give the 'kick-off speech' for the event.

Overall, Clem is a supporter of the conference, citing the "visible lesbian leadership"[144], the myriad "networking prospects"[145], "chances for professional development"[146] and "opportunities for casual flirting"[147] as a reason for participating and contributing their labour the conference. At the same time however, Clem is also frustrated that their work had not be remunerated. "I didn't get paid for the work I was doing"[148], they said dispiritedly. I bump into Clem a few months later, and their frustration seems even more accentuated:

> "I left the organizational team. It wasn't even on bad terms you know? But you know what? I asked for a ticket for the San Francisco Summit. And after all the work I've done for them, they said no! Can you believe it? And they even had the

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[144] Fieldnotes, November 2017; Lesbians Who Tech conference.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

nerve to ask more free labour from me. I thought they were supposed to be a non-profit… they're more like a mafia"[149]

Moreover, their experience also reveals that whilst the melding of professional and personal may allow some LGBT* employees to add (material and affective) value to themselves and to the ('LGBT-friendly') organization, for others, this process of 'de-compartmentalization' and (hyper-)visibility is accompanied by feelings of exposure and vulnerability. Ultimately then, Clem's inability and/or unwillingness to convert and extrapolate the 'queer value' of visibility' exposes the limits of the discourses and practices of (trans)inclusion (Raha, 2015), specifically, the limits of celebrating 'visibility' as a desirable and valuable (personal and professional) asset.

<center>***</center>

The 'kick-off speech' for the Lesbians Who Tech conference is expected to take place the evening before the conference in the very space in which Clem spends their day, working. Clem expects all attendants of the conference, as well as work their colleagues and managers, to be there. Whilst arguably, based on reflections put forward in the previous section, many would consider this to be a prime opportunity to 'be seen' and (thus) for professional advancement, Clem sees it otherwise, citing their gendered embodiment and their 'insecurity' as a reason to try and "avoid it"[150]:

> "So… I had like, severe anxiety about giving the kick off speech. I thought about getting out of it but then I thought maybe that would come across as a sign of weakness. But then like, standing on stage, like I've always felt really uncomfortable being seen with my body, because of like gender implications and whatever. And so I was literally up at night thinking like 'fuck I don't wanna do this… I can't think of anything more humiliating than standing there and everybody seeing that I'm embarrassed'. So If I'm in a situation in which I'm obviously gonna be insecure, I will try and avoid it"

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[149] Fieldnotes, March 2017; taken after I met Clem at another event.
[150] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (6.2.1) are drawn from my interview encounter with Clem, which took place in January 2018

Clem's discomfort with the 'gender implications' of their embodiment and the insecurity this causes them partly explains the failure to convert 'visibility' into a laboured productive personal and professional asset. Whilst, as we have seen, both Kostas and Eli have 'put to use' their 'visible' and 'diverse' gender/sexuality in order to add material and affective (queer) value to themselves and to the organization, Clem's (anticipated) failure to perform this labour self-confidently and securely, and the fear that refusing to do so might be interpreted as a 'weakness', causes them to experience 'severe anxiety' and stay 'up at night'.

In co-constructing meaning from my encounter with Clem I am reminded of the myriad ways in which trans scholars, activists, artists and poets have been arguing, for years, in favour of an appreciation of the limits, the complexity and the trappings of the politics of visibility, in general but for trans people in particular (Alabanza, 2017; Faye, 2018; Gossett, Stanley & Burton, 2017; Rose, 2016; Spade, 2011; van der Drift, Raha & Hunter, 2017). Indeed, it seems that whilst visibility may offer (some, more privileged and/or more passing[151]) trans- people opportunities for empowerment and protection, for others these may be double-edged swords' (Faye, 2018; Rose, 2016), 'half-opened doors' (David, 2015), 'trap doors' (Gossett et al., 2017; Spade, 2011): remarkably fraught affairs, riddled with (societally-induced) anxieties and *in*securities pertaining to one's gendered embodiment and the (paradoxical, perhaps) safety offered by *in*visibility (also see: Chapter Five, section 5.1.1)[152].

Yet, whilst Clem's 'being seen' in their gendered body certainly plays a role in their reluctance to deliver the speech, it is ultimately the idea of "de-compartmentalization" that gives them "the biggest insecurity":

> "The thing that was giving me the biggest insecurity was the knowledge that my director, my boss, my team, they sit there, and are probably gonna come over to this side of the building and watch me. It de-compartmentalizes it, my worst nightmare, when worlds clash. And that was just terrifying to me. The idea of them seeing the way I am in my space. So, the idea of worlds colliding is extremely uncomfortable, because

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[151] When a trans (or LGB*) person is perceived as cis-gender (or non-LGB*).
[152] We could also relate this to some of the points raised in Chapter Five about the limits of 'rainbow visibility' politics in relation to The Joiners Arms.

> I have to be somewhat of a façade, like I'm a social chameleon
> in a way that is very authentic about it, and those worlds
> colliding completely fucked with that. I don't know, it was an
> uncomfortable thought"

Clem describes the 'uncomfortable thought' that is picturing their director, boss and team enter their 'space', that is, a space populated by attendants of the Lesbians Who Tech conference, an LBT space (or a 'queer space' as organizers of the conference would probably refer to it) in which Clem is/can be themselves ('the way I am'). They describe this crossing of boundaries, between 'work' and 'gender/sexuality, the 'personal' and the 'professional', as 'worlds clashing…colliding'. It thus appears that the 'de-compartmentalization' engendered by LGBT inclusion interferes with Clem's own 'authentic' *and* 'chameleonic' laboured performance of gender/sexuality in the workplace in ways which cast doubt on the desire for, but also the value of, bringing your authentic self, herein problematized and deemed as the 'worst nightmare'. In so doing, Clem resists the colonization of space and time (both physical *and* affective) by 'work' and business more generally: they know, to borrow a Marxist term, that work is 'alienating', and are not willing to submit their 'full' and 'authentic' self to this regime.

Indeed, and ultimately, whilst as Clem points out, "no one from the team turned up because we work from home on Fridays", they still "didn't wanna do it". At first they question their instinctive response ('why should I feel insecure standing in front of those [LGBT*] people?"). But their answer turns the promise of inclusion on its head:

> "I realized, actually, you would be more comfortable wearing
> the work façade in front of work people, than to be myself in
> front of people who are like you. Because actually, you're so
> exposed. I care about what they think, and also I'm….
> showing myself. I'm not showing 'Oh hello everyone
> welcome to the app store, we love to think about our
> customers'. That's just work language. Whereas I wanna be
> accepted by that [LGBT] community [Lesbians Who Tech].
> And I don't wanna be accepted by anyone over there [points
> to their work desk], because I know that their validation
> doesn't mean anything to me. So actually like, as counter-
> intuitive as it sounds, it's more comfortable to be in a space

that isn't inclusive. Because you can hide in it. Whereas in an inclusive space it's like, you're exposed, you're vulnerable"

Here it appears that the laboured performances of gender/sexuality engendered by and required in order to be(come) included and participate in emergent promises of LGBT inclusion (delivering the 'kick off speech' and 'showing yourself'), make Clem feel 'exposed' and 'vulnerable'. Clem finds solace and safety in 'hiding' behind 'work language' and 'the work façade' and is thus unable and/or unwilling to perform this kind of labour, to be(come) included. In the next section (6.2.2), I turn to Emad's and Anita's story to further highlight the professional costs and consequences which accrue from failing to perform this labour (of inclusion) in the 'right' way.

6.2.2 'Getting stuck': Anita, 'the shouty one', and Emad, the 'dangerous' one

At first sight, Emad's and Anita's positionality in relation to the discourse of 'LGBT-friendliness' may be seen to be remarkably dissimilar. The former, a South-Asian man in his late 30s, primarily identifies as 'cis' and 'straight' and thus is principally involved from a position of externality, as an 'ally'. Anita, a White woman in her 50s, on the other hand identifies as 'genderfluid' and 'non-binary'[153], and is thus a more explicit 'target' of promises of inclusion. At the same time however, in both their cases, engaging with, and performing the labour of, inclusion leads them to 'get stuck'. In what follows I reflect on both these cases to argue that failing to 'correctly' perform the labour of inclusion, whilst it might (re)produce 'queer value' for the organization, adversely affects those very subjects which the discourse of LGBT-friendliness purports to celebrate and support.

Anita is a Business Manager and co-chair of the LGBT staff network (organizationally referred to as a 'Business Resource Group') in a large investment bank. Like Kostas, Eli, David and Clem, she is listed in OUTstanding's 50 LGBT+ Future Leaders List (2017 and 2018) in which she is lauded for her valuable contribution to the making of an 'LGBT-friendly(er)' workplace culture (by delivering gender-neutral toilets,

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[153] Although she admits to have more recently 'settled' for 'transwoman' and/or 'transfeminine' as a way to describe her gender expression, using she/her pronouns.

Transgender 101 classes to other employees and managers and more inclusive gender self-identification options for monitoring purposes). I contact Anita in early 2017 under the auspice of another participant. A few months later we meet for an interview in the HQ of the investment bank in which she works. After a few misunderstandings (described in Chapter Two section 3.4.2) which resulted in my not being granted access to the building, we settle in a nearby café.

Anita's initial experience coming out as trans- was "amazing"[154]. As she explains, "they encouraged me to come out, they bent over backwards to say yes to everything I wanted". Of course, as a former "communist", she is aware that, in her own words, the "ruthless investment bank" is partly interested in accommodating her needs due to fear that she would "make a fuss". Yet, ultimately, she doesn't seem to have a problem with the fact that the organization was "fundamentally supportive because it's good for money". So she begins "wearing sandals" and "vest[s]" to work- "'cause only women can show their shoulders"- and accepts a role as co-chair of the LGBT 'Business Resource Group'. But as she becomes more involved and after the "real high…about being yourself" wears off- and perhaps, after the fear she would "make a fuss" does too- her perceptions change. "You don't imagine the number of brick walls I've come up against in *actually* trying to help them understand how to create a more inclusive environment for LGBT people but particularly for trans people", she explains.

Here we are reminded of Sara Ahmed's (2012b) remarks on the ways in which 'diversity work' can often "feel like banging your head against the brick wall" (p17). These brick walls seem to be erected 'particularly for trans people', and prevent Anita from doing the very 'diversity work' and she was initially entrusted to perform as Chair of the LGBT Business Resource Group. As Ahmed (2012b) indeed argues, the "official desire to institutionalize diversity does not mean that the institution is opened up…[but simply that] the wall might become all the more apparent, all the more a sign of immobility, the more the institution presents itself as being opened up" (9). Indeed, ultimately, notwithstanding, and arguably because of, the organization's support for

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[154] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (6.2.2) are drawn from my interview encounter with Anita and Emad, which took place in March 2018 and February 2018, respectively.

'LGBT-friendliness' (under the guise of which Anita is encouraged to 'come out'), and despite the supposed professional benefits of being your 'true self', Anita's (failed) laboured performances of trans-ness lead her to experience inclusion as a 'sign of immobility':

> "I've been demoted. I got stuck. In the year that I came out I was on a year-long training course that prepares you for promotion. So, coincidentally, after I transitioned, I wasn't put up for promotion, actually a lot of my responsibilities gradually got removed. It's a big coincidence isn't it? I kinda feel straight-jacketed from a career-progression perspective. It's a story you get a lot from other trans- people. Sometimes people say that in coming out you suddenly become the spokesperson for all trans- people. But for me it's the opposite. I don't get asked to do anything anymore. They just think 'oh it's her again, the shouty one'"

Whilst Anita is cautious in her tone, entertaining the possibility that this might all just be a 'coincidence', she nevertheless draws connections between her 'transition' and the removal of her responsibilities and her chances of promotion. Needless to say, there is a remarkable disjuncture in the picture painted of Anita in the lists cited at the beginning of this section and her own reading and experiences of a 'diverse' gender/sexuality at work. Ultimately then, it seems that the very performance of the labour expected and required of her in order to be(come) included, such as helping the organization 'understand how to create a more inclusive environment', is what leads to her 'failure', not in the sense that she fails to perform this labour altogether, or that it does not accrue value for the organization (in fact, it does), but in the sense that this labour fails her because it is performed in the 'wrong' [read: 'shouty'] kind of way.

Interestingly, at the end of the interview, Anita relates her 'shoutiness' to the fact that she "used to be a communist, involved in student politics, fighting 'the class war' and all that jazz… before joining [the investment bank], back in the 90s". Anita acknowledges that she's "not that person anymore". Yet she explains that becoming involved in workplace activism around the issue of trans inclusion "somewhat reminded me of that… there's something in my unconscious that must have been re-activated from that experience". Anita's comments thus also suggest that her failure

to (re)produce 'queer value' and to be(come) included might also be read through a class perspective. That perhaps, in 'reactivating' her class consciousness (also explicit in her naming of the investment bank as 'ruthless' in the beginning of the interview), her efforts at trans-inclusion were read as too threatening to the organization. Indeed, as she concludes, if the bank knew about her "background… they'd get rid of [her] in an instant".

<center>****</center>

Emad's engagement with the discourse of LGBT inclusion reveals very similar dynamics. Emad is an Innovation Manager, 'diversity champion'[155] and 'straight ally'[156] at a law firm. Whilst he feels "a bit genderqueer", he doesn't think there's anything he "can do about it because your two options are either transition or stay cis… people can only really deal with if it's in a full-on kinda way". So he navigates these cis-normativities and the LGBT staff network "mostly…as straight". For the purposes of this Chapter, Emad's story begins when he is approached by his HR team to be nominated for the Stonewall 'Ally of the Year' award. "They just needed to fill out that section of the [Workplace Equality Index] application", he explains[157]. "I never thought I was going to win it, 'cause that would be shameful, all I ever did was organize a picnic for the network", he continues.

Nevertheless, to Emad's surprise, he wins it. And, like Anita, who (cautiously yet also affirmatively) blames her involvement with 'inclusion work' for her demotion, he believes that winning the award and becoming more involved in the "work…for LGBT inclusion" has put him "in a position where…[he doesn't] have a career as a lawyer anymore":

> "I basically found myself in a position where I had to leave my
> job about a month after I won. It was sort of related to a whole

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[155] Individuals (often volunteers) who are "committed…to making diversity work happen" in organizations (for a critique of the 'diversity champions approach' to inclusion, see: Spaaij, Magee, Farquharson, Gorman, Jeanes, Lusher & Stor, 2016).

[156] Individuals who identify as 'heterosexual' and who support LGBT inclusion (by participating in the network, championing diversity, etc…) in the organization.

[157] Indeed 'straight allies', like 'role models' (discussed in more detail in section 6.2.3), are key components of the ways in which Stonewall measures an organization's degree of LGBT-friendliness (Rumens, 2015) and are thus central to the (re)production of 'queer value' (Stonewall, 2012).

series of things, but basically they said I was 'flighty' and had a lot of interests outside my core job, and that some of my ideas were a bit 'radical' and 'dangerous'. So it was never linked back to the work I do for LGBT inclusion, but it is part of an impression that people end up being left with you, that you aren't a firm man, that you aren't the type of character that rises to a leadership position here, and maybe you're a bit dangerous to have around. Actually yes I do think that that award contributed to me being in a position where I don't have a career as a lawyer anymore. And that happened at the same time that the congratulations email [for winning the award] went out from the person who was most resistant to me getting the job I have now [the director]. So there's a kind of dissonance between that congratulatory email, and at the same time being resistant to giving me a job on the basis of 'you're a bit of a radical'"

The 'dissonance' described by Emad partly reflects that documented by Ahmed (2012a, 2012b) and others (Rumens, 2018) between the values of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' officially espoused, celebrated and turned into profitable resources by organizations, and the ways in which these are not simply not implemented 'on the ground' (Giuffre et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2009), but also literally used to block and obstruct the very subjects, LGBT* and/or 'straight allies', entrusted to further them. It thus appears that whilst working on LGBT inclusion, such as in the case of Eli's and David's 'gay job', adds value to one's 'day job' and makes one appear to be 'skilled' and 'passionate', at others it makes you 'flighty', 'dangerous' and 'radical'.

The line between 'passionate' and 'dangerous' seems be determined, firstly, by the content of the work of inclusion. Comments Emad made later in relation to "the combination of LGBT and business development" and how this "limits the value of diversity work by limiting what you can say", reveal where the danger might lie. Indeed, as he explains, "you become dangerous if you are critical of the organization…sharing warmth stories is okay, but criticising the organization in front of others is problematic". Thus, like Anita, he concludes that "trying to *actually* change the organization…[is what] makes you too dangerous", too dangerous to be(come) included.

Secondly, this line also seems to be determined by Emad's racialized performances of gender/sexuality. Indeed, as it emerges, Emad directly links the fact that he is read as 'dangerous and radical' to his "Brown-ness" by explaining that "the guys are so confused by me, a straight Brown camp genderqueer feminine guy… they just don't know what to do with me". The 'guys' Emad is referring to, as he later explains, are primarily White British straight and gay men. Relating these comments back to our previous discussion (in section 6.1.1), what emerges is that whilst Kostas is able to mobilize his 'campness' in a way that does not distress his boss or the senior leadership team, and, as argued, in a way which actually buttresses White forms of homosociality, Emad's 'genderqueerness' is 'too much': he is not able to draw from White privilege to insulate himself from misogyny. Moreover, given the gendered (feminine) expectations which attach to the very doing of 'diversity & inclusion work' in masculinist organizations (Acker, 1990, 2012; Eveline & Booth, 2002; Linstead & Maréchal, 2015; Williams, Muller & Kilanski, 2012), being a 'firm man' [read: masculine] appears to be a pre-requisite for rising to 'a leadership position'. Engaging in this kind of work makes Emad 'a bit dangerous', perhaps a bit too 'dangerous' for promotion. Indeed, we could also argue that it is Emad's identification as 'straight' that is even more confusing to his colleagues: whilst and that whilst Kostas (re)produces 'queer value' by virtue of being 'the right kinda gay, Emad does not identify as 'gay' and thus cannot be 'the right kinda gay'. He is thus penalized for failing to perform his gender/sexuality in intelligibly heteronormative ways, where heterosexuals are expected to be 'masculine', and homosexuals, in cases in which Whiteness and class status are not challenged, permitted and expected to be 'feminine' and 'camp'.

In the next and final section of this Chapter (6.2.3), I draw from ethnographic fieldnotes collected at an 'LGBT role model' training program and an interview to explore Andrea's experience of becoming- or failing to become- an 'LGBT role model'. In doing so, I argue that *doing* inclusion, as discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.3.2), requires one to 'straighten-up' (Ahmed, 2006a, 2006b) previously 'dangerous', 'shouty' and 'anxious' ways of being a 'diverse' gender/sexual subject. The labour involved in 'straightening-up' once again challenges the benevolence of the discourses and practices of LGBT inclusion by highlighting the often painstaking and elaborate

compromises LGBT* subjects have to strike in order to inhabit and 'fit' within its confines.

6.2.3 *'I just don't feel I fit the thing': Andrea failing to be(come) an 'authentic LGBT role model'*

I meet Andrea at a 'LGBT workplace role model' training program held in the London offices of a large insurance company. The program was run Stonewall and designed for LGBT professionals working in a variety of sectors and industries (but primarily private) with the stated aim of increasing motivation and confidence to step us a 'visible' and 'authentic' workplace 'role models'. Whilst what it means to be an 'LGBT workplace role model' was matter of great confusion throughout the program, a resource guide distributed to participants before the start of the program defines 'LGBT workplace role models' as individuals who make a "point to colleagues, both heterosexual and gay [sic], about the value and importance of being open about our difference…[and that ultimately], being who you are [read: being authentic], more often and as effectively as possible, is a good thing"[158].

'Authenticity' is indeed central to understanding the purpose and the (queer) value of what it means to be(come) 'an LGBT role model'. Indeed, in an era in which 'diversity' is not simply "allowable…[but] encouraged" (Hunter, 2017, p131), it seems that it is LGBT* subjects *in particular* who are curiously well-suited for the task of 'authenticity', a skill and/or talent which becomes a key component of the "exchange value that they bring to the market" (Ibid, p130). As Adam, one of the program facilitators, explains to the group:

> "In the allies program, straight people struggle to think of times when they were not being themselves. We work with MI5, we believe that the ability of LGBTs to assess and understand risks and different contexts stems from this self-awareness. It's a business benefit for a spy in MI5"[159]

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[158] Stonewall 'LGBT workplace role model' training pack distributed to participants before the start of the program (Stonewall, 2012).

[159] Fieldnotes, February 2017; Stonewall 'LGBT workplace role model' training program.

What emerges here is that, much like in the ethnographic vignette which opens section 6.1, histories of exclusion and 'closets', and the skills which accrue from learning how to (self-)manage these experiences, can be turned around into 'business benefits'. This process of (re)signification and (re)packaging "engender[s] a brighter future" (Ahonen et al., 2014, p272), a future in which some LGBT subjects, 'role models', emerge as 'diversity success stories', as examples of included (and includeable) 'diverse' subjects who have successfully (re)oriented their experiences of/with (in)authenticity in positive and valuable ways.

In what follows, I draw from data emerging from an interview encounter I arranged with Andrea after the program in tandem with Sara Ahmed's (2006a, 2006b) work on queer phenomenology to argue that the 'brighter future' promised by and through becoming 'an LGBT role model' is also (and primarily) a 'straight future' which requires LGBT* subjects to 'straighten up' the 'slant' of their queer desires in order to be(come) included. I then trace the implications of this for our understanding of 'inclusion'.

Andrea is a trans woman who works as a coder in the financial service sector for a corporate listed in Stonewalls' Workplace Equality Index as a 'Top 100 LGBT-friendly organization'. Six months ago, Andrea came out as trans- at work, and has since been "living full time as a woman"[160]. It has been two weeks since we attended the program, so I ask Andrea if she has felt more empowered to be her authentic self since she's been back at work, which is indeed one of the stated aims of the program. She says:

> "you know…I just want to be myself, however the thing is…at work... they have some expectations, but it's not written expectations…more like, they officially say 'oh we'll go at your pace, we'll do whatever you want', however, for example, in order to 'do' the transgender approach, they say 'oh we need a name for people to call you…you need to decide what pronouns you want to use' and everything like that, which I understand but it's not something I was initially interested in"

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[160] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this Section (6.2.3) are drawn from my interview encounter with Andrea which took place in March 2017.

Whilst her workplace is supportive, 'they have some (cis-normative) expectations' which do not 'fit in' with Andrea's own ('genderqueer') desires. These 'LGBT-friendly normativities' enable Andrea to 'come out' as trans, yet they require trans to be performed in specific and, to Andrea, restrictive ways. Andrea is expected to follow the expected [read: straight] line (choosing pronouns, changing her name, fitting the binary) in order to 'do' the transgender approach, that is, in order to be included. This leads Andrea to say, in an apologetic and almost confessional tone:

> "…I'm a bit annoyed at this 'role model' on all the LGBT things. I just don't feel I fit the thing. You see, to be a 'role model' you need to know where you are and where you wanna go…[and] that's a bit my problem because I don't know where I wanna go"

Here interestingly Andrea understands being 'a role model' as 'knowing where you are and where you wanna go', as a being oriented and/ aligned. Here we might want to read Andrea's experience 'role models' in terms of Sara Ahmed's (2006a, 2006b) straight lines (previously discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.3.2), whereby becoming a 'role model' depends on one's ability "…to adjust one's position…such that we are 'facing' the right direction …" (Ahmed, 2006b, p51). Orientation is here not simply a spatial and physical condition but also a metaphysical one, whereby one also orients oneself "towards objects of thought, feelings, and judgement, as well as objects in the sense of aims, aspirations, and objectives" (Ibid, p56). Andrea understands her failure to become an 'LGBT role model' in terms of her inability to face [read: to be oriented towards] as well as to follow this (right, expected and straight) line: she is 'off-line', 'disorientated', or as she puts it later, "one of the exceptions". What Andrea says next reveals the direction, of this (failed) line and orientation:

> "…I don't feel that I am a 'role model' in a sense that… I have a shitty career… I have a shitty life… I'm miserable…I hate everything in life…I've never been married, [and] more or less never been in love"

Read from this perspective, to be(come) 'an LGBT role model' involves becoming straight and a 'straightening up' and (re)orientation of what was previously queer, slantwise, inauthentic, dis-oriented, 'shitty' and 'miserable'. As explored in Chapter

Five (section 5.3.2), 'straightness' is here to be understood not merely as in 'heterosexual' but in its wider definitional usage to refer to a conventional or respectable person that has a nice career, a nice life, is happy, married and in love, whereby 'straightness' indeed "gets attached to other values, including decent, conventional, direct and honest" (Ibid, p70). Engaging in this 'straightening labour' allows the subject to perform the work 'the LGBT role model' is intended to do: to embody the promise of inclusion, to (re)produce (queer) value for the organization, be held up as an example of excellence to be lauded and emulated by those also seeking to be included. But clearly, as we've already seen, not everyone is able and/or willing to successfully perform this kind of labour. And for these, becoming an 'LGBT role model', fails: it does not 'fit'.

Indeed, ultimately, this (dis)orientation leads Andrea to express scepticism about whether the emergence of 'LGBT-friendliness' is "helping… employees be more themselves" or whether it is just "a made up thing… from a commercial point of view". Thus, (dis)orientation and disappointment at the figure of 'the LGBT role model' means Andrea becomes alienated, she is "not happy in proximity to objects that are attributed as being good" (Ahmed, 2010a, p4), she is an "affect alien" (Ahmed, 2010, p16) that turns away from the "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2006, p20) embedded in the discourse of LGBT-friendliness, and ultimately, is (unsuccessfully) trying "to close the gap between an expectation [those which attach to her in order to 'do' the transgender approach] and a feeling" (Ahmed, 2010, p16). This leads her to be disappointment not just in the promise of inclusion but in herself: at her "inability to overcome…[her] disappointment" (Ibid). Yet, whilst from a queer perspective we might be tempted to read this moment of disorientation and failure as a productive site of anti-normativity and (thus) resistance, Andrea's story also exposes the risks we run if we leave unaccounted the pleasure and necessity of 'fitting in'. This will be explored in Chapter Eight (section 8.1.2).

6.3   Discussion

An exploration of the labour required to be(come) included in 'the LGBT-friendly organization' exposes a number of interesting points in relation to extant critical discussions of inclusion in organizations. Firstly, the experience of fieldwork reveals that whilst 'the LGBT-friendly organization' may indeed open-up "new possibilities for recognition and social validation" (David, 2015, p190), these seem to be dependent upon the (re)production of 'queer value'. This accrues both to 'the organization' and to LGBT* employees. For the former in the form of increased productivity and traction on the discourse of LGBT-friendliness and the various advantages this entails. For the latter through the aspirational career trajectories of LGBT* subjects, rendering gender/sexuality into a highly strategic professional resource (e.g. Kostas), and, to a lesser extent, through the 'added value' this labour is (supposedly) thought to engender for other, presumably closeted and inauthentic, LGBT* employees.

Yet, as explored, performing this labour also accrues considerable costs. These costs accrue to both those who fail to perform this labour- made to feel 'vulnerable', 'stuck', 'disappointed' and/or who are 'demoted'- as well as those who engage in it successfully – who feel exhausted, irritated and/or inadequate. This partly confirms critical and queer interrogations of 'LGBT-friendliness' which stress that whilst this discourse and organizational formation may celebrate 'diverse' expressions of gender/sexuality it does not automatically deliver more 'inclusive' organizational experiences (Rumens, 2015). It also problematizes (critical) conceptualizations of LGBT 'voice', 'participation' and 'representation' in organizations as desirable and 'inclusive' organizational goals (Bell et al., 2011; Priola et al., 2014). Indeed, it appears that whilst these mechanisms may offer a way of redressing some of the limitations of (non-)performative commitments to 'LGBT-friendliness', they may nevertheless be premised upon forms of labour that not all LGBT* subjects are able and willing to engage-in. These failures, moreover, seem to be inflected by participants specific deployment of their gender/sexuality in relation to other forms of difference, such as class (or experience of class activism) as in the case of Anita, and race in the case of Emad. Thus, the experience of fieldwork reveals that a more meaningful focus on 'inclusion' may be engendered by critically interrogating the labour it requires: how this is performed and experienced by the subjects for whom

inclusion is intended for, at what cost, and how this is (re)configured in relation to a host of intersectional racialized and classed embodiments and experiences.

Secondly, I thus also argue that shedding light on the ways in which 'LGBT-friendliness' is experienced, negotiated and engaged-in in practice also sheds light on the contradictory dynamics that shape processes of inclusion and incorporation. In particular, it demonstrates that inclusion may be more ambivalent than the normative/anti-normative binary of queer scholarship can account for. Indeed, limited empirical engagement with 'the LGBT-friendly organization' to date may have led to what Thanem & Wallenberg (2016) argue is a taken-for-granted assumption that LGBT* people, and transgender people in particular, "make gender trouble" (p252). As they argue, this assumption erases the "nuanced and subtle ways" (p251) in which gender/sexuality are performed on the workplace. Indeed, as the example of Kaneila exposes, whilst becoming 'responsible' might certainly be symptomatic of neoliberal forms of governance, it may also be performed, reluctantly, out of a sense duty towards others[161]. Thus, whilst critical scholars have offered useful insights into how inclusion is often premised upon the internalization of normativity and neoliberal forms of (self-)responsibility and (self-)discipline, these also must remain attuned to the lived experiences of LGBT* subjects and the multiple negotiations (and costs) these have to make (and accrue) in becoming 'neoliberal subjects'.

We could also extend these remarks to ask whether 'queerness' does indeed make 'trouble' with organization and organizational normativities, and/or whether this 'trouble' may be worth it. On the one hand, as the example of Kostas reveals, 'campness' and/or exaggerated performances of gender/sexuality need not be incompatible with the imperatives of capital accumulation but may indeed be harnessed in pursuit of greater organizational productivity. This partly confirms Dan Irving's (2007, 2008) and Emmanuel David's (2015) exploration of the ways in which the "proliferation of options for gender identification" (David, 2007, p190) are incorporated in processes of wealth accumulation and "put to work in the global expansion of neoliberal capitalism" (Ibid). Here the troublesome potential of 'queerness' is pacified and harnessed in pursuit of greater productivity. On the other

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[161] As further discussed in Chapter Eight (section 8.1.2), a similar point can be made about Andrea's experience of 'failure'.

hand however, it is obvious that, for some (e.g. Emad, Anita, Clem and Andrea), their 'queerness' does make 'trouble' in the organization. This 'queerness' emerges in these participants' particular classed and racialized performances (Emad and Anita), in their recognition of the alienating nature of work (Clem), and/or from their inability to be(come) aligned with the normative line through which inclusion is done (Andrea). Yet, their engagements also revealed that 'trouble' may be far from desirable, costing them their careers and/or well-being.

This sheds light on the changing nature of the labour required in order to be(come) included. Indeed, we could argue that, whilst the performance of this form of labour is by no means a 'recent' phenomena, the specific performances of gender/sexuality mobilized by my participants in order to be(come) included may be of a *qualitatively* different nature than those documented and/or explored by previous scholarship on organizational gender/sexuality. Firstly, as explored, whilst the labour required in order to be(come) included in organizations before the emergence of the discourse LGBT-friendliness may have been more akin to 'passing' or 'hiding', the experience of fieldwork reveals that 'the LGBT-friendly organization' engenders forms of labour centred around the notion of 'visibility' and 'authenticity' and inhabiting new 'LGBT-friendly normativities' geared around the (re)production of 'queer value'. But more importantly, it appears that as the politics of LGBT inclusion in organizations are increasingly mediated through 'LGBT staff networks' and 'role models', this may have individualized both the value *and* the costs of this labour. Here 'collectivised action' is replaced by more 'individualized' engagements. Some (resourceful, entrepreneurial and energetic) LGBT* subjects take advantage of these individualized mechanisms to benefit their professional aspirations, adding value to their 'gay jobs' and their 'day jobs'. Yet some fail to (successfully) engage in this form of labour and the (re)production of queer value, bearing the brunt of this failure as individuals. In the next chapter, I reflect on the labour of inclusion in the social world of 'queer activism', once again, reflecting on the 'queer value' which accrues from its performance. As it will emerge, there are striking connections to be made between the kinds of laboured performances of gender/sexuality required in order to be(come) included in the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

It Took Three Years of Unpaid Labour: Paperwork, Affective Labour and the (Re)Production of Queer Value in the Social World of 'Queer Activism'

> "…it's so ridiculous that it took three years of unpaid labour from a group of people to get a Council to realize that what we were saying at the very beginning was true. That this space was vital, this space was important and it shouldn't be taken away from us"[162]

> "What we've gained and what we've achieved is a landmark but also it's so insignificant in the grand scheme of things. We still don't have any power. The best thing we can hope to be is a thorn in Regal Homes' side. They have time and they have money, they have so many more resources than we have. And again, within that process, who gets to decide what gets given priority within a neighbourhood or geographic space?"[163]

In the previous Chapter (Six) I explored the labour required in order to inhabit the promise of inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business, and the queer value reproduced as an effect of its (successful) performance. I have argued that the performance of this labour is a requirement in order to be(come) included and that its failure creates a number of 'dissonances' between organizational LGBT-friendly discourses and the lived experiences of the subjects these promises are (supposedly) intended to speak to. Ultimately, I reflected not only on what it means for inclusion to be premised on the self-responsibilized engagements of LGBT* subjects but also on the importance of accounting for the painstaking labour involved in becoming

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[162] Friends of the Joiners Arms interview at the Museum of London, organized the UCL Urban Lab, recorded in the Urban Pamphleteer #7 ("'LGBTQ+ Night-time Spaces: Past, Present & Future,'" 2018).

[163] Ibid.

'recognized' and 'included' in so-called 'LGBT-friendly organizations'. In this Chapter I return to the question of labour and (queer) 'value' in relation to the social world of 'queer activism'.

Whilst in Chapter Five I focused on the kinds of spaces and futures the promise of inclusion in this field worked to 'open-up' and for whom, in this Chapter I focus more specifically on the labour performed by the campaigners in order to carve out and 'inhabit' this promise. Building on arguments put forward in the previous Chapter, I reflect not only on the forms of labour that were required in order to inhabit inclusion but also the 'queer value' which ensued from their performance, and ultimately, to whom and/or what this accrued. In so doing, I also think about how this labour and its 'queer value' resemble to and/or differ from that performed and (re)produced in the 'diversity world' of business, and what this can tell us about inclusion and the discourse of LGBT-friendliness more broadly and in relation to extant critical conversations in the field.

In Chapter Five I primarily drew from data co-produced through ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the months leading up to the Development Planning Committee meetings in which the application was due to be discussed. In this Chapter however, I mostly draw from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the aftermath of the redevelopment's application ultimate approval on October 2017. I emphasize this distinction because, after being deferred at the first Development Planning Committee meeting in August 2017 on grounds that it "did not go far enough"[164] in addressing "the LGBT community's concerns"[165], the property developers were pressured by the Council to cede ground on the terms and conditions of the agreement. The revised terms of the agreement now included an extended 25-year lease, the recommendation that the new venue be granted similar opening hours (subject to approval from the

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[164] Fieldnotes, August 2017; (Conservative) Councilor Chapman at the Development Planning Committee meeting held at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall. It is interesting to note here, as some of the campaigners did, that Chapman's argument aligned with homonationalist narratives (Puar, 2007), whereby, throughout the meeting, he made frequent references to the importance of supporting Tower Hamlets' 'LGBT community' in light of the area's 'homophobic Muslim population'. Thus, whilst Chapman's vote to defer the redevelopment application ultimately served the campaign by forcing the developers to cede more ground, his motivations buttressed rather than challenged dominant LGBT-friendly discourses.
[165] Ibid.

licensing board), a requirement for property developers to contribute a total of £130,000 towards fit-out costs, a 12-month rent-free period, a 22% extension of the floor space, the (re)provision of a smoking area and sound-proofing for the venue. Thus whilst in Chapter Five the data primarily comprised campaigners' opposition to the redevelopment, in this Chapter I focus on their retrospective thoughts after a 'formal' decision was reached, a decision which saw the terms of inclusion 'expanded' to address some, but not all, of the campaigners' demands.

Two forms of (unpaid) labour were identified as significant components of efforts to 'expand' the promise of inclusion in the field. The first (discussed in section 7.1.1) is a form of material labour which describes the substantial, unpaid and painstaking paper*work* performed by the campaigners in order to "try… to put a stop to the proposed Joiners development"[166]. I argue that whilst this form of labour was instrumental in 'expanding' the promise of inclusion to address some of the campaigners points of opposition, its performance is nevertheless problematic because it outsources the labour of inclusion to self-responsibilized non-state actors and their ability and willingness to manage competing demands and expectations with implications for those (campaigners and campaigns) unwilling and/or unable to do so. I then discuss another form of (affective) labour (in section 7.1.2) which relates to the campaigners' engagements with the media and ███████████████, and which works to describe a multitude of emotionally charged 'misunderstandings' about the value of 'diversity'. I argue that this demonstrates that the 'benevolence' with which promises of LGBT inclusion are bestowed, and the 'good feelings' which accompany displays of 'LGBT-friendliness' more broadly (Ahmed, 2008b), require insidious, 'affectively alienating' (Ahmed, 2008a, 2014) and taxing forms labour which, whilst marking a qualitative shift from those required in order to challenge and inhabit the discourses and practices of homophobia, are nevertheless still violent, exhausting, "painful and shocking"[167], requiring campaigners to (self-)manage their social relationships in 'entrepreneurial' ways. I argue that both these forms of labour reproduce insidious forms of neoliberal governance.

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[166] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, during the Development Planning Committee meeting held at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.
[167] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Reg, in relation to *The Guardian* article (Neate, 2017a) at a campaign meeting at Coleen's house.

I then reflect on the 'queer value' which accrued from the performance of these forms of labour. Initially, I argue that, failing to overturn the neoliberal power structures of who "gets to decide what gets given priority within a neighbourhood or geographic space"[168], the 'queer value' which accrued from the campaigners' performance of paper*work* and affective labour was (re)appropriated by institutional and corporate actors to buttress neoliberal understandings of 'diversity' and 'LGBT-friendliness' (section 7.2.1). At the same time, reflecting on the campaigners' efforts at "being a thorn in the side"[169] of the property developers, I argue that the performance of these forms of labour also redressed some of the redistributive issues discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.2), and, ultimately, created 'queer value' for the campaigners, engendering a space with a greater potential for 'wholehearted queerness' than the original 'Trojan Horse' agreement had intended (section 7.2.2). I then conclude by reflecting on how this labour and its 'queer value' resemble to and/or differ from that performed and (re)produced in the 'diversity world' of business, and trace the contribution that these reflections make to the broader critical field of diversity and inclusion and queer OS (section 7.3).

7.1   It took three years of unpaid labour

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7.1.2 *Affective labour: on affect aliens and 'bullshit'*

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7.2   The 'queer value' of (queer) activism

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7.2.1 'We still don't have any power'

7.2.2 A greater 'potential for wholehearted queerness'

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7.3   Discussion

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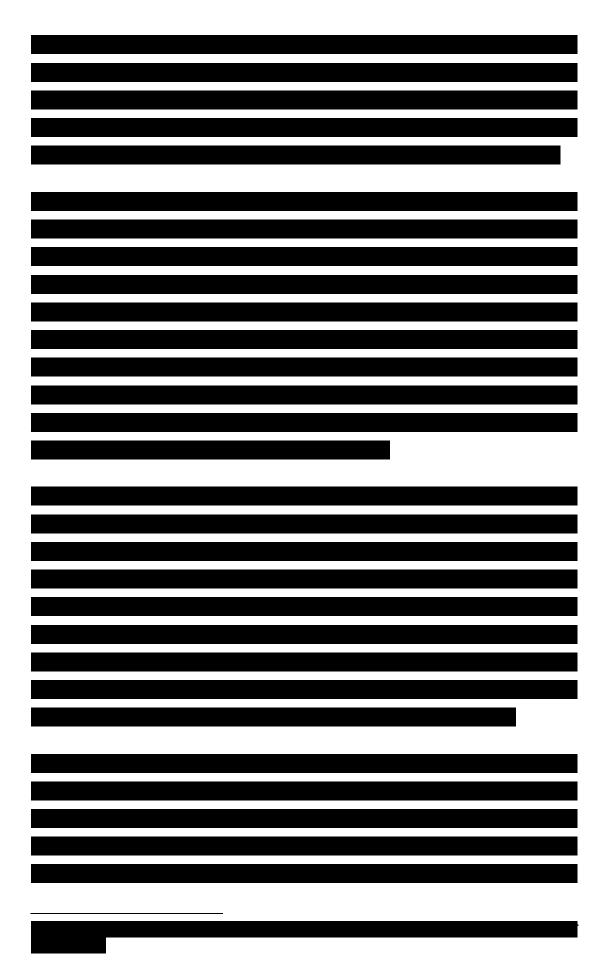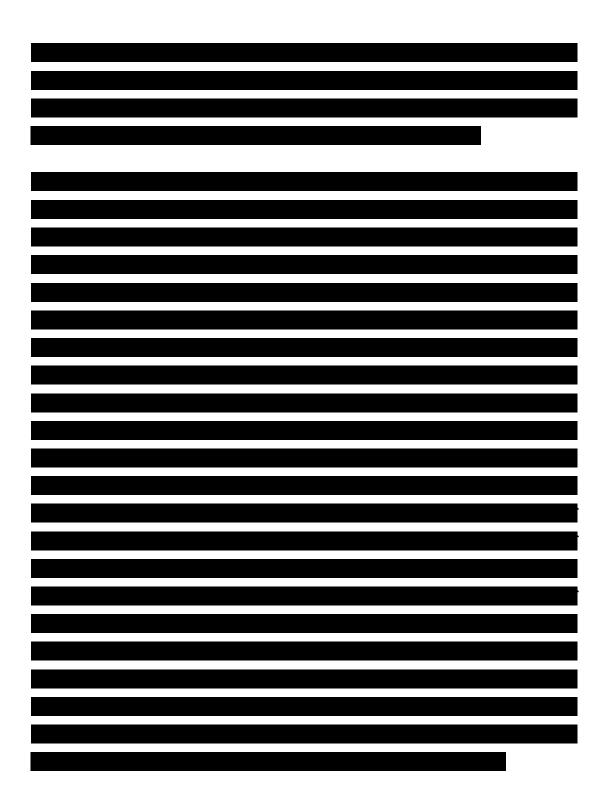██

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[216] Ibid.

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PART IV

CONCLUSIONS

Resisting Inclusion: On Failure, Affirmative Sabotage and Queer Utopia

> "I don't wanna work and they can't fire me because… well you can imagine the PR scandal…I am basically unfireable"[218]

> "…it's bigger than you, it's bigger than all of us. But…I can tell you, we can use this thing, personally I'd rather this than being called a dyke"[219]

> "I guess the idea of uncertainty and unpredictability is what excites me, that we're opening some doors into the future, that none of us might even ever walk through them…"[220]

The stories of the participants featured in this project thus far reveal that 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects are engaged in various struggles to "make viable lives, to cobble together resources that enable the fulfilment of- and occasionally resistance to-norms" (Crosby et al., 2012, p134). At times these efforts, whilst successful, "have made them available for exploitation" (Ibid). At other times, they have failed, revealing the precarious and fraught nature of inclusion itself. Indeed it appears that the production of demands for recognition and for 'friendliness', however appealing and seductive, often sustains conditions of maldistribution, 'unfriendliness' and exclusion.

This was evident, albeit in different ways, both in the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism'. In the former it seems that although inclusion was individually available to some 'successful', 'entrepreneurial', 'extra-ordinary' and

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[218] Interview with Helen, September 2018.
[219] Interview with Tilda, March 2018.
[220] Fieldnotes, September 2018; Reg, during a public campaign meeting at Hackney Showroom.

'productive' LGBT* subjects, this was only on condition that they performed their gender/sexuality in 'the right way' and added "something deemed to be of value" (Tyler, 2018, p63), with consequences for those unable and/or unwilling to do so. In the latter, inclusion' required painful and exhausting forms of (unpaid) labour which, whilst enabling campaigners to extend the promise of inclusion to address a number of their demands, ultimately failed to challenge gentrification and alter the conditions which had led to the pub's closure. As the campaign enters its fifth year and there's *still* nowhere 'wonky' left to go, the progressive promises of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness-for spaces to be 'oneself', for emancipation- appear remarkably more suspect than its proponents would like to believe. Ultimately, as Tyler (2018) argues, "[i]f the freedom to be oneself…is one that only 'some' have won… this means simply replicating rather than tackling hierarchies of recognition in the name of 'inclusion'" (p63).

It is in these moments of 'failure' and contradiction that the limits of inclusion are made most visible. It is in these moments that the 'cruelly optimistic' (Berlant, 2006) relations around which desires for recognition are organized are revealed. And it is in these moments, as briefly discussed at the end of the previous Chapter (Seven, section 7.2.2), that the critical and political potential of queer(ness) in expanding what it means be(come) a gender/sexual subject and contesting the normativities through which we organize our lives, is most necessary.

Indeed, whereas in Chapter Four (section 4.3) I raised some questions with regards to queer theory's potential to challenge neoliberal normativities, and in particular, the ways in which "the longstanding embrace of [gender/sexual] non-conformity as a mode of resistance to normalization is suspiciously neoliberal" (Winnubst, 2012, 79), it does nevertheless seem that queer*ing* may offer some invaluably fruitful avenues from which to start thinking about ways of resisting and/or undoing some of the exclusionary dynamics of inclusion. In particular, scholars working on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism have mobilized queer*ing* to argue that doing inclusion in tandem with processes of capital accumulation yields a politics of recognition which is simply unequipped to deal with the contemporary exclusionary dynamics of neoliberal capitalism (El-Tayeb, 2012; Grzanka & Mann, 2014; Halberstam, Muñoz, Eng, 2005; Puar, 2011; Rao, 2015). It is this which, in their eyes,

should be the goal of queer politics and gender/sexual politics more broadly: not the recognition of some gender/sexual Others under existing socio-economic regimes, but the mobilization of queer*ness* to challenge the exclusionary and violent dynamics of neoliberal capitalism in pursuit of social justice.

Of course 'justice' should not be read "as a universally agreed value with fixed meaning" (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p5) and may mean different things to different people. For some of the participants discussed in this Chapter, 'justice' means making 'LGBT-friendly' organizational contexts more 'liveable' and more 'inclusive'. For others, it means challenging the very premise of inclusion and the normative belief that the discourse of LGBT-friendliness is something desirable and/or equipped to the task of challenging exclusion altogether. Whilst aware of the potentially problematic nature of the exercise that is adjudicating what 'counts' as 'social justice', I also argue that it is crucial for a 'critically queer' approach to 'LGBT-friendliness' to insist that "such a system is never as good as it gets" (Davis, 2013, p403) and to approach inclusion in a way that not simply acknowledges the "complex web of economic, social and political forces" (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p5) that affect its shape and operation, but that also strives to tackle questions of power and ultimately undo their nefarious and insidious operations. Put simply, I follow Tyler (2018) in making the (normative) claim that to count as a 'good' [read: socially just] life, "the good life has to be defined and lived so that it does not presuppose inequality and exploitation" (p63).

To this end, in this last ethnographic chapter of the thesis, I build upon queer challenges to neoliberalism to explore the nature of, and the opportunities for, building a socially just and good life amid and beyond promises of LGBT inclusion. I do so not in order provide an exhaustive account of how the discourse of LGBT-friendliness could be challenged, but to reflect on what resistance to neoliberal inclusion might look like in the situated ethnographic contexts in which this study unfolded and to offer glimpses of queer(er) organizational realities. Borrowing from a post-structuralist perspective an understanding of resistance as always and already contaminated by power (Bowring, 2004; Castro Varela, Dhawan & Engel, 2012; Jones & Stablein, 2006; Juris, 2007) and tracing the mutual imbrication between power and resistance in the field, I demonstrate how the discourse of LGBT-friendliness may

operate both "as a site of complicity in neoliberalism *and* of resistance" (Tzanakou & Pearce, 2019, p3), and the multiple and often 'improvised' (Mir, Mir & Wong, 2006, p15) opportunities that can be negotiated to shift the balance in favour of the latter. In so doing, I contribute to both queer OS scholarship by showing how queer perspective, whilst useful, might have to come to terms with the fact that the discourse of 'inclusion' and 'LGBT-friendliness' may ultimately be something that "we cannot not want" (Dhawan et al., 2016, p35), and to critical scholarship on inclusion by outlining the situated practices of resistance through which 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects are (re)working its norms.

8.1   Failure as resistance (and its limits)

From queer theory's celebration of 'no futures' and 'death drives' (Edelman, 1998, 2004), to feminist celebrations of the figure of the 'kill-joy' (Ahmed, 2008b, 2010b; Swan, 2017), critical scholars have invested a considerable amount of energy in positing failure- to be productive, to (re)produce, to be happy, to succeed- as a crucial site of resistance (Halberstam, 2011). After all, failing is not only "something queers do and have always done exceptionally well" (Halberstam, 2011, p1). But also, in light of 'LGBT-friendly' neoliberal narratives which posit 'success' as an attainable and desirable goal for (previously excluded) LGBT* subjects, failing- to be successful, to participate, to be included, to straighten-up- could be read as a highly disruptive and troublesome practice.

In the latter part of Chapter Six (section 6.2) we saw glimpses of failure: failure to perform gender/sexuality in the 'right' way, failure to (re)produce value for the organization, failure to be(come) a 'role model', and ultimately, failure to be(come) included. In this section I pick up on some of these points to detail how failure could be read as a form of resistance to inclusion. In the first part (section 8.1.1) I describe how a trans woman in the 'diversity world' of business used the discourse of LGBT-friendliness to buttress her failure to be a "good worker"[221] and, ultimately, to make herself "unfireable"[222]. Failure here disrupts the "fields of normalization" (Rumens,

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[221] Interview with Helen, September 2018.
[222] Ibid.

2017, p232) which require LGBT* subjects to be productive in order to be(come) included and is a product of, and an act of resistance against, the business rationales which fuel 'LGBT-friendliness' in organizations. At the same time, I argue that this form of resistance is also limited on two main accounts. Firstly, operating at an individual level, it does not to disrupt the broader hegemonic understandings by which LGBT* subjects are constructed as 'valuable' organizational resources. Secondly, whilst failure may be enacted to disrupt organizational norms, not everyone wants and/or can afford to fail. Therefore, in the second part (section 8.1.2) I draw on data emerging from an interview encounter with Andrea (previously explored in Chapter Six, section 6.2.3), to argue that whilst in some cases (queer) failure may open-up opportunities to disrupt and resist the norms of inclusion in pursuit of greater freedom, it also comes with its costs, and that queer interrogations of failure would benefit from recognizing the pleasure, and the necessity, of recognition and the "myriad material locations different LGBT people inhabit" (Rumens, 2018, para. 11.35).

8.1.1 'Unfireable': Failing to be(come) productive

Helen is a White trans woman who works as a business analyst for an 'LGBT-friendly' insurance firm. I first contacted Helen after reading an article[223] about her in a prominent financial publication. The article was written as part of a 'special edition' on LGBT 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in business organizations, featuring Helen as a 'human interest story' and an example of how and why it 'is better to come out' at work. Why exactly it is 'better' to come out at work remained unclear, as the article simply cited the fact that Helen hasn't received any negative comments as evidence of 'progress'. Nevertheless, the article heralded her as 'trailblazer' in the field of LGBT inclusion, constructing her 'coming out' in the firm not only as an example of the organization's 'LGBT-friendliness' but also of "how far the industry has come in promoting acceptance". In September 2018 I arranged to meet her in a restaurant close to her work to have lunch. The observations and arguments which follow are based on

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[223] I refrain from referencing the article to maintain anonymity.

a (recorded) conversation I had with Helen and fieldnotes I took of our conversation during and after our meeting.

In my fieldnotes after the meeting, I note that Helen "was not the kind of employee I had imagined her to be"[224]. This was partly because, having been conducting fieldwork in the 'diversity world' of business for over a year by then, I was accustomed to highly entrepreneurial LGBT* subjects who were eager to tell me how being 'included' had made them much more productive and how 'enthusiastic' they were about their organizations commitment to 'LGBT-friendliness'. And also partly given that the article had painted a very different picture of her: an "LGBT role model", a pioneer of inclusion, and someone who was very active, engaged in, and supportive of 'LGBT-friendly' organizational discourses and initiatives.

A few minutes into our meeting however, I realized this was not how Helen saw herself. Helen explains that she was asked to be featured in the article by her boss. According to Helen, her boss had stated, in no uncertain terms, that her participation would be "great for the organization"[225] and for other "closeted LGBT employees". "Don't you want to be a role model for others?" He (apparently) prevailed, appealing to Helen's sense of responsibility, even guilt perhaps. Whilst initially this didn't faze her, her boss ultimately made it clear that her lack of participation would be interpreted as a lack of 'commitment to the organization' at her incoming annual appraisal. Helen subsequently agreed to be featured, going from being seduced, to being "somewhat 'coercively' included" (Adamson, Kelan, Lewis, Rumens & Slíwa, 2016).

Whilst in previous Chapters being 'included' through coercion and/or appealing to one's sense of 'responsibility' often sustained conditions of exclusion and mis-recognition (in Kaneila's, Emad's, and Andrea's case especially, in section 6.1.3, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 respectively), in this case, Helen is able to turn this promise on its head to disrupt the "fields of normalization" (Rumens, 2017, p232) which require LGBT* subjects to be productive in order to be(come) included. "I'm pretty lazy", she explains when I ask her about her workplace experiences. "It's not that I don't like my job, it's

[224] Fieldnotes, September 2018.
[225] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (8.1.1) are drawn from my interview encounter with Helen, which took place in September 2018.

just that…I really don't care about it". Intrigued by the answer, I asked her whether this attitude had caused her problems at work. Her response revealed, much to my surprise, that Helen explicitly used her 'diversity' in a context that is, in her words, "so into diversity and all that crap", in order to buttress her 'laziness' and her failure to work:

> "I don't wanna work and they can't fire me because… well you can imagine the PR scandal: first trans woman to come out at work, fired. It's funny you mentioned that article, its done wonders for me. It's so funny because at first I didn't even wanna do it [the interview for the article]. Since then, I am basically unfireable. It's like a big elephant in the room you know. I know they know that I know this is the case"

Thus, in contrast to the picture painted of her in the article, which poignantly described her as a 'caring' and 'productive' employee, Helen emerges here as remarkably uncaring and complacent worker. Moreover, and interestingly, whilst in Chapter Six (section 6.2.2) I discussed how Anita interpreted her 'coming out' as trans in the workplace as something which made her 'get demoted' and 'get stuck', Helen's interprets her 'coming out' as something which made her 'unfireable'. Reflecting on where the difference between these experiences might lie, I asked Helen to explain why she thinks she is 'unfireable'. What emerges is that, in a context where 'LGBT-friendliness' is valued, Helen is able to turn the norm of productivity on its head.

Indeed, Helen goes on to explain that she had never been a "very good worker", just "doing [her] job…the minimum if possible", and had even been "on the cusp of being fired a few times back in 2007 and definitely in 2009, after the crash". Somehow however, she pulled through whilst many of her colleagues lost their jobs. "I was one of the lucky ones", she clarifies. In 2016, Helen came out as trans at work. A few months after coming out Helen had her "annual appraisal", the "first since [she] had come out as trans". It is here that she realized she was "unfireable":

> "Usually the thing [the appraisal] can be a very aggressive experience…they are quite aggressive in saying that I'm not doing my job properly, that they're going to get rid of me if I don't do better, that this is my last chance…[but]…during *that* appraisal, they were not aggressive, like, they were scared?...It

was all very confusing, something had changed. And then, when I left that meeting, I realized…They are scared of the PR scandal, as I said. And I know this is true because I've been doing *even less* now [laughter]!...I guess it suits them, they look very trans inclusive and diverse and what not, but it also works for me, why do you think I can be here today, it's been almost two hours already, I had my lunch break before I met you [laughter]"

Of course, we can't know what truly lies behind the organization's change of mood. It might be that, as trans people are receiving increasing material protections under the Gender Recognition Act (2004) and the Equality Act (2010) organizations are increasingly aware of the legal implications of firing trans employees. Nevertheless, Helen interprets the organization's change of mood in terms of the value of being classified as 'LGBT-friendly'. What thus emerges from this ethnographic encounter is that, in the context of an organization who is interested in explicitly marketing itself as "LGBT-friendly", diverse subjects can use their 'diversity' to work "even less". This situation is akin to Zanoni's (2011) reflections on how 'diversity' can become "labour's resistance to exploitation" (p116). However, whilst Zanoni (2011) primarily focuses on how supervisors' and managers' construct (some) diverse subjects, in "negative terms" (p117), as "unwilling to work" (p116), in this case it is the diverse subject herself who turns the confluence between 'LGBT-friendliness' and profitability on its head to enact "labour's resistance against capital" (Ibid, p117).

Of course, many have argued that neoliberal regimes do not in fact reward 'hard work' with 'success' anyway and that many of the 'successes' which are promised as a return for 'productivity' are actually a product of class and racial privileges (Cahn, 2008; Ruben & Maskovsky, 2008). In this sense perhaps, Helen, a White woman from a middle-class background, embodies not the exception to the rule but rather the ways in which 'success' in a neoliberal world is always already prefigured according to the (re)production of class and racial norms and normativities in which some (almost) always 'win' and some (almost) always 'lose'. At the same time, her story points to some of the ways in which resistance can be enacted to subvert the terms of inclusion in 'LGBT-friendly organizations'.

This resistance takes the form of failure- failure to productive, failure to be efficient, to not be lazy, to be a 'good worker- and is used by Helen in pursuit of her own goals. Failure is, in this case, both a product of neoliberal logics which define 'LGBT-friendliness' as a financially valuable organizational goal and an act of resistance against it. On the one hand, it rejects the norms governing subjective viability in the field and opposes the power relations within and through which 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects are constituted as productive, signalling a disengagement from 'LGBT-friendliness'- 'lazy', for example- and even a disengagement from work itself- 'why do you think I can be here today'.

At the same time however, I would argue that this strategy also clearly fails to challenge neoliberal structures and discourses from which it arises. Firstly, it is clear that the idea that LGBT* subjects have to be 'valuable' to the organization in some way, shape, or form in order to be(come) included, remains intact. Indeed, Helen's failure to be organizationally valuable in terms of her workplace productivity only seems to work because this value is somewhat recuperated at a PR or marketing level. As some of the participants' stories discussed in Chapter Six reveal, Anita and Emad in particular (section 6.2.2), if this 'value' is not recuperated at some level, the result is vulnerability and exclusion. Thus it seems that if the aim is simply to challenge the norm which requires LGBT* subjects to be(come) productive in order to be(come) included, then this strategy might succeed for some (individual, individualized) 'diverse' subjects, the 'trailblazers'. Yet, if the aim is to disrupt the broader hegemonic understandings by which LGBT* subjects are constructed as 'valuable' organizational resources, then it is unclear how failing as an individual might lead to broader radical change (also see: Hunter, 2017).

Secondly, failure in this case is dis-organized and operationalized at an individual level, in terms of Helen's individual withholding of labour, and thus may not yield important dividends to other LGBT employee struggles. In fact, it may even work against them, for in becoming 'unfireable' by becoming a 'token' trans employee, Helen may render other LGBT* subjects more 'fireable' as the organization is now (non-performatively) protected against accusations of 'LGBT-unfriendliness' (Ahmed, 2012a, also see: Linton, 2017; Zanoni, Thoelen and Ybema, 2017). Thus, whilst failure to be(come) productive could be read as a form of (queer) resistance, it

is also complicit in the (re)production of the very systems from which it emerges, whereby resistance is still understood in terms of individual fulfilment, as a 'project of the self' (Grey, 1994) and which thus may, paradoxically, undermine alternative(ly collective) forms of labour organizing. Thus, as Fleming (2007) has argued, it is of paramount importance for critical OS to "move beyond simply classifying acts of misbehaviours and study the multiple political *outcomes* of resistance in relation to social justice issues" (p252, emphasis added). In what follows, I offer another reading of failure by drawing from an interview encounter with Andrea, first introduced in Chapter Six (section 6.2.3).

8.1.2   'In order to move on': queering (queer) failure

In the case above, and whilst not without its problems, failing seems to open-up opportunities for inhabiting promises of LGBT inclusion in resistant ways. At the same time, my encounter with Andrea (introduced in Chapter Six, section 6.2.3) forces us to rethink our allegiance to (queer) failure. In Chapter Six (section 6.2.3) I argued that becoming included and becoming an 'LGBT role model' in the ('LGBT-friendly') organization required Andrea to 'straighten up' the 'slant' of her queer desires and could thus be read as a form of normalization. Andrea fails to do so, which leads her to conclude that she doesn't "feel… [she] fit[s] the thing"[226]. Whilst initially from a queer perspective we might want to celebrate this failure to be(come) 'straightened' as a form of resistance to the normalizing tendencies of promises of LGBT inclusion, Andrea's reflections, offered towards the end of our two-hour interview, challenge critical scholars' allegiance to failure, anti-normativity and ultimately, perhaps, to resistance itself. Indeed, whilst Andrea is initially "annoyed" that her (queer) desires (to *not* choose a pronoun, to *not* be a 'role model', for example) are not accommodated, and wonders whether the 'role model' training program, and the discourse of LGBT-friendliness in general, may simply be a capitalist subterfuge designed to extract more value for the organization, she ultimately concludes that attending the 'role model' training program was:

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[226] Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (8.1.2) are drawn from my interview encounter with Andrea, which took place in March 2017.

> "A good thing because actually they [the trainers] will try to bring you on…what society wants you to be, or what they understand as a 'role model'… it helps you to know where you fit and what counts as normal behaviour. And sometimes I say, maybe I need it to in order to move on, or in order to make [the organization] happy"

Here the angry queer critical scholar of inclusion might say 'how dare they say what counts as normal behaviour!' But clearly this reading would simplistically accuse Andrea of 'giving in' to normativity rather than acknowledge the seductive appeal of inclusion. After our interview I note in my fieldnotes that I felt "sad"[227] for Andrea, and that I was "humbled"[228] and "moved"[229] by the clarity with which she posed the problem of inclusion: that no matter how queer, wonky and unintelligible our desires may be, and no matter how violent, unjust and problematic the straightening tendencies of 'LGBT-friendliness' might be, and how virulently they should be opposed and resisted, life would (probably) be easier if we could just 'fit', if we could just 'move on'. In Andrea's case, a genderqueer person, an affect-alien (Ahmed, 2014) of sorts, I found a feeling of ease in the idea of just 'fitting in'[230].

In this sense, Andrea's remarks are reminiscent of Melissa Tyler's (2018) comments regarding "the risks associated with questioning inclusion" (p62). As Tyler (2018) notes at the end of her article, these risks may be not simply "political or tactical, but ontological" (Ibid) in the sense that they threaten the well-being of the subject. As Tyler (2018) continues, challenging inclusion may indeed perpetuate "what is likely to be an already precarious, outsider status; saying, 'I don't recognize the terms on which you are offering to recognize me' is a very difficult position to be in, or to ask others to adopt, particularly when our livelihoods or even our very lives might be at stake" (p63).

My encounter with Andrea, read in light of Tyler's (2018) comments, should thus invite us to reconsider, or at least problematize, our allegiance to queer celebrations of

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[227] Fieldnotes, March 2017.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] This also echoes Jeanette Winterson's autobiography *Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal* (2012), which, amongst other things, discusses the tensions between the pursuit of 'happiness' and the pursuit of 'normality'.

failure. Certainly in light of the narratives of success around which 'LGBT-friendliness' is organized, failing to be(come) productive and/or failing to 'straighten up' the slant of gender/sexuality and of our desires more broadly certainly offers critical scholars fertile ground from which to theorize resistance. In this context, failing to 'join in', to (enthusiastically) engage, to be(come) productive and to (re)produce norms becomes a subtle act of subversion (Mir et al., 2006, p15). At the same time, resistance is always "polysemic, shifting and unstable" (Harding et al., 2017, p1211). In some cases, therefore, "what appears to be willing compliance… may itself be a form of resistance, a saying 'no' to resistance" (Harding et al., 2017, p1211). This seems to be the case in Andrea's story, where failure to know where to 'fit' accrues considerable costs, and where, ultimately, saying no to failure and to anti-normativity could itself be read as an act of resistance to the various forms of exclusion which Andrea experiences in the organization (e.g. being required to choose a name and a pronoun in order to 'do' the transgender 'approach') as a result of her gendered embodiment. Here, paradoxically, whilst Andrea could be read as the quintessential failed subject for failing to (re)produce and embody the various expectations and (hetero- and cis-)normativities which she expected to embody in order to become included, and could thus perhaps be seen as 'free' from these, she reads submission to these as providing her with the ultimate freedom: the freedom to 'move on'.

As organizations continue "to exploit our need for recognition" (Tyler, 2018, p64), explorations of (queer) resistance in OS would thus also benefit from interrogating "the universality of the desire…to be free" (Mahmood, 2001, p206), or indeed, the universality of the ability and/or willingness to be queer: to be 'out of line' with and 'wonky' in relation to the straightening logics of 'LGBT-friendliness'. Ultimately, what Andrea's case thus reveals is that an analysis of (queer) failure must always account for the partiality of polarising understandings of (anti-)normativity. As Browne and Baskhi (2011) note, "[s]uch polarisation risks overlooking how complex power relations exist in all negotiations of identity positions and life situations [whereby] the 'transgressive' queer that is opposed to the 'homonormative' gay man are figures that do not hold up under scrutiny (p182). Moreover, as Rumens (2018) notes, "not all types of queer failure may be desirable given the various material locations different LGBT+ and queer people inhabit" (para. 11.35). There thus may

nothing inherently queer or resistant about failure, whereby the task of the (queer) ethnographer becomes that of detailing how failure is enacted and operationalized in ethnographically situated ways, holding the discourses and practices of LGBT inclusion accountable in all their complexity- their exhausting and exclusionary demands *as well as* the 'feel good' and enticing effects of its promises- if only for the sake of ethnographically doing justice to some of our participants for whom 'fitting in', not even 'succeeding' perhaps but 'not failing', may not only 'feel good' but be a matter of survival.

8.2 Affirmatively sabotaging inclusion

Whilst in the two cases explored above (queer) failure was primarily mobilized as a form of resistance involving a rejection and/or circumvention of norms, 'affirmative sabotage' offers an alternatively, 'positive' or, indeed, 'affirmative', way of resisting the norms governing viability in the field. In an interview with *The New York Times* (Evans & Spivak, 2016)*,* Gayatri C. Spivak, who is credited with theorizing and popularizing the term (Spivak, 2012), explains her use of '*affirmative* sabotage' as an attempt to:

"…gloss on the usual meaning of sabotage: the deliberate ruining of the master's machine from the inside. Affirmative sabotage doesn't just ruin; the idea is of entering the discourse that you are criticizing fully, so that you can turn it around from inside. The only real and effective way you can sabotage something this way is when you are working intimately within it" (Evans & Spivak, 2016).

Key to the concept of 'affirmative sabotage' is thus not a *complete* rejection of norms, but their obstruction, disruption, interference, and, ultimately, their "creative reconfiguration" (Dhawan, 2014, p71). Thus whilst in Helen's case we might be tempted to read her failure to be(come) productive as a way of sabotaging the (efficiency and business of the) 'LGBT-friendly organization', the prefix 'affirmative' denotes a qualitatively different kind of engagement. As Dutta (2018), who uses the concept to explore sex workers' activism in India eloquently puts it, "the word affirmative as a prefix works to render… sabotage…a creative enterprise, rather than a destructive one…[this] articulation activates a practice in which those who were not

intended to be the beneficiaries of a system do not merely resist its workings to render it useless by shutting it down; instead, they work at putting such machinery to a different usage that proves to be more politically beneficial" (p234). Thus, whilst in many ways 'affirmative sabotage' may resemble failure, it also supplements it by being directed towards the overturning of structures of power, the benefit of the collectivity, and ultimately, a "reconfiguration and supplementation" (Dhawan, 2014, p71) of norms, as opposed to their rejection.

In what follows I detail two examples from the field in which the machinery of 'LGBT-friendliness' was turned into a tool for its transgression to the benefit of those 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects who would otherwise not emerge as its primary beneficiaries. In the first example, a lesbian woman who works in an accountancy firm agrees to feature on the front cover of the organizational newsletter's 'Pride Issue' to benefit a colleague, making "their life a little better"[231]. In the second example, a piece of research commissioned by the Greater London Authority as part of its efforts at 'celebrating diversity' in London is strategically co-opted by queer activists to critique gentrification in the city. Whilst the kinds of worlds and possibilities opened-up by both these examples of resistance arguably do not approximate the radical organizational futures critical queer scholars have in mind, they nevertheless show the ways in which the discourse of LGBT-friendliness- and in particular, its non-performative, straightening and de-politicizing effects- can be turned around and put to other uses in more creative ways that work "against the logic on which the power inequalities within those relations are founded" (Dutta, 2018, p233).

8.2.1 *'It's bigger than all of us'*

Tilda is White woman who identifies as a lesbian and works as an accountant in a large corporate accountancy firm. We met through a mutual friend at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, one of the oldest LGBT pubs in London, on a summery July evening in 2018. Upon discovering I was conducting research about the discourse of LGBT-friendliness in organizations, and in particular, that I was sceptical of its stated benefits

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[231] Interview with Tilda, March 2018.

and promises, Tilda exclaimed that she had "many opinions on the matter"[232], opinions that she'd "like to share"[233] with me. I thus arranged to meet Tilda a few weeks later in a pub after work. Once again, the observations and arguments which follow are based on a (recorded) conversation I had with Tilda, and fieldnotes I took of our conversation during and after our meeting.

Tilda is in her 60s and has worked at the accountancy firm for over 30 years, where she began her career with an entry-level job. She explains that for the first "20 to 25 years"[234] of these, the firm "could not care less about LGBT people". But more recently, the organization had started taking "special interest" in matters of LGBT inclusion. Whilst Tilda admits she is "unsure" as to why this may have been the case, she attributes this emergent interest to the fact that "the industry was becoming more 'LGBT-friendly', you know, all the other firms were now on the Stonewall thingy [the Workplace Equality Index]", and, in particular, to the fact that their "biggest competitor was listed as a Star Performer [in the Workplace Equality Index] in 2014, that really pissed them off". Over the course of the last four years, Tilda has observed the firm "bend over backwards" to try and "please the gays":

> "It was all quite funny, you know, watching them trying to do this [LGBT-friendly] thing…Watching them trying to, all of a sudden, starting to use that very condescending language of 'oh, we just want you to bring your real self to work, you're safe here, you can be who you are', as if all us gays hadn't already developed very creative ways of testing the waters by now. We read through all their bullshit. We knew it was just a PR thing. I might be an accountant, I know what you lot think of us, but that doesn't mean we're all dupes and complicit! I was an activist back in the 80s, I know I don't look like it now [points to her outfit, a white shirt, a grey blazer and grey trousers], but I can be a radical too [laughs]"

Tilda proved to be the perfect interlocutor for the kind of questions- about resistance and about 'so what do we do now'- that I was beginning to address at the time. Indeed,

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232 Fieldnotes, March 2018.
233 Ibid.
234 Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and observations referred to in this section (8.2.1) are drawn from my interview encounter with Tilda, which took place in March 2018.

she not only possessed a remarkable level of self-awareness about the various relations of power within which 'LGBT-friendliness' and 'the gays' can emerge as part of an organization's business strategy, but also shared with me a desire to enable more 'radical' possibilities of engagement with this discourse, in all its complexities. I thus, boldly, asked her what she had done in the organization to be 'radical', playing along with her (sarcastic and implied) representation of me as too young, too radical and definitely too naïve to recognize her, the older accountant in a suit, as a potential accomplice. Her response exposed one possible way in which (non-performative) 'special interests' in LGBT* subjects and 'LGBT-friendliness' can be subverted, co-opted, and turned around in the achievement of more radical objectives:

> "Well, I'm very glad you asked [jokingly]. The first thing that comes to mind is that right at the beginning of this whole thing the organization wanted to do a 'Pride Issue' in their June newsletter. And basically, long story short, they approached me and said 'Tilda, we would like you to be on the front cover, would you please do that?'…at first I said absolutely not…But then I went back and said okay, but only if you give us gender-neutral toilets…I did the thing… [and] by the next month all toilets on alternative floors were gender-neutral…Now, I know what you're thinking, but what am I supposed to do? I work there, it pays the rent…And what are we supposed to do? It's bigger than me, it's bigger than you, it's bigger than all of us. But for example I have a non-binary friend at work… and they don't want to make a big fuss but this has made their life a little better you know, not having to choose what toilet to use. I can tell you, we can use this thing, personally I'd rather this than being called a dyke"

In this case, Tilda 'affirmatively sabotages' commitments to 'LGBT-friendliness' to redress the non-performativity of its promises. Indeed, whilst overall she is highly sceptical of her organization's sudden interest in LGBT subjects and issues, labelling these as 'bullshit', twice, and aware that (from a 'queer activism' perspective) this strategy is obviously limited ('I know what you're thinking'), she recognizes and orchestrates possibilities for disruption. Here Tilda exposes how 'LGBT-friendliness', despite all its nefarious and insidious complexities, might indeed be something that "we cannot not want" (Dhawan et al., 2016, p35), not only in the sense that it might

be better 'than being called a dyke', but also in the sense that we might not have a choice, that this is, indeed, 'bigger than all of us'.

This confirms Spivak's (2012) own reading of affirmative sabotage as enacted in relation to something "…with which we are in sympathy, enough to subvert" (p4) and which thus is dependent on an awareness of the multiple operating forms of (homophobic *and* 'LGBT-friendly') control which define the organizational lives of LGBT* subjects. Engaging in a multitude of mental negotiations, Tilda resembles Meyerson's (2001) figure of the 'tempered radical', someone who is "not wholly compliant but neither always able to take up a position of direct challenge" (in Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015, p1931), choosing what appears to be a simple and small yet nevertheless immensely significant, 'win': for her friend to live a life just slightly less dictated by the gender binaries which dominate public spaces. In this case, 'LGBT-friendliness' is 'affirmatively sabotaged' and transformed into a tool for the transgression of its non-performative [read: bullshit] commitments.

Of course, we could argue that providing gender-neutral toilets, now also included as a barometer for measuring 'LGBT-friendliness' in Stonewall's latest (as of 2018) trans-inclusive Workplace Equality Index, is also in the interest of the organization and thus not a 'radically transgressive' act. We might even speculate that 'affirmative sabotage' works in this case because Tilda's strategy does not actually question and/or reject the discourse of LGBT-friendliness. Moreover, 'social justice' is here limited to the spatio-temporal boundaries of 'the organization' and thus obviously confined in its reach to the employees of said organization.

At the same time, Tilda is able to redress its non-performativity and the organizational self-interests which dominate commitments to inclusion by making these into things that *do* something for her non-binary colleague. In so doing, she opens-up alternative ways of inhabiting 'LGBT-friendliness': not passively accepting its promises, nor simply rejecting them but rather engaging with them critically and pragmatically. In so doing she also exposes how privilege can be used to 'affirmatively sabotage' 'LGBT-friendliness' to serve 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects who, for whatever reason, are unable and/or unwilling to engage. I say this not to offer a condescending reading which posits Tilda as benevolently rescuing her non-binary colleague but as a

way of entertaining the possibility that 'affirmative sabotage' may be an interestingly productive site through which subjects who benefit from (cis, white, male, able-bodied) privilege might use these privileges to re-order the priorities of 'LGBT-friendliness' in favour of (less privileged) others.

What thus emerges from Tilda's story is that complicity and resistance may be two sides of the same coin. Indeed, as Dutta (2018) explains, "the practice of affirmative sabotage is an acknowledgement of complicity…not [as] a 'conspirational' act… [but as] a state of being in which the critic and her subject of criticism are 'folded together'" (p233). Here, unlike failure, resistance does not unfold around a question of whether one should engage or not, whether one has a 'choice' to not be complicit. Rather, resistance unfolds from a recognition that engaging is not a choice, whereby the question becomes not if, but how. In the next section I further explore this question by looking at the Friends of the Joiners Arms' engagement with a report which documented the closure of 'LGBTQ+ nightlife venues' in London.

8.2.2 *Documenting diversity: complicity or resistance?*

In 2016, the Greater London Authority (GLA) commissioned research into LGBT venues in the city with a view to informing the Mayor's cultural infrastructure plan[235] and the London Plan[236], amongst other things. The result was a report (Campkin & Marshall, 2017), product of research conducted by the UCL Urban Lab, which explored case studies of 'LGBTQ+ nightlife venues' and which found that these had fallen by 58% (from 123 to 53) between 2006 and 2017, and that these spaces are integral components of the well-being of LGBTQ+ communities in London. I first introduced the report in Chapter Three (section 3.2.2) when contextualising the closure of The Joiners Arms in relation to a number of closures affecting other 'LGBT venues' in the city.

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[235] A manifesto commitment by the Mayor, published in 2018, which identified "what London needs to sustain and develop culture up to 2030" (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p5).
[236] A spatial development strategy for the City of London which also informs Boroughs' local development plans.

Although the report was underpinned by good intentions[237], it was also undeniably part and parcel of 'global city' discourses which construct 'LGBT diversity' as a culturally and economically desirable good and an asset to increase "the global competitiveness" (Kanai, 2014, p1) of the city. Indeed, not only was the report funded by the GLA with the specific aim of serving the Mayor's 'London Plan', describes as the "most pro-LGBT+ London Plan yet" (London City Hall, 2017d), but it was also subsequently picked up by the Mayor's office PR machine and by city-wide, national and international press to buttress the added value that 'LGBT-friendliness' and 'diversity' bring to the city. Strikingly absent from the ways in which this document was cited and circulated by institutional actors was the report's claim, made in the 'context' section of the full report but actually wholly omitted from the 'Executive Summary', that gentrification, privatization and the neoliberalization of strategic planning were central components of the closures.

But perhaps most problematic is that the report worked to render The Joiners Arms into a legitimate object of (diversity) management and (thus) a target for promises of LGBT inclusion. Indeed, as argued, The Joiners Arms was seen by both its owner (David) and many former patrons (including the participants) as more than simply 'an LGBTQ+ venue'. Yet, the report 'counted' The Joiners Arms merely as 'an LGBTQ+ venue' that had closed down. And, whilst the report did produce qualitative data to consider how the closure of venues affected members of the LGBTQ+ community along racialised and gendered lines, the ways in which class affected access to these spaces and the classed dimensions of the closures were left completely unexplored. As Grundy & Smith (2007) have argued, these forms of 'professionalized' knowledge production, which are increasingly common and predominant in LGBT activist and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), "coordinate 'at a distance' the political agency of LGBT individuals" (p296) by dictating what can and what cannot be said, evidenced and proven. Thus, this effort at 'documenting diversity' (Ahmed, 2007b) can be seen as, firstly, 'straightening' the messiness and the wonkiness of gender/sexuality to fit the LGBTQ+ acronym through which the closures were

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[237] Here I am concerned with (and critical of) the ways in which the report was taken-up and circulated. Thus, whilst I do not question or challenge the authors' (best) intentions, I would also argue that this document demonstrates the ease with which (well-intentioned) efforts at tackling 'exclusion' can become (unintentionally) coopted to buttress neoliberal narratives of inclusion.

'counted', and secondly, as not only side-lining the operation of systemic inequalities but arguably also exacerbating these by rendering London into an 'LGBT-friendly city' attractive to global capital, ultimately governmentalizing modes of queer resistance.

At the same time, this case also reveals how the instruments of neoliberal capitalism can also be used against the very logics from which they emerge. The balance between these two political dispositions- complicity or resistance- seems to be determined by how these kinds of knowledge production are taken up, circulated and re-directed (Ahmed, 2007, p237). Indeed, the campaigners creatively utilized the report in to legitimize three of their main claims.

Firstly, the report was undeniably instrumental in enabling The Friends of the Joiners Arms to make the case for a more attentive focus to LGBTQ+ nightlife. On numerous occasions, from meetings with the Councillors, property developers, and ultimately, in engagements with the media, the campaigners 'affirmatively sabotaged' the 'global city' discourses which accord 'value' to diversity and, in particular, the report's finding that London had lost 58% of its LGBT venues, to justify their demand for need for an LGBT venue. "We've lost 58% of our spaces over the past 10 years. That's why a community venue is so important, this is not just about us, it's about the lives of all LGBT people in London"[238], explains Coleen to the Councillors at the roundtable discussion with the property developers, using the weight of the statistics and the credibility of the (academic) report to justify their demands, to make these seem reasonable, absolute and to imbue them with a sense of urgency. Of course, as explored in Chapter Five (section 5.2), the campaigners' understanding of 'an LGBT venue'- informed by memories of the Joiners Arms and the notion of 'wholehearted queerness'- differed greatly from what the 'sufficiently gay' reading of property developers, the media, the Council and other various institutional actors had in mind. At the same time however, the report, buttressed by academic credibility and the use of 'verifiable' quantitative methodologies, acted as a legitimizing mechanisms and enabled entry into public policy discourses (Grundy & Smith, 2007).

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[238] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Coleen, during the Development Planning Committee meeting at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

Secondly, once public policy discourses had been entered, campaigners drew from the reports' finding that redevelopment projects and, more broadly, gentrification, were both "directly" (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p47) and indirectly linked to the rate of closure to reconnect commitments to LGBT inclusion to the politics of class in (East) London. Indeed, the campaigners' use of the report, unlike that of the institutional actors cited above, read the closure of LGBTQ+ venues as "symptomatic of neoliberal urban planning strategies which have prioritized high end accommodation and chain outlets over community space" (Heath, 2018, p119). In this sense, it was explicitly critical of gentrification, the role of property developers and ultimately the role of Council in enabling such developments. In using the report to critique gentrification, privatization and efforts at making London into an 'LGBT-friendly city' attractive to global capital, campaigners ultimately transformed the report, initially a tool of the dominant neoliberal discourse, into an instrument for its transgression (Dhawan et al., 2016, p35).

Thirdly, and relatedly, the report was also 'affirmatively sabotaged' to propose an alternative conception of 'value' beyond neoliberal notions of 'modernity' and 'cosmopolitanism'. Indeed, one of the key findings of the report was that "spaces that are/were more community-oriented, rather than commercially driven, are considered vital and preferable by many within LGBTQ+ communities" (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p10). As a campaigner eloquently puts it, The Joiners Arms is "overflowing with community value"[239]. In emphasizing these claims, and explicitly positing the Joiners Arms as one of those 'community-oriented venues' that the GLA-funded report identified as fundamental to the well-being of 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects in the city, the campaigners buttressed their demand for a late-license, community-oriented, and affordable space. This reconfigured and supplemented the normativities which inform the 'global LGBT-friendly city' discourse by re-linking gender/sexuality to alternative forms of value which cannot be encapsulated by the mere presence of rainbow flags, 'LGBT-friendly' marketing and programming strategies and LGBT+ Venues Charters. These are forms of value which, as explored in Chapter Five (section 5.2 and 5.4), undo the simple dichotomy established between economy/culture and which expose the ways in which, after all, such distinction, "far

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[239] Fieldnotes, August 2017; Dev, during a campaign meeting at Coleen's house.

from marking a separation between different kinds of injustices… is essentially the ruse through which neoliberal capitalism pretends to become more inclusive" (Rao, 2015, p44).

Thus, whilst efforts at 'documenting diversity' can be read as complicit in neoliberal discourses by being part of the 'straightening' and de-politicizing machinery of 'LGBT-friendliness', they also may offer "a concrete step in assisting LGBT activists to influence public policy" (Grundy and Smith, 2007, p302), and ultimately, to engender a (more than 'merely cultural) gender/sexual politics of inclusion which re-works its normativities towards a critique of gentrification, privatization and neoliberal understandings of 'diversity'.

In this section I have demonstrated how, whilst the non-performativity and 'straightening tendencies' of 'LGBT-friendliness' can be 'affirmatively sabotaged' in the interest gender/sexual subjects, ways of being and inhabiting space and time that do not appear to be the discourse's primary beneficiaries. Once again, as in the case of queer failure, what is of paramount importance here is paying 'attention to detail' (Spivak 2012 cited in Dutta, 2018, p234) against both the homogenizing tendencies of LGBT-friendly discourses *and* those of critical(ly queer) scholars. As Spivak (2012) intelligently puts it, this is "indispensable 'because everything that is medicine can turn into poison' if it is not known 'how much to use, when and how'" (cited in Ibid). Inevitably therefore, one of the major limitations of this practice of resistance is that it does "not…have a general applicability… in all contexts" (Ibid). The other is that, of course, its reach is limited and constrained by the practical applicability of its demands. Whilst, as explained, 'affirmatively sabotaging' 'LGBT-friendliness' may re-direct its machinery in more "politically beneficial" (Ibid) ways, from a queer perspective we could argue that this remains within the intelligible boundaries of its discourse and thus may be limited by the tyranny of the present. In what follows, I detail how the practical and discursive limits of affirmative sabotage can be extended through experimenting in 'queer utopia' and entertaining broader conversations and questions concerning the kind of futures we might want and/or dare to imagine.

8.3   Queer utopia

Queer utopia offers yet another way of thinking resistance to inclusion. Queer utopia has often been described as a form of "educated hope" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p279) which gestures towards the creation of alternative future realities (Colmon, 2017; Duggan & Muñoz, 2009; Freeman, 2007; Jones, 2013; Muñoz, 2009; Telmissany, 2014). Moving away from some of the more negative or 'anti-social' dispositions (e.g. Edelman, 2004) of queer theory, queer utopia rejects the idea "that social and political organization cannot lead to emancipatory possibilities in the future" (Jones, 2013, p2) and embodies a desire to "want something else, to want beside and beyond the matrix of social controls that is our life in late Capitalism…to participate in…other form[s] of desiring…[to] desire for a new world despite an emotional/world situation that attempts to render such desiring impossible" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p278). Thus, unlike queer failure, queer utopia involves more than simply a (sometimes hopeless) rejection of norms, and, unlike affirmative sabotage, it is not bounded by the constraints of the present, but rather is future-oriented, radically anticipative, and energetically invested in thinking of gender/sexual scenarios beyond mere 'inclusion'.

My experiences in the social world of activism were replete with glimpses of queer utopia. In what follows I demonstrate how engaging in queer utopia can be a useful way of thinking beyond the often bland political imagination of the discourses and practices of LGBT inclusion. Firstly, with regards the 'straightening tendencies' of 'LGBT-friendliness', practicing queer utopia entailed locating possibilities for resistance not in fighting for the inclusion of ways of being a gender/sexual subject that already exist, but in fighting for those that are yet to be imagined. The Friends of the Joiners Arms' queer*ing* of the agreement represents one such possibility. As Coleen explained to me when asked about what organization's ultimate goals and strategies were with regards to the agreement, she answered by saying:

> "Pushing the limits… We weren't doing it for our own goals…[we were] just pushing for the queerest space"[240]

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[240] Fieldnotes, October 2017; Coleen, during a campaign meeting at Dalston Superstore.

Coleen's comments here embody a utopian understanding of (not merely 'LGBT-friendly', but 'queerest') inclusion as fighting for a space that is not yet defined, and cannot be defined, within the political framing engendered by the politics of (LGBT) identity and recognition. It is by pursuing the wonky and unexpected path of 'pushing the limits', a path that defies the straightness and predictability with which narratives of inclusion demand we give a name and a label to our desires, that we can offer a glimpse of a queer-, and not merely LGBT-, friendly future. Indeed, as Ahonen et al. (2014) remark, "…the extant debate is largely between how 'diversity' should be governed rather than whether it should be governable" (p212). In this case, rendering gender/sexuality 'ungovernable' would mean working to trouble the process of normalization not by retrieving the queer and the wonky but by committing to a twisted or wonky path of unexpected possibilities and potentialities. Queer utopia is here underpinned by collective desires for an alternative, for a life beyond "the moribund institutions" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p279) of 'LGBT-friendliness' and the normative desires these engender. Queer utopia thus moves beyond the cynicism of failure "into a generatively energetic revolutionary force" (Ibid).

At the same time, underpinning this queer utopian political imaginary is also a desire to extend beyond and bypass what Jose Esteban Muñoz (2009) would call the 'quagmire of the present'. Indeed, I first began reflecting about utopia after having a conversation with Reg, recorded in my fieldnotes, in which we realized that due to the tardiness of the planning process, which ultimately meant that the 'replacement venue' would not actually be open for (at least) another 4 years, some of us (including myself) would probably never see the new 'replacement venue'. "We might not even ever be here for it all", explains Reg, over a pint on a sunny September afternoon, after a public campaign meeting. He continues:

> We might all have moved to the suburbs by then [laughs], and
> come back and walk past there and there will be a bunch of
> queers partying into the night. We'll be going to sleep then.
> I'm old [laughs], and that will be because of us and what we
> did. How weird is that? Or there might not be any of that.
> There might be a bunch of wankers in suit working away in
> the office, or a Sainsbury's. I don't know.

Me: Does that distress you? Knowing that you might not be in there, or knowing that it might all be for nothing? Does it bother you not knowing what is really going to happen?

Reg: Maybe a little. But not really. As you know, I actually hate partying [laughs]. But also, it doesn't matter. I guess the idea of uncertainty and unpredictability is what excites me, that we're opening some doors into the future, that none of us might even ever walk through them…that is not the point. The point is that this is a chance not just to replace a gay bar, but to create something led by the community, for the community, whatever that community is and looks like[241]

It is in the realm of uncertainty that queer utopian imaginaries unfold. Unpredictability here becomes "exciting", embodying "a refusal to settle the form of the future and yet a commitment to one anyway" (Freeman, 2007, p173). And, like in Coleen's perspective proposed above, its driving force is located in "modes of expansive sociality that generate energy from shared collectivity" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p279), a collectivity that may not yet be known, that might never be known.

It is here too that queer utopia emerges as a form of resistance that is not opposed to power, but that is in constant tension with power, unfolding in relation to power itself (Foucault, 1978). As one of the campaigners eloquently put it in their 'Year in Review' blog post of December 2018:

"There was the hype of the Section 106 thing ending and us being left with the future. We were working on the present and dealing with documents and objection letters, and now you're like 'OK, fuck, what do we do with all this stuff?' Now we have a foot in the door in some ways, it's been mostly been like thinking about utopian things other than practical steps – but also the practical steps to the utopia. So it's been an interesting year in terms of seeing actually what we're made of in terms of not just opposing things, but creating things. What we're made of in terms of not just opposing a development, opposing gentrification, but actually right now, OK this is what we want a space to look like, this is what we would like to see, and this is what should be done, and this is

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[241] Fieldnotes, September 2018; Reg, after a public campaign meeting at Hackney Showroom.

the kinds of people we want involved, and the kind of organization we want to be"[242]

Indeed, practicing queer utopia entails daring to imagine alternative forms of living and dreaming into what an alternatively 'queer', and not simply 'LGBT-friendly', world may look like. That is, whilst gentrification and closure of the pub ultimately threatened social isolation, poverty, homelessness, and even the death of its iconic owner, all of which were ghostly reminders of the partiality of narratives of 'LGBT-friendly progress', the partiality of life itself, these forces also "lay the basis for a sideways step into political engagement in a disappointing world, via the educated hope, the concrete utopia" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p280). Ultimately, perhaps one of the most moving aspects of the campaign its ability to see beyond both the nostalgia of the past and the immediacy of the present to imagine and dream a (queerer) future. Queer utopia thus also goes beyond affirmative sabotage and its rootedness in the present. In utopia, "[t]he future is queerness's domain" (Muñoz, 2009, p1).

8.4   Discussion

As Lisa Duggan (2012) explains, as "the global economy of neoliberal capitalism has emerged grown and ricocheted from boom to crisis over the past four decades, its logics have acquired the status of mainstream common sense and inevitability, as asserted by the slogan, 'there is no alternative'". Indeed, throughout the fieldwork experience, my doubts about the emancipatory potential of 'inclusion' and 'LGBT-friendliness' were often met by 'pragmatic' responses which argued that whilst these discourses were far from perfect, what alternatives did we have? Why resist something that is, in Tilda's words, "bigger than all of us"? And how? Despite these arguments, some of which left me feeling naïve and disappointed, in this Chapter I have sought to demonstrate that we *do* have alternatives and provided some glimpses into how this might be possible. Whilst these alternatives do not always, like inclusion, deliver on their promises, they nevertheless demonstrate the importance of transforming institutions in ways "that meet the needs of more than us, rather than simply plead or settle for inclusion in the status quo" (Duggan, 2012).

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[242] https://thejoinersliveson.wordpress.com/news/.

In so doing, I have had to lay some of my queer and critical tools to rest and come terms with the fact that the discourse of 'inclusion' and 'LGBT-friendliness' may ultimately be things that are 'bigger than us' and/or that "we cannot not want" (Dhawan et al., 2016, p35). I felt this most ardently in Andrea's and Tilda's case, albeit differently. Regarding the former, I had to acknowledge that queer failure, and anti-normativity more generally, whilst desirable from a critically queer perspective, entail costs and compromises (for recognition, for a sense of belonging) that not everyone, and especially the most vulnerable members of 'the LGBT community', are able and/or willing to take. With regards to the latter, I was forced to come to terms with the value of pragmatism. Indeed, whilst overall I do not agree with Tilda's reading of a 'bullshit' 'LGBT-friendliness' being better 'than being called a dyke', I also read in her a tiredness, perhaps even a fear of loss (of her job, of her security, of her material gains), and ultimately a desire to just live her life unencumbered by the (queer) activism to which she dedicated a significant portion of her life. Whilst, of course, some of us do not have to privilege to live life unencumbered by activism, this recognition is nevertheless important for queer scholars interested in outlining the situated practices of resistance through which LGBT* subjects are (re)working its norms.

An engagement with the question of resistance to and complicity with neoliberal forms of inclusion thus exposes, as Dhawan et al. (2016) eloquently put it, the need "to confront the paradox that whenever categories are listed… this itemization risks concealing certain moments of oppression that are not adequately reflected by these inventories" (p35). Key to navigating this paradox is, I argue following Dhawan et al.'s (2016) own suggestion, a degree of "deconstructive vigilance" (Ibid) not only with regards to the categories used in efforts at documenting 'diversity', but also towards the multiple compromises and complicities that we must enact in order to subvert, re-order, re-organize, and re-assemble (non-performative) practices of knowledge production to serve our needs. In Tilda's case, compromise was struck to redress the non-performativity of 'LGBT-friendliness', to make a commitment to inclusion *do* something. In the case of the Friends of the Joiners Arms, compromise was enacted by engaging with and creatively co-opting the 'straightening' tendencies of a report to politicize its findings and conclusions. Whilst in the former Tilda works

towards 'social justice' in an organizational sense by trying to make the organization more 'inclusive', in the latter case 'social justice' is understood in a broader sense relating to a host of class and community struggles in the city. Yet ultimately, (re)ordering relations of power in both these ways entails a recognition and an awareness of one's embeddedness in multiple power relations which one can be opposed to whilst also engaging with in seeking to transform (Dutta, 2018).

In exploring resistance to inclusion, I thus invite critical scholars to pay attention to queer practices of resistance in detail and to engage with the multiple existences and incidences through which everyday life unfolds. Indeed, as we have seen, what may look like resistance in one case may (re)produce and hide its own exclusions in another. For example, whilst in Helen's case 'failing' (to be(come) productive) enables her to free herself from the business logics which govern 'LGBT-friendliness' in her organization, Andrea interprets her 'failure' as something which prevents her becoming free. It is thus of paramount importance, as queer critical scholars continue to document and trouble the multiple ways in which our lives are dictated and violated by the forces of (hetero- homo- and cis-)normativity, that more attention is paid to the ways in which resistance is lived and practiced in situated organizational settings without assuming the shape and/or form this may take.

Secondly, I also argue that the case studies discussed in this Chapter should encourage critical scholars of organizations to think of 'resistance' beyond the ontological boundaries of 'the organization'. Indeed, perhaps one of the greatest contributions that scholarship on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism can make to field of OS is to enable these to look "at a set of things together and understand their interlocking relationships rather than analysing them in ways that make us miss key connections" (Spade, 2011, p49). Whilst, as Zanoni and Janssens (2007) have argued, scholarship on 'diversity' and 'inclusion' has thus far seldom explicitly engaged with the question of resistance, more attention is now being paid to the need to 'resist' the various exclusions, inequalities and forms of control that are buttressed via the discourses of diversity and inclusion (e.g. Fleming & Sturdy, 2009).

At the same time, the majority of these interventions have remained within the boundaries of 'the organization' in making their claims. Indeed, as Jones and Stablein

(2006) attest, critical approaches to 'diversity' and 'inclusion' have thus far tended to "marginalize…activist campaigns which address diversity issues from the bottom up (p5). This not only heavily restricts the reach and potential of our critical endeavours, but also gravely misrepresents the specific ways in which exclusion and inequality is reproduced in relation to 'LGBT-friendliness'. Indeed, what emerges from this distinctively multi-sited engagement is not simply that narratives of inclusionary 'progress' at a corporate level (re)produce a host of inequalities and exclusions elsewhere. Bluntly put, corporate actors might, yes, be 'LGBT-friendly', but that doesn't stop them from threatening us with dismissal if we step out of line, and it doesn't stop them from closing down our spaces elsewhere.

This is most evident in Helen's and Tilda's case. Indeed, only benefitting members of the organization and arguably only those members who, as Ellen Berrey (2014) has elsewhere argued, are not the ones cleaning the 'dirty floors', these forms of 'resistance' or 'micro-emancipation' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007) ultimately failed to challenge the problematize or challenge of inclusion. Thus, whilst these might surely look and 'feel' like resistance from the vantage point of a field thus far bounded to the ontological stability of 'the organization', queer*ing* organization should involve "a politics that can expose the collusive contradictions at the heart of inclusion – namely, that organizations can accentuate oppression while professing to do precisely the opposite" (Tyler, 2018, p64). This might involve exploring resistance and 'resistant subjectivities' "working from outside or across organizations" (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p5) in a spatial sense, but also those working beyond organization in a temporal sense: resistant subjectivities that are yet to be imagined and performed. The case studies proposed above thus encourage queer and critical inclusion scholars in OS to look "beyond the boundaries of the workplace for sources of resistance" (Munro, 2016, p582), to be more creative about the 'proper locations' of struggles for social justice. To do so, we must firstly, pay attention to detail and the multiple existences and incidences through which everyday life unfolds, engaging with resistance "from the bottom up" (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p5) as performed and negotiated by the 'diverse' gender/sexual organizational subjects to whom the discourse of LGBT-friendliness is supposedly intended to speak to, and secondly, to recognize that possibilities for change exist where and when we dare to

imagine and dream of futures, ways of being and spaces *beyond* the confines of 'LGBT-friendliness' and into the world of 'queer utopia'.

Indeed, it seems that, against the striking and "intense political conservatism" (Halberstam, Muñoz & Eng, 2005, 5) which lurks behind the celebratory rhetoric of 'LGBT-friendliness', queer utopia offers the most convincing way of resisting inclusion by fighting for the inclusion of genders/sexualities that are yet to be imagined, which is committed to a future whose form remains uncertain, which re-deploys the pain of loss, death and isolation towards "expansive innovating socialities [which] produce energy for alternative, cooperative economies and participatory politics" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p279), and which ultimately rejects the temporality of the "here and now" (Muñoz, 2009, p1) by insisting on "potentiality for another world" (Ibid) and providing "glimpses of what is on the horizon" (Jones, 2013, p3). Whilst proponents and some critics of 'LGBT-friendliness' alike may hide their accommodations behind various forms of 'pragmatism' or even 'realism' (e.g. Tilda), who is to say that queer utopia, and dreaming and fighting for a space one may never inhabit is any less pragmatic? Perhaps the creation of "queer counterhistories of space and time, alternative narratives of development" (Halberstam, Muñoz & Eng, 2005, p5) is indeed a central component of pragmatism itself, of the ways in which we rid ourselves from the cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011) which inflects our obsessions and attachments to fantasies of 'the good life' and the aspirations dictated by neoliberal capitalist visions (or hallucinations) of procuring prosperity and becoming somebody.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion: Queer*ing* Inclusion

I began the thesis by asking how the promises of inclusion bestowed by the discourse of LGBT-friendliness might be configured in the 'diversity world' of business and the social world of 'queer activism'. In particular, I set out to inquire into how the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion unfolded in relation to processes of capital accumulation and the specific laboured performances of gender/sexuality which diverse subjects have to engage-in in order to be(come) recognized by the terms of inclusion. To respond to these questions, I adopted a queer perspective and constructed a 'field' by tracing the discourse of LGBT-friendliness across business and activist social worlds, following the various (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities (or 'LGBT-friendly normativities') that must be operationalized and performed in order for these promises to be issued and received. The ethnography that emerged from these efforts was presented in way which exemplifies the movement between each 'site' and charts a progress from a study of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness as it currently exist towards a glimpse of queer(er) futures and possibilities.

In Chapter Four, the first ethnographic Chapter, I introduced 'the promise of inclusion' in the 'diversity world' of business. Recounting my ethnographic experiences in the skyscrapers of Canary Wharf, which house some of the world's biggest 'LGBT-friendly' corporate actors in London, I conceptualized inclusion as a neoliberal 'politics of crashed ceilings': a 'trickle down' form of justice which focuses on the achievements of individuals as opposed to meaningful systemic change. Here, feelings of hope, of self-worth and of happiness, were deposited or 'appeared in objects' "in the sense of aims, aspirations, and objectives" (Ahmed, 2006a, p56) for a 'good life' (Berlant, 2011) marked and determined by professional success, social mobility and careerist achievements. This "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2006, p20) was in turn (re)produced as an effect of its circulation, creating various 'affective economies' (Ahmed, 2004a) which engendered happy(ier), bright(er) and 'more inclusive' futures

and workplace cultures which showed that you can be productive and successful not simply despite, but because of, your 'diversity'. The kinds of desires and 'corporeal styles' (de Souza et al., 2016, p607) that thus took shape and were made intelligible in this field were geared around the notion of extra-ordinariness and stylized in entrepreneurial and fundamentally neoliberal ways, pointing to the ways in which "claims to rights and equality have been easily subsumed within a discourse of economic productivity" (Irving, 2008, p51).

At the end of Chapter Four, I began asking about the implications of 'inclusion' beyond the 'diversity world' of business. Building on Rumens' (2015) observation that doing inclusion in "a culture of austerity" (p184) might prove to be problematic for forms of difference that cannot be easily reconciled with business-driven understandings of 'diversity', in Chapter Five I introduced 'the promise of inclusion' in the social world of 'queer activism'. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork conducted with the campaigners from The Friends of the Joiners Arms, I argued that the promise to (re)include a 'replacement LGBT venue' after The Joiners Arms was closed by property developers failed to extend its promises to the 'wonky' and/or 'queer' subjects which once populated the pub this was supposedly intended to protect. Foregrounding class and class politics in understanding norms and normativities (Halberstam, 2005), I conceptualized the promise of inclusion in this field as a 'Trojan Horse draped in a Rainbow Flag', exploring how a commitment to inclusion was used to empty a space of its 'queerness', to carry out business imperatives (e.g. redevelopment), and ultimately, how this worked to 'straighten-up' the wonkiness of 'queerness' in pursuit of profit. The ethnographic work thus showed that whilst some entrepreneurial, normatively productive and extra-ordinary LGBT* subjects stand to gain from being 'actively complicit' in the discourse of LGBT-friendliness, attaining significant (material and symbolic) gains and statuses, others are not simply 'left behind' but actually co-opted by these processes, their efforts to resist, to dare to imagine and demand otherwise, resolved, defused and de-politicized in the very name of 'inclusion'.

At this point, I offered some preliminary conclusions on the organization of inclusion in the field. Specifically, I focused on how the neoliberal logics of privatization (of social justice, of social space, of politics and of life itself) enable corporate actors to

emerge as 'benevolent' and 'friendly' sponsors of more 'inclusive' gender/sexual realities whilst simultaneously making inclusion conditional upon accommodation to dominant norms. The data discussed in Chapter Five in particular demonstrated that commitments to LGBT inclusion cannot simply be about recognizing and incorporating 'diverse' gender/sexual identities "in the institution of capitalist modernity" (Duggan, 2003, p83), but rather need to account for the specific ways in which gender/sexuality becomes implicated in processes of capital accumulation.

In Chapter Six and Seven, I thus shed light on the labour that 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects have to perform in order to inhabit these (increasingly privatized) spaces and promises, the value (and the costs) which accrues from its performance and how these are (re)configured in relation to a host of intersectional racialized and classed embodiments and experiences. In Chapter Six I drew from data co-produced through in-depth ethnographic interviews with eight employees of (so-called) 'LGBT-friendly organizations' to argue that inclusion in the 'diversity world' of business depended upon various laboured performances of gender/sexuality geared towards the (re)production of ' queer value' (Wesling, 2012). Some (resourceful and entrepreneurial) LGBT* subjects took advantage of these mechanisms to be(come) recognized and benefit their professional aspirations. Yet, those who were unable and/or unwilling to do so were made to feel vulnerable, 'stuck', dangerous and/or that they didn't 'fit'. In each of these cases, success and/or failure was internalized as an individual feat, whilst inclusion remained conditional upon adding something considered to be of value, performing one's gender/sexuality in the 'right' way and submitting oneself to the taxing regimens of one's 'gay job' and 'day job'. Ultimately, my experience in this social world directed my ethnographic attention to ask: how might these 'valuable' laboured performances of gender/sexuality be harnessed in the social world of 'queer activism', where the boundary between a 'gay job' and a 'day job' is, at first sight, more clearly demarcated? How might the 'queer value' of 'gender/sexual diversity' be reconfigured in this field and in relation to gentrification, to whom and/or what does it accrue, and to whom its costs?

To move towards answering these questions, in Chapter Seven I identified paper*work* and affective labour as significant components of what it meant to be(come) recognized in the social world of 'queer activism'. I argued that whilst the performance

of these forms of labour was instrumental in 'extending' the promise of inclusion to address a number of the campaigners' (redistributive) concerns and was thus clearly 'valuable' to the campaign, it also (re)produced insidious forms of neoliberal (self-)governance. These unfolded through making 'inclusion' rest squarely on the shoulders of self-responsibilized non-state actors with classed and racialised forms of 'activist capital' (Ward, 2008) and their ability and willingness to (self-)manage competing demands, expectations and social relationships in 'entrepreneurial' ways. It thus appears that in both social worlds, inclusion required labour performed in order to engender, fit and expand promises of inclusion as they unfolded in the field, comprising both material practices and more affective ones. Moreover, in both social worlds the performance of this labour seemed to rest upon 'diverse' subjects' ability to integrate their 'day jobs' and their 'gay jobs', yet the 'queer value' (and the costs) which accrue from its performance were accrued in different ways: in the 'diversity world' of business, as discussed, in remarkably individualized ways, whilst in the social world of 'queer activism', albeit ambivalently, in more collectivist terms. Whilst the 'queer value' which was (re)produced as an effect of these performances was ultimately (re)appropriated by institutional and corporate actors to buttress neoliberal understandings of 'diversity' and 'LGBT-friendliness', I also argued that opportunities for creative co-optation persist.

These opportunities were then explored in Chapter Eight, where I outlined three modalities of resistance- failure, affirmative sabotage, and queer utopia- and traced these across both social worlds. Each represented a mode of queer engagement and harboured its own possibilities and limitations. With regards to failure, I argued that whilst it offers a way of resisting the "fields of normalization" (Rumens, 2017, p232) which require LGBT* subjects to be productive in order to be(come) included, it is limited on account of its individualizing tendencies, tendencies which excessively anti-normative readings of queer theory (re)produce by ignoring the political, tactical and ontological risks of not being recognized (Tyler, 2018). With regards to affirmative sabotage, I argued that whilst it redresses the individualizing negativity of (queer) failure by promoting a pragmatic and optimistic engagement with inclusion to co-opt its non-performative and straightening tendencies in the service of social justice (broadly configured), it does "not…have a general applicability… in all contexts"

(Dutta, 2018, p234-5) and, remaining within the intelligible boundaries of discourse, is limited by the 'tyranny of the present'. Lastly, in queer utopia I found an irreverent yet educated form of resistance which challenged both the "intense political conservatism" (Halberstam, Muñoz, Eng, 2005, p5) and the bland political imagination of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness to render gender/sexuality ungovernable, unpredictable, unmeasurable, perhaps even un-includeable. Thus, in striving for the creation of more 'socially just' and 'good' futures, I argued that 'queer utopia' should be considered a central component of pragmatism itself and of the ways in which we might begin to rid ourselves from the cruelly optimistic relations (Berlant, 2011) which inflect our obsessions and attachments to fantasies of 'the good life' and the aspirations dictated by neoliberal capitalist visions (or hallucinations) of procuring prosperity and becoming somebody.

Three broad findings emerge from such an engagement. The first is that inclusion is not an unambiguous good. Indeed, it appears that 'inclusion' does not simply maintain but actually exacerbates conditions of mal- and/or non- recognition and 'unfriendliness'. The second finding is that inclusion (re)produces various exclusions by straightening 'queerness' and reworking the desire and the need to be(come) recognized to seductively invite 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects to exploit themselves and others. Navigating these dynamics required complex, exhausting and painstaking forms of 'labour' deployed in order to perform gender/sexuality in the 'right' way and align oneself with the 'LGBT-friendly normativities' of the promises which this discourse purports to bestow. This process of seduction and incorporation was, in turn, deeply related to and embedded in neoliberal regimes of capital accumulation, intricately connected to the manifold ways in which corporations attempted to extract the (queer) 'value' of 'diversity', and inflected by a host of intersectional racialized and classed embodiments and experiences. The third is that, whilst this exposed that promises of inclusion do indeed (re)produce a host of exclusionary dynamics, it also revealed that inclusion was not simply reproduced by its own inevitable neoliberal logics but rather open to (re)interpretation and (re)appropriation (Chapter Eight). In what follows, I reflect on these findings, detailing the original contribution to knowledge (section 9.1) before outlining avenues for future research (section 9.2).

9.1 Original contribution to knowledge

In recent years, critical scholars of inclusion have started "asking different questions" (Adamson et al., 2016, p9). Rather than simply "celebrating inclusion" (Ibid) or "counting heads, ticking equality boxes and then forgetting about it" (Ibid), they have started asking about "the quality of equality" (Ibid), that is, how and what types of 'diverse' subjects are becoming included, on what and/or whose terms, and if and how inclusion precipitates and engenders new forms of exclusion (see also: Adamson, Śliwa, Kelan, Lewis & Rumens, 2018; Brewis, 2018; Dobusch, 2017; Priola et al., 2018; Tyler, 2018). Building upon these interrogations, and through its sustained focus on the organization of the discourse of LGBT-friendliness and its promises, the thesis contributes to our (empirical) understanding of the lived experiences of organizational gender/sexuality, to the (theoretical) scholarship that aims to make sense of these and the terms of inclusion, and to the (methodological) queer*ing* of organization. In broad terms, the thesis thus offers an original contribution to knowledge by shedding light on the specific dynamics of inclusion/exclusion which affect 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects in relation to the discourse of LGBT-friendliness. I make significant contributions to original knowledge by adding to existing scholarship on queer OS and inclusion studies in three different areas.

9.1.1 Theoretical contribution: a 'critically queer' theorising of inclusion in the age of neoliberalism

Firstly, the thesis demonstrates how inclusion is implicated and interwoven with the 'straightening' logics of neoliberal capitalism. Here inclusion works through seduction, by 'selling' (literally *and* metaphorically) aspirations for a 'good life' according to spatio-temporal (hetero- homo- and cis-) normative logics. In the 'diversity world' of business these logics took shape through the extra-ordinary and successful stories of LGBT 'role models' 'crashing ceilings'. In the social world of 'queer activism these were organized around normative understandings of time and space as 'sufficiently gay', 'safe' and 'productive'. In both these cases, it is *through* inclusion and recognition, not omission, that exclusion is (re)produced through a 'straightening up' of previously queer desires, spaces and performances of

gender/sexuality. The result is a kind of 'inclusive exclusion' (Priola et al., 2018) or an "over-inclusion" (Tyler, 2018, p57) in which gender/sexuality is turned into an "object of disciplining" (Dobusch, 2014, p230) through the very requirement to be given a name, a form and an intelligible shape. As argued, inclusion in these terms also entails the privatization of the sites of gender/sexual politics and the "sweeping away of many distinctions between private and public" (Harvey, 2000, p90) by reconciling the (private) interests of business and (public) notions of 'equality', with severe consequences for forms of difference that cannot be reconciled with processes of capital accumulation.

This gives credence to Dobusch's (2014) 'relational understanding' of inclusion and exclusion (also see: Tyler, 2018), where "not only exclusion but also inclusion mechanisms are examined with respect to their potentially intrusive and (self-)regulating effects on 'the' included/excluded" (Ibid, p226). Here the focus shifts from looking at 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' as polar opposites to looking at how "forms of life… are conferred recognition… according to the established norms of recognizability, on the condition of and at the cost of conforming to these norms" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p36 cited in Tyler, 2018, p57). In particular, foregrounding that the inclusion/exclusion dynamic works through a relational 'straightening' of the 'wonkiness' of queer desires, ways of being and performances, a queer*ing* approach contributes to our understanding of inclusion by shedding light on the specific normative conditions which attach to inclusion and determine, and limit, who and/or what can be(come) included.

From this perspective inclusion doesn't (re)produce exclusion by 'assaulting human difference' (Costea & Introna, 2006, p56) nor denying 'full subjectivity' (e.g. Litvin, 2002, 2006). Rather, inclusion is (re)productive of exclusion in positive terms, by addressing and recognizing us in "our diversity and particularity" (Joseph, 2002, p147 in Oswin, 2007, p656). This problematizes the gender/sexual ontologies of identity and 'diversity' adopted by both mainstream *and* critical scholars (Prasad, 2012). Indeed, what seems to matter most is what *kind* of 'diversity' you perform and how, not what you *are.*

This contributes to extant critical discussions on inclusion by a) demonstrating the currency and applicability of a poststructuralist and queer approach to inclusion, b) enabling critical scholars' call for approaches that conceptualize inclusion as a "dynamic and relational construct" (Adamson et al., 2018, p2) and ultimately, c) offering a 'critically queer' (Butler, 1993) theorising of the concept, rhetoric and practice of LGBT inclusion and (thus) demonstrating the need for a queer (or 'wonkier') model and understanding. Indeed, the data revealed that whilst LGBT inclusion may surely be considered a desirable (and highly seductive) goal, it is not only questionable whether and how far this may actually dismantle various (hetero- cis- and homo-) normativities, but that this might even exacerbate and accentuate their (re)production. Posited in these terms, the goal of critical inclusion scholars should be that troubling inclusion not by fighting for the recognition of a wider range of 'diverse' LGBT identities beyond (hetero- cis- and homo-) normativities, but by becoming committed to a twisted or wonky path of unexpected possibilities and potentialities.

At the same time, the thesis also extends these discussions by demonstrating that what is 'included' and 'include-able' is determined according to neoliberal logics of capital accumulation and the (re)production of (queer) 'value'. Indeed, whilst there has been growing, albeit still limited, critical engagement with the discourses and practices of inclusion, this work has primarily focused on the (re)production of exclusions at an organizational level, decoupled from larger societal and global phenomena (for an exception, see: Ahonen et al., 2014; Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008; Zanoni, 2011).

Whilst I too have looked at gender/sexual subjects' experiences of inclusion in situated organizational contexts, I have also taken a more expansive approach by situating 'LGBT-friendliness' within the context of neoliberalism and political economy more broadly (David, 2015; Preciado, 2008; Rao, 2015; Wasser, 2016). I have thus combined work on the gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism with critical scholarship on diversity and inclusion, queer theory and organization, to explore the specific ways in which gender/sexuality is becoming included "in the institutions of capitalist modernity" (Duggan, 2003, p83). This has contributed to extant debates in the field of inclusion studies by foregrounding the class politics of inclusion, not simply by looking at 'class' as an identity but actually exploring the class(ed) dimensions of

(hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities as they unfold onto the bodies of 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects (see: Zanoni, 2011).

In so doing, the thesis has also contributed to ongoing discussions about the relationship between social justice and business discourses in organizations, a debate which, as others have noted, often "leaves one amid a sea of debate with very little reconciliation" (Dye & Golnaraghi, 2015, p267). On the one hand, critical scholars have argued that the discourse of 'diversity' is partly problematic because it "does not so powerfully appeal to 'our sense of social justice'" (Benschop, 2001, p1166 cited in Ahmed, 2007a, p236). Whilst the discourse of inclusion has remained a somewhat marginal element of these discussions, it is also clear that the 'inclusive' and 'happy' rhetoric of the concept, and the fact that this is, too, often linked to business bottom lines, may lend itself to similar forms of critique. On the other hand, poststructuralist approaches have argued that the business case for 'diversity' (and 'inclusion') can be 'strategically reconciled' with social justice, acting as 'Trojan Horse' and "a means through which justice can be achieved" (Rhodes, 2017, p542).

The thesis has contributed to these debates by showing that inclusion works precisely because it appeals to *both* our sense of justice and to the business case. Indeed, in both social worlds, corporate actors were evoked as agents of inclusion, whilst the idea of being 'productive' and/or of 'productive space' was, too, imagined as evidence that 'justice' had been served. This delivers a neoliberal or 'trickle down' version of (market) justice in which the goals of gender/sexual politics become aligned with those of businesses. In this sense, inclusion does indeed act as a 'Trojan Horse', but inversely to what Rhodes (2017) has argued, it is a means through which the imperatives of 'business', not 'social justice', can be achieved.

This demonstrates the theoretical importance of queer*ing* the separation between 'social justice' and 'business' and the critical value of reconciling matters of recognition with questions of redistribution (also discussed later in this section). This contributes to extant critical discussions on inclusion by showing the relevance of the questions asked by scholars working on the cultural and gender/sexual politics of neoliberalism for inclusion studies, offering an interesting opportunity through which to problematize corporate actors' investments in inclusion and theoretically queer*ing*

inclusion by demonstrating how 'recognition' can sustain conditions of 'unfriendliness' and mal-redistribution, thus further developing and politicizing extant interrogations of 'LGBT-friendliness' in the field. Ultimately thus, the thesis has extended knowledge in and around queer and OS by opening-up a theoretical space from which to pursue critical (Marxist) questions in a way which does not ignore and/or side-line questions of gender/sexuality as 'merely cultural' (Butler, 1997) and thus secondary to a critique of political economy and capitalism.

9.1.2 Empirical contribution: 'LGBT-friendly normativities' and the labour of inclusion

Secondly, as discussed, a growing and important body of queer scholarship in the field of OS has emerged over the years. Yet these engagements, like those of queer theory more broadly, have to date relied on a discursive analysis focusing on the textuality of everyday life at the expense of the materiality and bodies and the "*subjectively embodied* products of discourse" (Courtney, 2014, p387, emphasis added; Browne & Nash, 2010; Pullen et al., 2016a). Drawing from first-hand ethnographic data accounting for participants' lived experiences of gender/sexuality in multiple settings, the thesis has made an empirical contribution to the field of queer OS and to ongoing discussions on 'LGBT-friendliness' and its relationship to heteronormativity (Giuffre et al., 2008; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014; Williams et al., 2009), cis-normativity (Rumens, 2018) and homonormativity (Benozzo et al., 2015; Rumens, 2018; Ward, 2008).

In so doing, the thesis has demonstrated the ways in which queer theory, and queer*ing* as a critical practice, can contribute beyond the merely theoretical, philosophical and discursive by providing an ethnographically-grounded account of the operation and negotiation of 'LGBT-friendly normativities'. Going beyond the non- or anti-normative standpoint to explain "the adoption of our everyday gendered and sexual selves" (Valocchi, 2005, p757), the thesis has demonstrated that 'normativity' as it has been used thus far in the field fails to appreciate the intricacy and plurality of norms governing subjective viability (Love, 2015). Indeed, for example, exploring normativities as they ethnographically unfolded in the 'diversity world' of business

revealed that these operated less around desires for 'ordinariness' and more around desires for 'extra-ordinariness' and 'success', thus reworking queer theory in itself in relation to empirical insights unfolding on the ground. Similarly, an empirically-grounded exploration of (queer) 'queer failure' also revealed the "political or tactical, but ontological" (Tyler, 2018, p62) risks of celebrating 'failure' in discussions of anti-normativity, the importance of accounting for the different social-materialities and locations inhabited and lived by LGBT* people, and ultimately the very desirability, or the ability and willingness, to be(come) 'queer'. Likewise, in the social world of 'queer activism', queer approaches in OS were extended by considering the class dimensions and politics of normativity and how these relate to the ways in which we inhabit time and space.

In this sense, far more ethnographically significant than 'anti-normativity' has been a sustained ethnographic focus on the seductive dimensions of normativities and the specific ways in which these are embodied and performed. Moreover, in each of the cases cited above, it is clear that a more fruitful deployment of 'queer' in the field might be unlocked if this is used not merely to denounce and oppose 'normativity' (Brown, 2012), but to 'pluralize' (Love, 2015; Martin, 1994a) it, and understand the ways in which it is ethnographically operationalized, organized and laboriously performed and inhabited in relation to emergent LGBT-friendly regimes of inclusion.

In this way the thesis has offered an empirical contribution to scholarship on queer OS by firstly, shedding light on the "entangled character of norms" (Wiegman & Wilson, 2015, p11) as they are lived and experienced by 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects. In particular, this contributes to extant discussions by demonstrating that the process(es) by which some gender/sexual Others become included is not as seamless as critical scholars have erstwhile imagined (see: Chapter Six). This also highlights the myriad ways in which the transgressive potential of queer(ness) is being (re)appropriated and operationalized in tandem with processes of capital accumulation (Ludwig, 2016; Winnubst, 2012) and the limitations of positing 'failure' as an inherently desirable anti-normative condition.

And secondly, and relatedly, the thesis also offers an empirical contribution to the field of inclusion studies by demonstrating that a more meaningful focus on 'inclusion' may

be engendered by critically interrogating the labour it requires: how this is performed and experienced by the subjects for whom inclusion is intended for, at what cost, and how this is (re)configured in relation to a host of intersectional racialized and classed embodiments and experiences.

Thirdly, the thesis also offers another empirical contribution to scholarship on queer OS by reconciling the (cultural) politics of queer(ness) to questions of political economy. This sheds light on the manifold ways in which dominant conceptualizations of gender/sexuality as 'productive' have served to mask the cultural and economic interconnections which have shaped ('LGBT-friendly') trajectories of inclusion (Rao, 2015), and thus the importance, to borrow Duggan's (2012) phrase, for queer scholars and constituencies to "become fully literate in economic policy".

Indeed, as also argued, queer theory, and gender/sexuality studies more broadly, has often "retreat[ed] from class analysis" (Hennessy, 2000, 49) whereby "the very possibility of linking the changing organizations of [gender/]sexuality to capitalism remains all but unspeakable" (Ibid, p54). This has been replicated in the field of OS, where a queer theory perspective has seldom been accompanied by a sustained critique of political economy (for an exception, see: Rumens, 2018). In exploring the class(ed) and economic dimensions of queer(ness) through Jack Halberstam's (2005) and Meg Wesling's (2012) work, the thesis has also offered an empirical contribution to the field of queer OS by demonstrating the importance of exploring the politics of recognition in tandem with the politics of redistribution (Butler, 1993; Rao, 2015), the class(ed) dimension of (hetero- homo- and cis-) normativities and the intricate ways in which these are (re)produced as an effect of a neoliberal (re)organization of culture and the economy.

9.1.3 *Methodological contribution: queering organization and activism in the Business School*

Thirdly, this thesis offers an original contribution to knowledge by exploring the potential of a multi-sited ethnographic methodological approach to inclusion. Business Schools are commonly and frequently referred to as University 'cash cows'

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(Contu, 2017), as hubs in which "the worst excesses" (Ghoshal, 2005, p75) of management practices, and of human nature itself perhaps, are reproduced. Other have also argued that Business Schools should be considered to be "academies of the apocalypse" (James, 2009) given the role they played in the 2008 financial crash. All pervasive is also the understanding, as Alessia Contu (2017) explains, of "someone working in a business school… [as] one who serves the 1%". As she continues, "Business schools are not perceived as intellectual hotbeds, even less crucibles of critical and progressive thinking". Whilst of course this is not to say that *all* Business School and/or Business School academics are complicit in the (re)production of Universities as 'ivory towers', at least no more than departments and academics in other fields[243], there is clearly much to gain in (re)politicizing 'organization' as an ontological unit of analysis, as a field, and as a practice in the Business School. In tracing the discourse of LGBT-friendliness across multiple sites, the thesis has offered an alternative (politicized) way of doing 'organization (studies)' in the Business School.

In particular, the thesis has contributed to the development of the field by methodologically problematizing, queer*ing* and (re)politicizing organization. Over its history, "organization studies has too rarely interrogated a fundamental, yet deceptively simply, question: what *is* organization?" (Schoeneborn, Kuhn & Kärreman, 2019, p476). Engaging with subjects, processes, and fieldsites not (traditionally) explored by Business School scholars, the thesis has 'made trouble with' (Butler, 1999) organization as an ontological unit of analysis and as a field, thus contributing to ongoing discussions about the relationship between 'business' and 'activism', how to make organizational theory itself queer (Warner, 1991, xxvi) and ultimately how to radicalize the Business School (Ford, Harding, Learmonth, 2010; Rumens, 2018).

Initially, this was done by demonstrating the queer*ing* potential of a multi-sited ethnography to the study of 'organization' (as ontology). Here the critical practice of questioning 'organization' finds a remarkably well-suited accomplice in

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[243] See, for example, comparable efforts by queer and feminist scholars to denounce the discipline of International Relations for its apolitical and acritical tendencies (Hooper, 2001; Lind, 2014; Rao, 2018).

Anthropological problematizations of the boundaries of 'the field' from which multi-sited ethnography was born. This offers critical OS scholars a methodological tool with which to engage with "larger questions" (O'Doherty, De Cock, Rehn & Lee Ashcraft, 2013, p1428). The thesis has thus contributed to emerging 'new forms of organizational ethnography' (Rouleau et al., 2014) which "tend to work with settings beyond the scope of standard organizations, for the purpose of investigating new organizational phenomena" (Ibid, p4). As argued, 'LGBT-friendliness' may be one such example, embedded in a number of "complex, ambiguous and volatile contexts" (Ibid) and relations and thus not approachable from the vantage point of the stable ontological boundaries of 'organization'. In ethnographically-tracing the discourse of LGBT-friendliness across multiple sites, the thesis has offered a methodological contribution to the field by chipping away at the very construct of 'LGBT-friendliness' by aligning together phenomenon - such as the 'friendliness' and 'progressiveness' of its rhetoric and promises, and the 'unfriendliness' of gentrification and of London's socio-economic landscapes more broadly- that are "not always grasped within the purview of a single research site" (Zilber, 2014, p97). Moving from social world to social world and inhabiting both simultaneously meant that both these experiences could be understood as two sides of the same coin, whereby the 'macro' (the 'neoliberalization of activism' and processes of 'privatization' and 'gentrification') was read not merely as 'context' but as an "emergent dimension of arguing about the connection among sites" (Marcus, 1995, p99). In so doing, the thesis has demonstrated the value and usefulness of a multi-sited approach in OS for queer*ing* organization.

Moreover, this also offers of scholars of organization a way of exploring inclusion in more politicized terms. In particular, tracing cultural formations of inclusion across and within its multiple sites of activity, both within and without formal organizational boundaries, and yes, "asking different questions" (Adamson et al., 2016, p9) but also asking them in different fields, has contributed to the field by shifting the focus of inquiry towards the 'straightening' of gender/sexuality and politics to show that "[t]he distinction between lifeworlds of subjects and the system does not hold" (Marcus, 1995, p98). The 'straightening' of certain displays of gender/sexuality in relation to 'LGBT-friendliness' emerged here as macro-phenomenon, a cultural manifestation embodied in subjects' lifeworlds that was multiply produced and whose logics were

"at least partly constituted within sites of the so-called system" (Ibid, 97). In this sense, a multi-sited ethnographic methodology has not simply provided 'more perspectives' on 'LGBT-friendliness', but rather, through "expanding what is ethnographically 'in the picture' of research" (Ibid, p102), has demonstrated that, conceptually and politically -speaking, it might be unhelpful to posit 'activism' and 'business' as separate entities in the context of 'LGBT-friendliness', a phenomena which represents at once the 'business-ification' of activism and social justice and the 'activation' of business in the supposed creation of more socially just worlds (Grundy & Smith, 2007; Rao, 2015; Richardson, 2005; Ward, 2008). This has, too, offered a methodological contribution to ongoing critical discussions on organizational inclusion by shedding light on the relationship between neoliberal governance and the politics of gender/sexuality (Richardson, 2005). In particular, it has demonstrated that the emergence of 'inclusive organizations' can be mapped and related to processes occurring outside the spatio-temporal boundaries of 'the organization' and the political usefulness of ethnographically investigating and/or 'following' these processes and occurrences for our understandings of 'inclusion'.

Finally, a multi-sited ethnographic approach has contributed to the development of 'intellectual activism' (Contu, 2019) in the Business School. As Contu (2019) explains, intellectual activism "requires rigorous analyses (informed by different methods and theories) of what impedes/frustrates/blocks the flourishing of freedom and equal and democratic relations" (p 5). At the end of Chapter Three (section 3.3.3), I explored the activist potential that a multi-sited ethnography can unlock in terms of politicizing observation and the process of research more broadly, and challenging some of the taken for granted assumptions about the hegemony of capitalist logics. Yet, it appears that a multi-sited accentuation of the performativity of research positionalities and subjectivities may also ultimately work to queer the Business School itself. Indeed, whilst, as discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.3.1) my involvement in multiple fields and subjectivities, as a respectable suit-wearing lesbian and doctoral researcher in a Business School on the one hand, and a politically-engaged queer activist on the other, resulted in a highly disorientating, and ethically challenging, qualitative experience, this multi-sited ethnography's "unapologetically political" (McDonald, 2017, p131) stance towards the field could also be understood

as a form of 'activism in the Business School'. Indeed, by moving away from the "foundationalist [methodological and positivist] approaches that are most commonly taught in Business Schools" (McDonald, 2017, p131), and involving a melding of personal, professional and political personas, not only did this multi-sited ethnographic study "queer the Business School and disrupt the heteronormative and managerial assumptions that pervade much organizational research" (Ibid) but also defied the neat compartmentalizations which are increasingly "constitutive of the well-tempered liberal subject" (Parker, 2002, p161). In so doing, this multi-sited ethnographic engagement has deconstructed a host of 'normativities' which structure our experiences as 'researchers', opening up a space for the transgression of our "bodily and intellectual habits" (Ibid), and, it is hoped, fostered especially 'queer' ways of being in the academy, ways which may allow an honest interrogation of not only our own academic field, but also the objectifying gaze by which we come to know and study gender/sexual 'diversity' and 'LGBT inclusion' more broadly.

9.2   Further research directions

To conclude, I offer some reflections on future research directions in the field. In particular, as I begin thinking about the next steps in my (academic, intellectual and political) life, a number of potential avenues for future research stand out as remarkably fertile grounds onto which to sow the seeds which this thesis (has only just) begun to disseminate.

Firstly, particularly fruitful seems to be the possibility of building upon queer interventions to move beyond researching 'LGBT people' and/or 'queer people' in organizations towards a more expansive understanding of gender/sexuality. Indeed, whilst the deployment of 'queer' to explore "the workplace experience of 'minorities' such as gay men, lesbians and those identifying as bisexual or transgender" (Rumens et al., 2018, p1) was a "crucial and apposite" (Ibid) task, this can also "limit the analytical reach of queer theory, neglecting other objects of analysis like heterosexuality" (Ibid). Of particular relevance here may be an exploration of how heterosexuality is performed in 'LGBT-friendly' organizational contexts and in

relation to 'inclusive' organizational practices. For example, building upon work in and around the performance of Whiteness and/or 'white allyship' in anti-racist work (Conway & Leonard, 2014; Steyn & Conway, 2010; Ward, 2008b), queer OS scholars could start interrogating the performance of 'straight allyship': its potentials (dismantling hetero- homo- and cis- normativities), its limitations (where this strategy is merely 'performative', or what Brodyn and Ghaziani (2018) refer to as 'performatively progressive') and its specific manifestations in situated organizational contexts.

Another avenue of potential future inquiry may be unlocked by engaging with a broader range of queer theoretical scholarship, and ultimately engaging with queer theory and politics in less "sporadic, marginal and ambivalent" (Pullen et al., 2016a, 1) ways. As Pullen et al. (2016a) note, whilst "*Gender, Work and Organization…* published around twenty papers that work with queer theory or make reference to the queer project… the journal had published more than a hundred papers that engage with or refer to the work of Judith Butler" (Ibid). Of course, Butler's work has been pivotal to the very development of queer theory, and without an understanding of 'gender performativity' the rethinking of gender/sexual "beyond dualistic and stereotypical conceptions of masculinity and femininity" (Ibid) would not be possible. At the same time, OS scholars have erstwhile overlooked the breadth and depth of queer theoretical scholarship, from Leo Bersani (1995), to Jack Halberstam (2005, 2011b), Jasbir K. Puar (2005) and David L. Eng (2010) (for an exception, see: Harding, 2016; Rumens, 2018). In particular, work in and around 'homonationalism' and empire in relation to (Western) understandings of inclusion and 'LGBT-friendliness' might offer especially fruitful possibilities for OS engagements with the racialization of discourses of inclusion (Eng, 2010; Puar, 2005; Rao, 2010).

Indeed, also important seems to be the possibility of extending some of the thesis' findings to explore how the discourse of LGBT-friendliness travels in settings outside of 'the West' (Jonsen, Maznevski & Schneider, 2011; Massad, 2017; Puar, 2007; Rao, 2010, 2015). Of particular interest for OS scholars might thus be a future examination of whether, how and in what ways corporate discourses and practices of LGBT diversity and inclusion can become disciplining forces in the 'Global South', with a focus on how local actors engage, experience and re-appropriate these commitments

in pursuit of their own goals, and the reconfiguration of local gender/sexual politics in relation to global discourses of LGBT-friendliness more broadly.

Lastly, further research directions in inclusion studies and queer OS should build upon some of the reflections articulated in this thesis to, as Chryssy Hunter (2016) eloquently explains, "stand outside of our embeddedness in our everyday lives in order to understand the bigger picture" (p257). In particular, it is my hope that this thesis has demonstrated some practical ways in which we can harness the openings provided by socio-political regimes in which the production of promises of LGBT inclusion and 'friendliness' towards 'diverse' gender/sexual subjects is possible to not only to examine their limitations but also to work towards the creations of spaces and forms of knowledge through which such efforts are recognized for what they are: cruelly optimistic, partial, limited, violently complicit in the (re)production of exclusions and misleadingly 'friendly', whilst also extraordinarily seductive. Thus, whilst fighting for inclusion may certainly be an understandable response to 'exclusion' (Nkomo, 2014) and something that, despite our best and queerest intentions, perhaps we 'cannot not want' (Dhawan et al., 2016, p35), it is of paramount importance for forthcoming critical OS research not to settle for 'recognition' but continue fighting for more radical, queer and socially just futures. It is my hope that, in queer*ing* promises of LGBT inclusion across social worlds, foregrounding the tensions, complicities and resistances between 'activism' and 'business' in contemporary 'LGBT-friendly' neoliberal landscapes, and underscoring the costs of both exclusion *and* inclusion, this thesis has enabled the creation of a critical space in OS within which to disrupt the shape of the future offered by promises of inclusion in their current form, and voice, firmly and responsibly, our unwillingness to settle and be seduced by the cruel optimism of 'LGBT-friendliness'.

Appendix

A.   Outline of participant observation in the field

Date	Event	Location	Social world	Scale of Event[244]
September 2017	LGBT staff network event: 'Where have all the women gone? A lively discussion of female participation in LGBT professional networks'	Norton Rose Fulbright offices	Business	Large
February 2017	LGBT staff network event: 'LGBT rights: a changing landscape'	HSBC offices	Business	Large
February 2017	Stonewall 'LGBT role model' workplace training	-	Business	Medium
March 2017	Interbank & LBWomen: 'LBWomen in the workplace'	Barclays offices	Business	Medium
April 2017	Stonewall workplace conference	Queen Elizabeth II Centre	Business	Large
April 2017	LBWomen app launch event	Werkin offices	Business	Small
May 2017	Stonewall 'LGBT role model' workplace training	-	Business	Medium
June 2017	OUTstanding: 'Intersectionality series'	Facebook offices	Business	Small
June 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Anarchist social centre	Activism	Small
August 2017	Tower Hamlets Development Planning Committee Meeting	Tower Hamlets Town Hall	Activism	Large
August 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Coleen's house	Activism	Small

[244] Small >20, medium 20-50, large 50+.

August 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Dev's & Max's house	Activism	Small
August 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms public meeting	Limewharf, LGBT venue	Activism	Medium
August 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Marquis of Landsdowne, pub	Activism	Small
September 2017	Roundtable discussion with Friends of the Joiners Arms, Tower Hamlets, Greater London Authority (GLA) and Regal Homes.	Tower Hamlets Town Hall	Activism	Small
September 2017	'Never Gonna Dance Again' symposium	Sutton House	Activism	Medium
October 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Dalston Superstore, LGBT venue.	Activism	Small
October 2017	LGBT Leaders conference	JP Morgan's offices	Business	Large
November 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Coleen's house	Activism	Small
November 2017	Lesbians Who Tech conference	Facebook offices	Business	Large
November 2017	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	The Clapton Hart, pub	Activism	Small
February 2018	Interlaw: LGBT+ history month from a BAME perspective	CMS offices	Business	Medium
February 2018	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Coleen's house	Activism	Small
February 2018	Goodbye to London	Limewharf, LGBT venue	Activism	Medium
February 2018	Intercomms: pride and profit	Gay Times offices	Business	Large
February 2018	Queering the London Plan	ThoughtWorks	Activism	Medium

March 2018	LBWomen: International Women's Day event	EY offices	Business	Medium
March 2018	Friends of the Joiners Arms public meeting	Hackney Showrooms	Activism	Medium
March 2018	Intercomms: 'Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index- best practice'	Teamspirit offices	Business	Medium
March 2018	Friends of the Joiners Arms at the Sheila McKechnie (SMK) Foundation national campaigners awards	SMK offices	Activism	Large
March 2018	Friends of the Joiners Arms meeting	Marquis of Landsdowne, pub	Activism	Small
March 2018	Glamazon trans visibility day	Amazon offices	Business	Medium
April 2018	Interlaw: 'Trans* insights and conversations'	CMS offices	Business	Medium
April 2018	The Friends of the Joiners Arms at the LGBT community centre launch event	Hackney Showroom	Activism	Large
May 2018	Planning Out LGBT event	-	Business	Large
May 2018	Friends of the Joiners Arms public meeting	Hackney Showroom	Activism	Medium
June 2018	Interlaw: 'How to be an effective LGBT+ Ally'	Norton Rose Fulbright offices	Business	Medium
November 2018	LGBT+ venues forum	Karaoke Hole, LGBT venue	Activism	Small

B.   Interviews in the 'diversity world' of business

	Date	Name	Identifies as	Profession
1	**January 2017**	Leo	Bisexual trans man	Leo is a 'diversity & inclusion specialist' and 'LGBT role model'

				in an 'LGBT-friendly' retail company.
2	**February 2017**	Mike	Cis gay man	Mike is an executive coach and 'LGBT role model' in an 'LGBT-friendly' insurance company.
3	**March 2017**	Andrea	Straight trans woman	Andrea is a coder in Financial Services and 'LGBT role model' in financial services.
4	**March 2017**	Fanny	Cis lesbian woman	Fanny is a nurse and 'LGBT role model' in a hospital.
5	**March 2017**	Ibeyi	Cis bisexual woman	Ibeyi is a non-academic staff at a University and 'LGBT role model'.
6	**March 2017**	Jackie	Cis lesbian woman	Jackie is a marketing manager and 'LGBT role model' in an 'LGBT-friendly' insurance company.
7	**April 2017**	Horatia	Cis lesbian woman	Horatia is a 'diversity & inclusion specialist' and 'LGBT role model' in an 'LGBT-friendly' insurance company.
8	**April 2017**	Theresa	Trans woman	Theresa is a consultant and 'LGBT role model' in an 'LGBT-friendly' investment bank.
9	**April 2017**	Vasily	Cis gay man	Vasily is vice-president in banking and 'LGBT role model'.
10	**April 2017**	Rosy	Cis bisexual woman	Rosy is an events manager in a professional LGBT organization.
11	**April 2017**	John	Cis gay man	John is a lawyer and LGBT activist.
12	**January 2018**	Clem	Non-binary	Clem is marketing manager, LGBT staff network representative and (former) volunteer for Lesbians Who Tech. They work for an 'LGBT-friendly' tech company.
13	**February 2018**	Stefan	Cis bisexual man	Stefan is CEO of community well-being charity.
14	**February 2018**	Emad	Cis straight man	Emad is a lawyer and 'straight ally' at an 'LGBT-friendly' law firm.
15	**March 2018**	Tilda	Cis lesbian woman	Tilda is an accountant in an 'LGBT-friendly' accountancy firm.
16	**March 2018**	David	Cis gay man	David is a senior project manager and co-chair of LGBT Network in an 'LGBT-friendly' bank.

17	**March 2018**	Anita	Non-binary	Anita is a business manager and co-chair of LGBT Network in an 'LGBT-friendly' investment bank.
18	**March 2018**	Eli	Cis gay man	Eli is a public affairs exec and founder of professional LGBT network.
19	**April 2018**	Mira	Cis lesbian woman	Mira is a solicitor in an 'LGBT-friendly' law firm.
20	**April 2018**	Ems	Non-binary	Ems is a banking director and 'senior role model' in an 'LGBT-friendly' investment bank.
21	**April 2018**	Kostas	Cis gay man	Kostas is head of sales in banking and co-chair of the LGBT network.
22	**May 2018**	Sam	Cis gay man	Sam is the founder of LGBT workplace consultancy service.
23	**June 2018**	Kaneila	Cis lesbian woman	Kaneila is director in professional services, co-chair of LGBT staff network and 'LGBT role model' for an 'LGBT-friendly' investment bank.
24	**June 2018**	Fran	Cis lesbian woman	Fran is a credit analyst and 'future LGBT leader' in financial services.
25	**September 2018**	Helen	Trans woman	Helen is a business analyst in an 'LGBT-friendly' insurance company.

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