



## Murderous Inclusions

Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman & Silvia Posocco

To cite this article: Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman & Silvia Posocco (2013) Murderous Inclusions, International Feminist Journal of Politics, 15:4, 445-452, DOI: [10.1080/14616742.2013.841568](https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2013.841568)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2013.841568>



Published online: 17 Dec 2013.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1422



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

*Murderous Inclusions*

JIN HARITAWORN, ADI KUNTSMAN AND SILVIA POSOCCO

York University, Canada, University of Manchester, UK and Birkbeck,  
University of London, UK

The aim of this Special Issue is to interrogate the intersection of violence and feminist and queer politics of inclusion. As critical voices within the 'sexual citizenship' debate have argued, middle-class and homonormative performances of politics and identity are often privileged in dominant frames of inclusion and belonging (Richardson 2000; Bell and Binnie 2002). Moving beyond an analysis of citizenship as limited to some and not others, our scholarly and political aim is to debunk the very move of inclusion – into citizenship, rights and political subjecthood – through sexuality. Instead of taking for granted the incorporation of sexual minorities as a certain pathway to progressive politics, this Special Issue asks how inclusions can be murderous by shifting the focus from their promise to their violences. Contributors to the issue reflect on the 'intimate investments' (Agathangelou, Bassichis and Spira 2008) surrounding, for example, international development aid conditionality and local, national and transnational regimes of governance of identity and desire; same-sex marriage reforms in the context of structural assaults against racialized and economically disadvantaged populations; sexual and gendered citizenship regimes and the pathologization, criminalization and/or violent erasure of sexually and gender-non conforming subjects from lower classes/castes; the uneven and ambivalent extension of state protection to individuals on the grounds of sexual and gender identity in a context of unchallenged heteronormativity; and alliances between neo-imperial free-market capitalism, slavery and political value struggles (see also Bailey, Kandaswamy and Richardson 2004; Smith 2007; Reddy 2011; Spade 2011 reviewed in this issue; Stanley and Smith 2011 reviewed in this issue; Ekine and Abbas 2013). In that respect, the articles brought together here decouple the link between inclusion, queer politics and justice, and explore the mundane articulation of such dynamics.

They draw our attention to how a range of murderous inclusions shape contemporary formations of queer citizenship in various geopolitical locations across the world. By withdrawing the gaze from inclusion's seductive promises and looking at the deadly outcomes of some forms of inclusion, the issue returns the focus on those lives and deaths (queer or otherwise) that fall outside of inclusive citizenships and into erasure, violence and abandonment, and subsequently appear not to matter.

In examining the deadly logic of inclusion into (some) modes of queer citizenship, our authors focus on the relations between queerness, killability and death, to critically interrogate the political formations of both sexuality and inclusion itself. Attending to the simultaneous expansion of liberal gay politics in recent formations of US sexual citizenship and its complicity within the 'war on terror', Jasbir Puar calls our attention to the 'differences between queer subjects who are being folded (back) into life and the racialised queernesses that emerge through the naming of populations', often those marked for death (Puar 2007: 36). Queer citizenship, here, is conceptualized as a deadly mechanism of differentiated inclusion, which divides its subjects into grievable and ungrivable (Butler 2004), worthy and unworthy of state protection (Spade 2011), 'folded into life' (Puar 2007) or 'socially dead' (Mbembe 2003).

This Special Issue therefore moves away from the narrow focus on sexual citizenship as citizenship of rights and from the idea of inclusion as positive and desirable per se. 'Inclusion into what?' is the question posed by several of the authors. In that respect, this Special Issue extends current debates on queer politics and sexual citizenship, militarized queer intimacies and diversity policing in the name of queer safety. This occurs, for example, through a carefully situated analysis of the deadly underpinnings of assimilationist logics of lesbian and gay rights for gay marriage in their transnational dimensions, LGBTQI politics and international development aid in the Global South and neoliberalism and the re-entrenchment of austerity. The discussions presented here further focus on the changing parameters of sexual citizenship that accompany violent regimes of coloniality, racism, 'wars on terror', criminalization, border enforcement and neoliberalism (see also Kuntsman 2009; Haritaworn *forthcoming*; Thobani *forthcoming*). They connect productively with queer critiques of masculinist and militarized forms of inclusion into the body of the nation (Çakırlar 2014) and of the move towards the inclusion of sexually minoritized populations through the granting of 'full citizenship' (Conrad 2010: 3; see also Conrad 2011, 2012) via the extension of, for example, the right to marry as a fundamentally partial and politically myopic process that fails to address fundamental systemic violence and exploitation (Nair 2010a, 2010b). The contributors ask: What new techniques of governance can be mapped in a context of power which increasingly speaks the language of sexual and gender rights, protection and diversity? What are the geopolitical intersections between violent forms of inclusions into the body politics, neoliberal policies and sexual politics, against the background

of coloniality's persisting processes of expropriation and displacement? How do these intersections articulate transnationally and locally in the domain of sexuality through, for example, the rationalities of rule linked to international development aid or the globalizing non-profit industrial sector (see also Incite! 2007)? What challenges arise from these queer complicities, convergences and inclusions, and how are they best addressed? What are the spaces of difference between situated and ever shifting regimes of legal regulation, and what is the ethical domain of queer politics?

Instead, the contributors bring into view deadly formations of sovereign power to rise to the theoretical and analytical challenge of accounting for the relations between sexuality, violence and inclusion – whether it is in the constitution of 'community', 'neighbourhood', or 'nation'. Attending to the governance of identity, sociality and desire, and the workings of biopolitical projects of HIV/AIDS global governmentality in a range of locales, including South Africa, India, Ecuador and the Caribbean, they explore exactly who is envisioned as worthy of incorporation into sexual citizenship and the costs of such turns to inclusion in various contexts. The articles offer situated analyses of how LGBT identitarian claims, acquisitive forms of sociality and assimilationist logics are implicated in such processes, in contexts where the relationship between sovereignty and rights is marked by the historical experience of colonialism, genocide and slavery. They thus resonate in different ways with the 'immunitarian dialectics' or 'apparatuses' through which, as Esposito (2008) tells us, 'community' and 'belonging' are articulated and collectivities instantiated, in the form of processes of introjections of negativity geared towards the preservation of life. Gendered and racialized Others are thus enabled to exist in segregated proximity, as 'the outside of the inside' of the body politic.

Anna Agathangelou's article 'Neoliberal Geopolitical Order and Value: Queerness as a Speculative Economy and Anti-Blackness as Terror' offers a formidable theoretical intervention for understanding and conceptualizing the processes of production of simultaneous inclusion and abjection in play in the contemporary constitution of the sexual queer. Through a reading of a 2011 speech by Hillary Clinton at the United Nations regarding African states' violations of human rights of gays and lesbians and a 2011 report on the violations of human rights of Iraqi gays, Agathangelou charts the emergence of a sexual queer subject whose humanity – and associated rightful place within the body politic – is predicated upon a recognizable sexual orientation and gender identity. Agathangelou shows that this process is concomitant with the production of racialized structures that connect whiteness to radical alterity, whilst positioning blackness as always already outside the 'legitimate' political economy of sexuality. For Agathangelou, queerness and blackness, whiteness and slavery, are dyads that offer an insight into the differential production of value in coloniality and neoliberalism. Whilst queerness is increasingly bound up with necro-economic-political orders, blackness constitutes an orientation from which to recuperate visions of radical justice

emanating from the anti-slavery and anti-colonial struggles as well as an opportunity to renew a critical engagement with the relation between sexuality and value-making projects.

Andil Gosine's article 'Murderous Men: MSM and Risk-Rights in the Caribbean' approaches the question of murderous inclusions from the ways in which sexuality has been taken up by international development agencies. Gosine observes the rise and circulation of the new category MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) through development programs which cast them as murderous bodies that deserve rights precisely because they pose risks to heterosexual populations. The article traces this "'Risk-Rights" strategy' firstly through reports by the World Bank and other multilateral organizations, and secondly through two Caribbean initiatives – the film *Living in the Shadows* and the Guyanese NGO Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD). While the former repeats the dominant characterization of MSM as murderous, the latter critiques its limits. Based on these close readings, Gosine argues that the constitution of MSM in development is ultimately consistent with colonial articulations of non-white peoples' sexualities as backward, pathological and in need of modernization. By casting MSM as a transitional state of being which will properly progress to a modern 'gay' identity, the strategy privileges Euro-American frameworks of sexuality and forecloses possibilities for other forms of sexual cultures and identities. This effort to include is a murderous one: 'Just as colonial officers believed the disciplining of indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas into heterosexuality was a moral imperative, so too do many LGBT activists view themselves as saviours of deadly men' (this issue: 492).

Continuing the exploration of the relations between international development and murderous inclusions of some genders and sexualities, Aniruddha Dutta in 'Legible Identities and Legitimate Citizens: The Globalization of Transgender and Subjects of HIV-AIDS Prevention in Eastern India' presents another angle to the critical discussion of rights and policies of inclusion. Dutta asks: what is legible, what is legitimate – as political subjecthood, as a target of development and as a subject of rights? Based on ethnographic research in eastern India, Dutta's article follows male-assigned gender variant same-sex desiring subjects to demonstrate how forms of sexual and gender identification are regulated and advanced – or made illegible and illegitimate – at the intersection of transnational development agencies, the state and activism. Similarly to other contributors, Dutta challenges simplistic notions of inclusion into sexual citizenship and demonstrates instead how sexual and gender non-conformity, when it does not fit the legible categories such as 'transgender' or MSM, leads to increased surveillance both at the 'biopolitical level of mapping populations ("risk groups") and the disciplinary regulation of subjects within communities' (this issue: 509–510). In other words, modes of 'inclusion' operating here are always violently conditional. Dutta's analysis brings together a critique of the hegemonic use of 'transgender' as a universalized category, frequently deployed by transnational

transgender activism and developmental agencies, in particular in the HIV-AIDS industry in the Global South, with the analysis of 'global queering'. Dutta argues that transgender as a concept and category expands into India through institutionally constrained intersections between regional cultural tendencies and transnational activist discourses, exerting a certain globalizing force without simply being a homogenizing or colonizing imposition. Rather, globalized terms of sexual and gender identification can selectively reinforce preexisting identitarian tendencies in India.

In 'Navigating the Left Turn: Sexual Justice and the Citizen Revolution in Ecuador', Amy Lind and Cricket Keating also grapple with processes of inclusion into the body politic through legal reforms and consider the implications of these changes for shifting parameters of sexual justice. The article focuses on analysis of the pro-LGBT changes in the legal domain in Latin America and more specifically in Ecuador. The authors note how in Ecuador the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1997 was followed by the introduction of a raft of anti-discrimination legislation that included the redefinition of the family, the recognition of same-sex civil unions and the extension of state protection to individuals on the basis of gender identity. They stress, however, that such a seemingly comprehensive turn towards policies of inclusion has been accompanied by the notable exclusion of any reform of the ban on abortion. Given this enduring disparity and unevenness, the article focuses on a critical analysis of the fundamentally ambivalent and partial status of the turn to inclusion of sexually minoritized and transgender subjects. It argues that at the heart of such ambivalence is a tension between homophobia and 'homoprotectionism', that is, 'discourses and policies which are geared towards protecting individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity' (Lind and Keating, this issue: 516). Both homophobic and homoprotectionist policies and rhetorics are deployed instrumentally by politicians to achieve their ends. Ambivalence here marks the fundamentally limited nature of the move towards state inclusion in the Ecuadorian context and the need for deeper and more sustained forms of coalition politics and activist engagement.

In 'The Distance between Death and Marriage: Citizenship, Violence and Same-Sex Marriage in South Africa', Jessica Scott offers a critical analysis of the global movement for the legalization of same-sex marriage. Scott challenges the globalization of liberal claims to inclusion through same-sex marriage through, for example, the work of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). Her article offers an incisive analysis of marriage as a technology of heteronormativity and also, crucially, of racialization. Drawing on in-depth interviews with black lesbians in South Africa, Scott foregrounds differential class experiences to show that the extension of same-sex marriage in the South African context reinforces heteronormativity and entrenches violence against poor, sexually minoritized and gender non-conforming subjects. For Scott, 'the establishment of the regime of same-sex marriage is itself a "murderous inclusion"' (this issue: 536) with

great detrimental consequences for sexually minoritized subjects who, due to their class positioning, do not have the option of retreating into homonormative models of sociality, property ownership and domesticity, but rather, are exposed to structural and exceptional violence. Against redemptive readings of the inclusion of same-sex marriage in the reforms of marriage law in South Africa, Scott's analysis reveals the chasm between formal equality and substantive social justice.

Many of the themes discussed in this Special Issue are also brought together in the Conversations section in the interview held by the guest editors with Elizabeth Povinelli, the author of *The Cunning of Recognition* (2002), *The Empire of Love* (2006) and *Economies of Abandonment* (2011). Moving away from the opposition of inclusion and exclusion, Povinelli's work offers a different set of conceptual tools to address the ways of 'making live, making die and letting die' and invites us to think about alternatives to modes of citizenship and responsibility. In our conversation, which began at a workshop in Manchester, UK, in Spring 2013 and carried on as a cross-continent cyber exchange, Povinelli presents several of the key concepts developed in her recent work and their relationships to queer politics: formations of abandonment and endurance, social projects and 'the otherwise', autology and genealogy, the politics of responsibility and what she calls the 'broom closets' of late liberalism and, lastly, the relations between the catastrophic and the ordinary. The dialogue with Povinelli over violent processes of abjection, abandonment and endurance in late liberalism and the analytics at our disposal to grapple with them is complemented by a rich compendium of book reviews written by a wonderful group of scholars who engage with a range of texts that speak directly to the theme of the Special Issue.

As the Special Issue as a whole demonstrates, the critical project of tracking the intersections between citizenship, violence and multiple and variegated turns to inclusion is clearly an open one. The analysis of necropolitical forces that shape the different processes foregrounded by the contributors to this volume connect to many other conditions. Sites that deserve further exploration include deportation, statelessness and the experience of being undocumented and queer, with the problematic politics of offering asylum to people based on fear of persecution due to sexual orientation – conditions that emerge in 'queer liberalism', when countries adopt legislation to protect the rights of sexual minorities that profoundly shape contemporary sexual and racial formations. The task, then, is to continue to map the interactions between the 'wars without end' (Mbembe 2003: 23) – understood here broadly as referring to regimes of migration control, colonial conflict, the prison industrial complex or the 'war on terror' – and the more mundane, and thus perhaps less noticed, forms of militarization of queerness as they shape bodies, intimacies, communities and everyday encounters.

Jin Haritaworn  
Faculty of Environmental Studies  
HNES 137, York University  
4700 Keele Street  
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3, Canada  
Email: haritawo@yorku.ca

Adi Kuntsman  
Department of Anthropology  
The University of Manchester  
Arthur Lewis Building  
Oxford Road  
Manchester, M13 9PL, UK  
Email: Adi.kuntsman@manchester.ac.uk

Silvia Posocco  
Department of Psychosocial Studies  
School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy  
Room 505, 30 Russell Square  
London, WC1B 5DT, UK  
Email: sposocco@bbk.ac.uk

## References

- Agathangelou, A. M., Bassichis, D. M. and Spira, T. M. 2008. 'Intimate Investments: Homonormativity, Global Lockdown and the Seductions of Empire', *Radical History Review* 100: 120–43.
- Bailey, M., Kandaswamy, P. and Richardson, M. 2004. 'Is Gay Marriage Racist?', in Sycamore, M. B. (ed.) *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation*, pp. 87–96. Brooklyn, New York: Soft Skull Press.
- Bell, D. and Binnie, J. 2002. 'Sexual Citizenship: Marriage, the Market and the Military', in Richardson, D. and Seidman, S. (eds) *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, pp. 443–57. London: Sage.
- Butler, J. 2004. *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso.
- Çakırlar, C. forthcoming, 2014. 'Troubled Objects of Militarism, Masculinity, and Nationalism: Erinç Seymen's Queer Art of Sodomitical Sabotage', in Christensen, C. and Christensen, M. (eds) *Understanding Media and Culture in Turkey: Structures, Spaces, Voices*. London: Routledge.
- Conrad, R. (ed.) 2010. *Against Equality: Queer Critiques of Gay Marriage*. Lewiston: Against Equality Publishing Collective.
- Conrad, R. (ed.) 2011. *Against Equality: Don't Ask to Fight their Wars*. Lewiston: Against Equality Publishing Collective.
- Conrad, R. (ed.) 2012. *Prisons Will Not Protect You*. Lewiston: Against Equality Publishing Collective.

- Ekine, S. and Abbas, H. (eds). 2013. *Queer African Reader*. Dakar, Nairobi, Oxford: Pambazuka Press.
- Esposito, R. 2008. *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Haritaworn, J. forthcoming. 'Beyond "Hate": Queer Metonymies of Crime, Pathology and Anti/Violence', Special Issue on Law, Culture and Politics in Neoliberal Times, *Global Jindal Law Review* 4 (2).
- Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (ed.). 2007. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Kuntsman, A. 2009. *Figurations of Violence and Belonging*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Mbembe, A. 2003. 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture* 15 (1): 11–40.
- Nair, Y. 2010a. 'Against Equality, Against Marriage: An Introduction', in Conrad, R. (ed.) *Against Equality: Queer Critiques of Gay Marriage*, pp. 1–9. Lewiston: Against Equality Publishing Collective.
- Nair, Y. 2010b. 'Who's Illegal Now?: Immigration, Marriage, and the Violence of Inclusion', in Conrad, R. (ed.) *Against Equality: Queer Critiques of Gay Marriage*, pp. 51–8. Lewiston: Against Equality Publishing Collective.
- Puar, J. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Time*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Reddy, C. 2011. *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality and the US State*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Richardson, D. 2000. 'Claiming Citizenship? Sexuality, Citizenship and Lesbian/Feminist Theory', *Sexualities* 3 (2): 255–72.
- Smith, A. 2007. 'Unmasking the State: Racial/Gender Terror and Hate Crimes', *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 26 (47): 47–57.
- Spade, D. 2011. *Normal life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Brooklyn, New York: South End Press.
- Stanley, E. A. and Smith, N. (eds). 2011. *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiments and the Prison Industrial Complex*. Edinburgh: AK Press.
- Thobani, S. forthcoming. 'Prologue,' in Haritaworn, J., Kuntsman, A. and Posocco, S. (eds) *Queer Necropolitics*. London: Routledge.