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# Mobility Tactics: Young LGBTIQ+ Indigenous Australians' Belonging and Connectedness

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**Abstract**

Although previous research indicates a positive relationship between community belonging and well-being in Indigenous Australian contexts, little is known about how this relationship is experienced by Indigenous Australians who are gender and/or sexually diverse. Drawing from qualitative interviews with LGBTIQ+ Indigenous youth, we explore concepts of belonging and connectedness and how these concepts relate to their identities and lived experiences of 'community'. Although many participants shared similar experiences of conflict and isolation from their Indigenous kinship or geographically located communities, they also emphasised the importance and collective transformative potential of Indigenous LGBTIQ+ community-building that is aroused when forging new communities of belonging and connectedness.

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## Keywords

Mobility, mobilities, belonging, connection, Indigenous communities, LGBTIQ+

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## Introduction

Enduring settler-colonial mythologies of the 'wandering nomad' and 'going walkabout' short-circuit the rich complexity of Indigenous peoples' past and present practices and knowledges of movement (Russell, 2018; Soldatic, 2018). This mythology, coupled with discourses of dispossession, continues to prevail while Indigenous movement for agential reasons remains largely unexplored in academic literature. There is a need to disrupt settler-colonial mythologies and extend discourses beyond dispossession to understand and realise Indigenous mobilities that are underpinned by agency. The acknowledgement and exploration of Indigenous mobility is critical for ongoing expressions of self-determination, identity, and sovereignty (Soldatic, 2018). Further, to expand dominant narratives, Indigenous mobilities and the meanings attached to them need to be explored from the viewpoint of those who have done the moving. This is essential for the development of nuanced understandings founded on lived experiences.

We draw on the 'new mobilities paradigm' and qualitative interviews with Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth to explore their complex mobility practices and tactics. Exploration of the gendered and/or sexual aspects of mobilities is something frequently overlooked in mobilities scholarship (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). Therefore, this article contributes to the small body of growing literature that is queering mobilities (see for examples De Jong, 2015; Knopp, 2004; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015).

The new mobilities paradigm is drawn upon because it moves away from and challenges the conceptualising of place as a 'fixed geographical container' within which social processes unfold (McCann & Ward, 2011; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2014; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). Instead, it gives recognition to the ways in which places are dynamic, relational, constantly on the move, and constituted and linked through forms of mobilities that are tied to power relations and social categories (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2014; McCann &Ward, 2011; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015; Sheller & Urry, 2006). This approach facilitates understandings of identities, practices, and places as inherently partial and always fluctuating (Noble, 2009).

The interviews highlighted in this paper elucidate the ways in which Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth in the country now known as Australia find new possibilities in their complex movements, such as finding 'new family' and (re)claiming social and cultural community. They illustrate how Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth negotiate experiences of loneliness, alienation, racism, and discrimination through strategies of movement, such as utilising 'passing privilege' and online

technologies.

## New mobilities: places and belonging

Mobility practices and tactics are commonly enacted by queer and other marginalised people or groups as a means of seeking places, relationships, people, and ways of being that can provide emotional and physical security, and the solidarity that they are denied in the heterosexist world (Knopp, 2004; Wait & Gorman-Murray, 2011). On the individual level, for instance, there is a widespread practice of queer people of distancing from communities of origin and families to make possible ‘coming out’ (Knopp 2004; Valentine, 1993). People who are either forcibly rejected or choose to eject themselves *move*, ‘often literally, but sometimes by radically remapping their worlds and their places in it’, in attempts to protect themselves or ‘find themselves’ (Knopp, 2004, p. 123), or both. Movement can provide possibilities of self-actualisation, self-reinvention, and the potential to challenge normative understandings of the self (De Jong, 2015; Wait & Gorman-Murray, 2011). Knopp (2004), in speaking about queer movement specifically, refers to these personal (and sometimes collective) journeys as ‘queer quests for identity’. Often inherent in these quests — wherein alternative ways of being can be explored and experimented with in contexts foreseeably less encumbered by constraints — is a desire to belong (Knopp, 2004; Sullivan 2018). This pursuit of finding a sense of belonging in and connection to queer spaces is important for Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse people too.

Belonging is a relational, embodied, emotional, political and affective experience. It is a restless process between being and longing, and constantly becoming (Probyn, 1996). According to De Jong (2015) mobility is regularly conceived of as the ‘antithesis to belonging’ due to conceptualisations of belonging being commonly understood as emergent through a presumably ‘fixed’ place (p. 9). However, as Fortier (2003) contends, finding sites of belonging and ‘being oneself’ are not pre-givens but instead formed through ongoing movements and journeys, ‘tacking back and forth across different sites, circuits, origins and destinations’ (Wait & Gorman-Murray, 2011, p. 1385). For Indigenous peoples, a sense of belonging is often derived from an ontological relationship to Country (Moreton-Robinson, 2003), and from being recognised by or accepted as a member of a collective Indigenous community, or both (Carlson, 2016). As Moreton-Robinson (2003) states ‘Indigenous people are related either by descent, country, place, or shared experiences’ it is through these relations that connectedness and belonging emerges (p. 14). Thus, belonging can be fostered through participation in ‘new’ Indigenous communities (Carlson, 2016), cultural protocols and relationships to country, for example, wherein Indigenous peoples can be in place (belong) even when away from one’s home country (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Furthermore, through the new mobilities paradigm, places are conceptualised as being contingent, ephemeral and fluid, and as always in the process of becoming (Knopp, 2004; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2014; Sheller & Urry, 2006). They are constituted relationally through uneven networks of people, ideas, and goods that are perpetually on the move (McCann & Ward, 2011). Thus, places themselves are seen as travelling at varying speeds and distances within networks of non-human and human agents (Sheller & Urry, 2006). They are dynamic but they are also about the placing of peoples, of bodily co-presence, and about the relationships of those people who

happen to inhabit — by chance or by choice — the same place at the same time (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

**Containing Indigenous peoples' movement**

Within this fluid and uneven context of movement are politics and power dynamics that can afford, constrain or contain mobilities (Clarsen, 2015; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015; Soldatic, 2018; Stanley, 2020). The politics and relations of power inherent in mobilities is particularly apparent when considering how settler-colonial societies have aimed to contain and control First Nation's peoples' movement (Clarsen, 2015; Soldatic, 2018). 'Foundational to settler colonialism are both the potential and actual capacities of settlers to … circumscribe and control the mobilities of Indigenous peoples, to immobilise the former sovereign owners of those territories' that settlers have since claimed as their own (Clarsen, 2015, p. 42). Policy narratives in Australia, for instance, often seek to make explicit policy boundaries and borders while rarely exploring the edges of movement, mobility, and change (Soldatic, 2018). Too frequently, the policy has been one of containment: containing Indigenous peoples 'within the outstation, the mission and the town camp' (Soldatic, 2018, p. 163).

More recently, Soldatic (2018), illustrates how Australia's retracted disability income support system imposes new forms of containment on Indigenous peoples (and indeed other disability welfare recipients) with disabilities. The mobility of Indigenous people living with disability is 'highly regulated by the requirements attached to their payments', such as, having to attend a raft of interviews and appointments (Soldatic, 2018, p. 161). Thus, while required to be on the move to ensure compliance and income support, mobility is circular and contained; a constant repetition of presenting in a plethora of spaces to have their disabled status certified. Concomitantly, Soldatic (2018) argues that income retractions fix Indigenous Australians in a circular mobility: a 'cyclical motion of poverty management' that has impacts on personal wellbeing and the wellbeing of family and kin (p. 162). This is because personal mobility relies heavily on the support of family, kin and community to meet the demands of welfare conditionality to maintain some level of economic security. Therefore, this circular mobility of containment effectively negates the critical role of Indigenous mobilities for the ongoing expression of Indigenous sovereignty, identity and self-determination (Soldatic, 2018).

**New mobilities, motilities, politics and power relations**

The new mobilities perspective has been applied in research that seeks to understand the 'ongoing transformative processes reordering sexual and gendered landscapes' in numerous major cities (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2014, p. 757). Nash and Gorman-Murray (2014; 2015) argue that new mobilities theorising offers new ways of (re)thinking LGBTI+ place-making and movements in urban areas of the global North, both historically and contemporarily. This literature also highlights the ways in which politics and power relations are deeply entrenched in mobilities. Kaufmann et al. (2004) use the notion of 'motility' to indicate 'the capacity of entities (e.g., goods, information or persons) to be mobile in social and geographic spaces, or as the way in which entities access and appropriate the capacity for sociospatial mobility according to their circumstance' (p. 750).

Nash and Gorman-Murray (2015) reconsider Sydney's lesbian geographies through the framework of motilities, mobilities, relational space, identity politics and social power. Lesbian spaces in Sydney post-World War II were primarily comprised of private

or semi-public places whereby lesbian networks were 'hidden' in everyday public spaces reflecting the gendering of public and private spaces in Western cities at that time (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). During the 1960s, when gendered legal restrictions that excluded woman from certain public spaces, such as bars, had been removed, public lesbian spaces began to coalesce. Emerging underground lesbian bars on Sydney's Oxford Street came to constitute Sydney's 'lesbian scene' (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). These social spaces and networks facilitated new models of lesbian identities, such as butch/femme pairings (Jennings, 2009). New forms of identity politics and new lesbian spaces continued to take shape, however, because lesbians, as other woman, tended to have smaller economic means. Gradually, the residential marketplace of Oxford Street became unaffordable. Resultantly, some relocated to Leichhardt in Sydney's inner west, which was recognised as a lesbian distinct before it dissipated in the 1990s (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2015). While summarised here, Nash and Gorman-Murray's (2015) account of lesbian geographies illustrates how the lesbian landscape in Sydney moves in relation to the 'political milieu, social acceptance, and economic markets of their respective gay villages' evidencing how place-making is mobile, dynamic, transient, and tied to politics and power relations (p. 187).

**Tactics of movement**

As is being made evident, certain individuals and institutions possess the power to affect mobility while simultaneously determining the requirements of who does, and does not, belong (Probyn, 1996; Carlson 2016; Sullivan, 2020). Congruently, Stanley (2020) investigates the social media activism of 'counter-hikers' (people who are fat, queer, 'of colour' or are lone women who hike) who create Facebook pages and Instagram accounts to foster community and support. She argues that certain social scripts or ideologies of the 'legitimate hiker' (a white person with a visibly fit physique) affords some hikers the ability to walk, while those who do not fit the normative script (such as those with fat bodies) have their mobility constrained. This constraint comes in the forms of sexism, body-shaming, and racism, for example. This, however, does not mean that normative logics of belonging cannot be made anew through mobility processes (Kojima, 2014). Stanley (2020) illustrates how 'counter hikers' utilise social media to collectivise, find community or belonging, and challenge 'legitimate' hiker ideologies by posting images of 'unlikely' hikers who have bigger body types or are gender non-conforming folk, people of colour, differently abled people and so on.

Relatedly, Carlson (2020) explores some of the ways that romance 'plays out' for Indigenous peoples through dating applications, such as Tinder (p. 134). She reveals that Indigenous women carefully construct simulated profile pictures (often of blonde, blue-eyed womn) to navigate Tinder's 'swipe logic' that works to exclude those who do not fit the normative racial mould of online dating. This intentional misrepresentation enables Indigenous women to have mobility and 'textual romances' through Tinder.

Not dissimilarly, Kojima (2014), explores the tactics of movement in the everyday lives of Asian queer migrants who make use of 'existing systems, means and locations of mobilities for their own cultural needs and purposes' (p. 35). Kojima (2014) problematises understandings of movement that centre on either mobilities-as-agency or mobilities-as-displacements, arguing that a focus on either one is inadequate to capture the nuances of his participants 'often elusive tactics of manoeuvre' (p. 35). According to Kojima (2014), 'any hope of apprehending the vibrant possibilities for

everyday (and often queer) tactics of movement' become lost through these conceptualisations (p. 56). Instead Kojima (2014) arrives at his own framework, which he terms 'mobilities-in-difference'. 'Mobilities-in-difference' describes the opportunistic tactics that allow provisional movement in any given cultural space. This framework investigates the relationality between the movements and displacements of his participants; it is situated in the temporality of 'survival, getting by, and making do' (Kojima, 2014, p. 35).

Yasu, the participant Kojima (2014) introduces first self-identifies as being a 'gay', 'chubby', 'Asian Bear'. Because Yasu is chubby himself, 'debusen' ('chubby chasers': gay men who pursue chubby gay men for sexual partners) 'are integral to his intimate community-making' (p. 37). He lives in Vancouver and his participation in the gay scene there has been non-existent and not in demand. This is not because the bear community does not exist there but because it is a 'white space' not free from racialised logics of desirability, which situates Yasu as 'out of place' and 'unwanted' (p. 37). To negotiate possible encounters with people who share similar preferences to his own, Yasu has tactically made an account on a video-streaming website where he broadcasts his 'fat belly to the world' (p. 37). Through this, Yasu has been able to find 'his people'; his 'online fans' who he physically travels to meet (often in Japan) in person once a year (p. 37). In this way, Yasu reconstitutes a space of queer possibility. Furthermore, his travels and broadcasting are ways of extending and negotiating the boundaries of his belonging (Kojima, 2014).

The use of digital spaces by queer individuals to extend the boundaries of their belonging (by building sociality or solidarity, or both) is a common and widely documented practice (Byron et al., 2017; Craig et al., 2015; Craig & McInroy, 2014; Hankel & Morris, 2014; Farrell, 2017). It can be conceptualised as a form of virtual or online mobility. Waitt and Gorman-Murray (2011), for example, document the ongoing journeys and movements of a 16-year-old queer Australian man who experiences stigma and exclusion in his hometown, Mount Isa. Harry (the pseudonym given to this participant) had limited money for physical migration, so in efforts to circumscribe the heteronormatively of his everyday life and nurture alternative senses of home and intersubjective positions, he journeyed online. In doing this, he discovered a third space that is liberated from the prejudices of heteronormativity (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2011). In this space, he could explore non-normative desires and the possibility of identifying as gay, and create online same-sex friendships that nourished his sexual identity (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2011). Consequently, by logging on and virtually journeying through the internet, Harry could temporarily leave the homophobia, heterosexualism, and prescribed sexual identities of his hometown (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2011).

Considering reconstituting spaces of queer possibility and exploring the edges of Indigenous peoples' movement and mobility and its crucial role in the expression of identity, self-determination and personal wellbeing, this paper investigates the tactics of movement of young Indigenous Australians who are gender and/or sexually diverse from their own voices.

## Methods

This article is part of a series of papers interrogating the data from a set of interviews

with Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth in Australia. These interviews were part of a preliminary phase in a larger project investigating the Social, Cultural and Emotional Wellbeing (SCEWB) of Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth. This study was supported by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council under its Targeted Call 2018 Indigenous Social and Emotional Wellbeing funding round. The principal objective of the study was to understand how being Indigenous, gender and/or sexuality diverse and young intersected with SCEWB. The project also aimed to assist in the development of support programs and services. The project has a three-phase methodology, with each phase informed by preceding phases. The data used in this report are from 15 in-depth narrative interviews with Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth aged 14–25 years. Participants were recruited from November 2019 to May 2020 through Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse social networks, social media posts by partner organisations (BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation and ACON Health) and service provider networks (such as Twenty10, Campbelltown City Council, Infant Child Adolescent Mental Health (ICAMHS)/NSW Health). Given the predominance of deficit-based approaches, the larger project takes a strengths-based approach, focusing on the resistance, successes, voices, and perspectives of Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth in overcoming challenges to their SCEWB.

The first phase involved in-depth interviews with young Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse people living in urban centres. These interviews will inform the content of phase two, an online survey of Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse young people to obtain quantitative data regarding wellbeing, risk and protective factors, and experiences of health services. A final phase will use participatory action research methods to work with Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse young people, their organisations, relevant service providers and stakeholders to co-design programs that can support young people's SCEWB. All phases of the research process have been guided by a Youth Advisory Group of Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse young people.

Prior to submission, this article was reviewed by members of the Youth Advisory Group and the NSW Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council's (AH&MRC) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The project received ethics approval from the AH&MRC (HREC Ref. 1536/19) on 27 August 2019. All quotes used herein were verified and approved for publication by each of the participants in acknowledgement of their ownership and control of their own stories. The project has taken a Dharug name to reflect this: Dalarinji translates as 'Your Story'.

## Data Analysis

This article thematically analysed transcripts from interviews with participants who identify as Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse young people. Thematic analysis allows for the development of complex conceptual and thematic categories that emerge from inductively analysing transcripts rather than deductively testing pre-existing theories or hypotheses.

Thematic analysis involved different levels of analysis with open, axial, and selective coding as foundational techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the first stage of thematic analysis, the research team read through the transcripts to open up the text and identify broad themes that lead to more in-depth examination. The

transcripts were read line-by-line to identify and classify recurring themes and common conceptual groupings as well as any outlying or contradictory categories. Conceptually similar themes were grouped together into categories whereby key relationships and linkages between cases (participants), concepts and categories were identified (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

## Discussion

### Conflict and Isolation from Indigenous kinship or communities of origin

Conflict and isolation from Indigenous kinship or geographically located communities is a reccurring issue raised in the interviews with Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth. Participants explained experiences of disownment by family, of rejection in community, and a lack of acceptance and feeling like they were not 'allowed to be different in the country' (Participant 6, a Wiradjuri woman). For some participants, this led to temporary or permanent disengagement from community. As participant 10 explains, 'I don't engage in community anymore … I don't feel like it's a place made for me.' Not dissimilarly, participant 5, whose ancestors are from Wiradjuri country, does not return to their hometown when visiting country because they 'feel really uncomfortable there … I can't go back.'

A small body of literature analyses the effects of the colonisation of Indigenous peoples' gender or sexuality, or both. A relevant consequence identified is experiencing social and cultural exclusion within Indigenous communities (Kerry, 2014; Rosenstreich & Goldner, 2010). Through colonisation, the settler state used its power to produce sexuality and/or gender diverse Indigenous peoples as dirty, deviant and depraved (Day, 2020; Monaghan, 2015; Sullivan, 2020) and, effectually, as discordant with one's community (Sullivan, 2020). Today, in some communities, attitudes towards queer Indigenous people continue to resemble that of the western world. This may help to explain some of the participants experiences of conflict with their kin or geographically located communities.

Experiences of social and cultural exclusion and discrimination are not only the result of one's gender and/or sexual identity. Participants also spoke of experiences of racism enacted by non-Indigenous people and their 'own people' which was often linked to their skin colour, that is, being 'too white' (Participant 1). Participant 1 recounts her time in high school: 'They [an 'aboriginal girls group'] would be like, 'you're not Aboriginal, you can't hang with us,' … you're too white.' For Participant 1, this exclusion and discrimination was compounded with experiences of being 'shunned' and 'judged' in high school for their sexual orientation.
In attempts to circumvent isolating and discriminatory experiences, participants engage in a variety of complex mobility tactics and processes that often lead to forging new communities or places — or both — of belonging and connectedness.

### Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youths' tactics of mobility

*Virtual Mobility*

Multiple participants in this study spoke about engaging in virtual mobility tactics to circumscribe the heteronormativity and experiences of isolation in their everyday life. Some participants utilised social media sites, such as Facebook, to find out about queer events, to share and create friendships online, to have access and exposure to relevant and/or educational content that is otherwise absent from their lives, and to 'reconnect and find other people' (Participant 2, a Noongar person). For Participant 5, social media

offers the only opportunity to connect and collectivise with people like them: 'there isn't really anything out here but social media. That's probably the only thing that is LGBTQ to reach out to other LGBTQ [people].' Without this online mobility, Participant 5 must travel long distances to foster these connections. Therefore, Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youths' online mobilities enable them to reconstitute a space of queer possibilities where they can find places of belonging that are not readily available to them in their offline lives (Farrell, 2017). In this way, their virtual journeying can allow for temporary relief from experiences of discrimination and heterosexism in their offline lives (Farrell, 2015; 17; Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2011).

*'Passing'*

Another mobility tactic employed by Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth in this study is 'passing' to belong or fit in and/or feel safe. Passing is a type of identity negotiation whereby an individual can be regarded as a member of an identity group or category that is often different from their own (Renfrow, 2004). Frequently, passing is used strategically by an individual (pro-active passing) to distance themselves from a stigmatised identity and to transgress social boundaries in everyday life (Renfrow, 2004). However, passing can also be a response to an audience miscategorising an individual, and that individual deciding to go along with the audience rather than contesting the mischaracerisation (reactive passing) (Renfrow, 2004).

A participant in this study spoke about the latter form of identity negotiation as 'passing privilege': 'I'm pale, people think I'm white, and that I'm feminine, people think I'm straight. So I didn't get rocks thrown at me when I was walking home from school. I didn't get slurs growing up because people assumed that I was straight and normal' (Participant 6). The participant goes on to explain, 'I was from the wrong side of the tracks neighbourhood, like low socioeconomic community. And so, I think that's what made me so certain that I needed to be closeted and take advantage of that passing privilege … I guess that idea of hiding because you don't necessarily think it is a safe space' (Participant 6).

While Participant 6 used their retroactive passing privilege to move safely within their community, another participant strategically negotiated their identity in high school to pass as a white hetero-cis man because being gay was 'a bad thing' (Participant 10). 'I am white-passing, and you could say that my Aboriginality like my sexuality was invisible, therefore it was easy to suppress growing up … but eventually, that just got too much physically and emotionally' (participant 10). Participant 10 speaks of times now when they feel like 'regressing to strategies I used in high school to feel safe', to play on their whiteness and masculinity to fit in.

Each of these participants illustrate how they chose or felt forced to negotiate or exclude certain subjectivities when desiring to belong and feel safe (De Jong, 2015). Employing these opportunistic tactics allowed for provisional movement in their given cultural space (Kojima, 2014). This narrative of passing to feel safe and/or belong is a common experience among the participants in this study. Although being able to pass is often seen as a privilege, it also had negative emotional ramifications on wellbeing, creating dissonance between who one 'should' be and who one truly is or wants to be.

### Forging New Communities and Places of Belonging and Connectedness

To overcome experiences of unbelonging and isolation, and in efforts to ‘find themselves’ or become who they ‘really want to be’ (Participant 12, a Birpai woman), some of the participants in this study chose to physically relocate from communities of origin and kin. These relocations sometimes involved moving to urban areas within Australia.

Growing up, Participant 12’s family were supportive and accepting of their gender and/or sexuality diverse identity. However, they felt the need to dress a certain way to please their mum (dressing feminine) and to conceal their gender and/or sexual identity from the broader public in their younger years. While having a supportive family, they suspected that being advised by them not to be ‘out’ publicly was because they were, at least in part, ashamed. However, when Participant 12 moved to attend university, they were able to become ‘who I really wanted to be’ and not conceal their identity. As they explain: ‘I stop[ped] wearing all these girly clothes and actually wear the clothes that I felt comfortable in. I didn't have someone telling me “No, don't wear that.” I could just do whatever I wanted.’ Participant 12 goes on to describe how they built a new group of ‘solid friends’ in their new location, who were unphased and accepting of their gender and/or sexuality diverse identity. ‘I had really good, solid friends. I thought one of the boys – he was from Torres Strait Island, I grew up on Palm Island and he didn't care. A lot of them just didn't care. They were really like chill. We just all had the same thing in common, which was studying. And we were all black and we were all different compared to everyone else on campus. So we all just stayed in our little unit … Our dynamic at uni was pretty accepting. Because the boys kind of talked about it because I asked them, I was like, “Why don't you care?” They said, “We have a hard enough time not being accepted. Why wouldn't I accept you because you like girls?”’ For Participant 12, the act of physically relocating to attend university not only led them on a journey of being able to express and be who they really wanted to be without parental pressures, it also enabled them to forge a new community of belonging and connectedness.

For the participants, finding a place of belonging and connection was a common desire and outcome in participants’ physical movements. When growing up, Participant 6 described how ‘there was no education or acknowledgement that queer people were in our community and therefore, no Indigenous-specific ways of understanding what I was going through or connection in – with my community.’ This led to feelings of unbelonging and of ‘desperately’ wanting a place to belong, and eventually, a move to a city in Australia where there is a LGBT presence. Participants 6’s relocation simultaneously enabled them to mobilise into being more comfortable within themselves.

In their new city, Participant 6 enjoys attending ‘queer events’, whether that be ‘going to a bar with friends or hanging out with other queer people and understanding our shared commonalities and feeling like you have a place to belong.’ They also value connecting with their Indigenous community (going home to visit family or attending Indigenous events in the city), which makes them feel ‘really grounded’ (Participant 6). For Participant 6, each of these spaces provide a place of community connection and belonging wherein they can embrace each of their intersecting identities, albeit separately – identifying with one of their identities more than the other in response to their different environments.

Attending ‘queer events’ in expressly gay districts (such a Sydney’s Oxford Street) is another mobility tactic used by Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth in this study. This can mean traveling for a couple of hours to the destination where an event is taking place. For some participants, gay clubs and parties are a place of acceptance, belonging, and connectedness that offer an escape from experiences of racism or discrimination directed at either or both of their intersecting identities.

Participant 1, for instance, describes the importance of going clubbing for their wellbeing and expression of identity: ‘Most of the time, if I’m having a bad day or something, I mean my friend would just go gay clubbing or something and it’s so refreshing … In gay clubs, you can just be yourself and just dance and sing.’ Similarly, Participant 3, who identifies as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, really enjoys attending queer parties for their inclusiveness; ‘I like parties that are open for all sexualities and all genders because I find they're usually the most inclusive spaces, particularly with other races or people with disabilities as well.’

Queer events can offer a space where one can belong and be themselves unencumbered by heteronormative constraints or racism. However, not all participants in this study shared the same experiences of inclusivity communicated above. For some, encounters of racism and discrimination within non-Indigenous queer communities has deterred them from visiting certain clubs or gay districts and/or has forcefully excluded them from such communities (i.e., being verbally told they do not belong due to their Indigeneity). Participants who share these racist and discriminatory experiences expressed how they caused feelings of further isolation, marginalisation, and unbelonging. Racism within queer communities restricts the mobility of Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth, adds to experiences of social inequality, and culturally marginalises them, each of which can diminish health and wellbeing (Kerry, 2014; Sullivan, 2021).

## Conclusion

In this article, we have shown how the mobility tactics of Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youth do not always lead to a place of unproblematic belonging. Sometimes tactics such as ‘passing’ are required to avoid being negatively targeted for either or both intersecting identities, and to be able to move safely within their geographic locations, communities, or the places they are visiting. This can create dissonance with identity and hinder experiences of social, cultural and emotional wellbeing. Moreover, experiences of non-acceptance in community can create anguish, identity confusion, and self-doubt (Fredericks, 2004), which makes maintaining a strong sense of identity and belonging challenging (Sullivan, 2020). In other instances, the tactics of movement create spaces of possibilities. They provide opportunities for self-actualisation and for finding and/or creating new relationships, families, and communities in ‘new’ places. Differently then, some mobility tactics can help to positively strengthen identity and help to foster experiences of wellbeing, signifying the critical role Indigenous gender and/or sexuality diverse youths’ movements have for ongoing expressions of identity, and personal and collective wellbeing. Additionally, they highlight the transformative potential of community building that is aroused when creating new communities and spaces of belonging and connectedness.

Regardless of the purpose or outcome of movement, each of the participants in this article exemplified opportunistic agential tactics that allow them to move either

provisionally or sometimes unencumbered in their given, arrived at, or co-constructed cultural spaces. This extends understandings of Indigenous movement beyond settler-colonial mythologies, illustrating instead the rich complexity of practices of mobilities and the identity negotiations that are inherent within.

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