

Queering Spaces

For the third time we gather here for a queer-intersectional and non-commercial Pride. This years motto: Queering spaces. You might wonder: „What do spaces have to do with queerness? What do gender and sexuality have to do with places?“

A lot of people take moving through spaces for granted. They enter and exit them depending on the context. They go to work, university, school. In the afternoon they enter stores, meet up with friends at the lake or in a bar. In the evening they go home or go to a club. They barely notice the different spaces they have encountered. Using and changing spaces freely and without danger is not a given for queer people. The life of a lot of Queers is coined by daily name-calling and insults in public but also private spaces.

We want to emphasize, that this violence in spaces does not only effect queer people. (cis) Women experience a specific form of violence. Colonial and racist governance has been affecting BIPOC and migrantified people for centuries. The whole concept of our society and architecture seems to be designed to exclude people with dis_abilities. Only those, who have the ability or permission to speak the same language, have the same bodies, have the same so called origin, behave and are the same as the dominante majority in this space, are allowed to be part of it.

The following will talk about specific queer experiences. Please keep in mind, that „being queer“ is not synonymous with „being *white*, christian and able-bodied“. Lived queer realities intersect with a lot of other realities.

The first study on anti-queer violence in Saxony was published 2019 by a cooperation between HS-Mittweida and LAG Queeres Netzwerk Sachsen. Almost all of the 267 participants have experienced violence on the basis of their gender or sexual identity. Violence can come in physical, psychological, structural and institutional forms. It can hurt and destroy us. It happens in spaces and places. It's the fear of the dark, the fear of the way home, the fear of being alone or just being in the wrong place the wrong time. All of it is part of the queer reality. But it does not just affect physical spaces.

Early on, we get to know family as a patriarchal social space. Many of us Queers grow up with cis-heteronormative expectations from our parents and society. We are afraid of coming out or experience domestic violence because of our identity. Class groups, sports clubs, alleged friend groups - all of them are social spaces we can't freely choose in childhood and adolescence. We find ourselves wondering: how do I fit in here? How can I be just normal? But how are we supposed to be normal when society still perceives us as "special" and as "different." All around us we are confronted with cis-heteronormative bullshit: The way we are expected to have relationships and sex, how we are (supposed to) dress and how we are supposed to speak. All rules that are not written anywhere, but not following them is punished nonetheless. Be it with looks, uncomfortable comments, insults or punches. If not even killed. Like 27-year-old Christopher W., who was murdered by three neo-Nazis in the Saxon town of Aue in April 2018. As if in a frenzy, they beat him without restraint. For 20 minutes. Particularly in rural areas alternative opportunities to meet cool people are scarce. Queer sport programs and educational projects do not exist. Or if they do they are located at the next bigger city. These spaces are often the only queer point of contact in miles. With the awesome (irony) infrastructure in Saxony and other regions in Germany it is especially complicated. „Off to Berlin in the ICE“ said no person from Chemnitz ever. And this is the third biggest city of Saxony... These crucial spaces and projects on the other hand depend on the state and its financial support and are sometimes simply cut off. Let's take the educational program

from Gerede e.V. as an example. They go to schools and just this last year have trained 1.000 students and about 700 teachers, educators and professionals by sensitizing them for queer issues. This year they were cut off financially. Just like that. Thank you state action plan, we guess. Guess that's how it goes (irony)... Thanks a lot, Sucksony! (pissed) The few projects that Gerede e. V. can do at the moment are only made possible by the City of Dresden. Queer education in East Saxony is dead for the time being.

Often the only option is to retreat into private spaces, into secrecy, into the closet.

Queers, however, are masters in appropriating spaces, making them more queer or opening their own spaces. Let's remember the famous examples like the Stonewall Inn, ballroom houses and the whole ballroom world itself, the occupations of Berlin's „Tuntenhäuser“, cruising areas and cottaging. Spaces that often were criminalized and that existed and functioned in secrecy. Spaces with own codes. Constantly they had to be alert, expecting anti-queer attacks of the state and society. But in the midst of all the caution and danger, they managed to create spaces, that worked differently than the rest of society. Where cis-heteronormative expectations no longer applied, where they could openly flirt, love, show affection and fuck in all the queer ways. Spaces of calm from the outside, of relative safety, of self exploration. Today we would probably call it a safer space. Michel Foucault, who himself was gay and other pioneers of Queer Theory, would probably call it a Heterotopia. So called ‚different spaces‘ beyond the mainstream society, that simply function differently.

And the best part? These spaces aren't a thing of the past! They still exist and especially in Leipzig they are becoming more and more. Yay! To name some of the explicitly queer and non-commercial spaces: Bubble Bar, short-term spaces like the Queerbeam series at Queerbeet, Antischocke which was occupied in march but unfortunately vacated shortly after, Candy Krush, Pixi, Rosa-Linde, this very demonstration and the workshops, hangouts and panels beforehand and some more that used to exist, are being created right now and that are being revived again and again. These spaces offer safety, shelter, places to party, flirt, to get conversations started, to plan the abolition of the cis-heteronormative patriarchy and just to come as we are - queer.

There were and are many more spaces outside of Leipzig. They were created through decades of dedication, build by Queers and sometimes militantly fought over and vacated by the state. Two prominent examples are Liebig34 or multiple Aids service organizations. And yet queer spaces continue to be attacked - by the governmental repression organs, by Nazis, by the so called civil society, but also by leftist machos.

A recent and particularly upsetting example of violence amongst leftists against queer feminist spaces is the Syrena collective in Poland: so called „leftist“ guys violently vacated and occupied the project next to them. Anti-feminism and anti-queerness made them do what the police wasn't able to for years. This goes to show that queering spaces always includes fighting and protecting.

But making spaces queer does not mean transforming or reforming them. We will not be satisfied with a small rainbow makeover of the police. We will not thank Rewe for hanging a rainbow flag outside. We won't throw a party because the FDP enters the government with queer voices and will at best laugh bitterly at the electoral promises of the governing coalition. We don't want to paint spaces queer. What good does it bring trans* and non binary people to be called a „new trend“. What are Black and POC Queers supposed to get from having their Style, culture, dance style and House- and Ballroom culture being made a fashion goal? How can you thoroughly fight the gender binary if bisexuals, queers with dis_abilities or inter* people are told that they are "somehow also normal" in a sorry attempt

to include them without addressing the problematic binary system itself. What acknowledgment? Where? From Whom? We don't need this pseudo solidarity!

For us, Queerness means profound change. Making something (more) queer, means overthrowing the deep rooted patriarchal meaning of things. We want to squeeze every last drop of heteronormativity out of our home. We want to scrub the stinking rests of liberal capitalism from our rooms. We want to spread in every physical and imagined space and expand like ever-growing colorful construction foam. Until there is not an inch left for racist and ableist shit in our space.

Queerness is a challenge! Queer living and being needs unlimited space. We want the space and we are taking the space, we will enter the stage, we will build palaces and will bulldoze our way, until our queerness has squished the old power structure. Give us the houses so we can give them away! Give us the parliaments so we can make them into a club! Give us the streets so we can tear half away and while Police cars are sinking in the sand we will discover new paths on our cargo bikes. Give us the borders and states and we will burn them down. Give us the family and we will make it into something beautiful, give us the country side and we will make reliable networks, give us the so called market and we will throw it in the trash. Give us all the spaces we want!

And if you don't want to give it to us... then we will take it ourselves. We know how to as we have done it for over a century of this movement.

The future is intersectional queering spaces!

About the author: CHELSEA, QUEER, NON-BINARY, 26 YEARS, FROM CAMEROON

My asylum experience in Germany and my sexual orientation

My name is Chelsea. I'm a Cameroonian, and this is my story.

Arriving in Germany

My life in Germany wasn't easy from the very beginning. I arrived Germany and asked for an asylum, my fingerprints were taken, photos and every detail feature I have on my body. I was then taken to a reception facility. I stayed there for 1 week, then moved to another reception facility in Leipzig. That's where the German story began. I was so naive that I didn't know how serious asylum was. I just knew - tell your story and you are done with it. I remember going for my interview and the guy interviewing me, his main interest was to make me blunder and make errors. I wasn't smart enough. I failed myself and my asylum was rejected with facts taken from the internet, denying my story as completely inadmissible. Receiving this information from BAMF, I was so scared and that's when the trauma and reality of asylum seeking began to hit me so hard. I had just one week to make an appeal or be deported the next week. My process and everything about my asylum process was so fast. I knew immediately, I wasn't welcomed here. I couldn't sleep, couldn't think right, fear of the police and fear of been deported plus going back to Cameroon. I knew once I get there am a dead man, if someone denies me something I say it's their choice, because I believe it's all about choice. My story wasn't unique. When I spoke to others, I realized we all had similar stories and so I said to myself, I wouldn't be seen as been truthful because generations of asylum

seekers said my story already in their own words and life experiences. Nothing I said or did was new, they had seen and heard everything already, the circle just continues.

The beginning of the asylum process

The asylum process makes sure it gives you an experience to never forget. The reality was more like a joke, but so serious that any step taken counts to your success or your downfall. While I was at the Max-Liebermann-Strasse refugee camp, I've always had the feeling of being gay as at the moment that's the term I could address myself with. My point of view was, its either you are gay for guys and lesbian for ladies. I didn't know there was more to it. I didn't still know myself that well due to lack of proper education about gender Identities. The asylum process made me confused. I forgot things so fast and was losing my mind every second, every minute and hour and every day. Too many nights I felt dead, it was all in my head, my thoughts where really hurting me.

After I was rejected, I made the appeal. Once again my process was so fast. I wasn't really accepted in the country. Then I looked for a lawyer and I believe he was a good lawyer. I didn't trust anyone, even those who wanted to help me. I'll laugh with you, tell my story but I didn't trust no one. I was later transferred to DÖLZIG camp.

At DÖLZIG life was much harder. There I stayed for 9 to 10 months. While at the camp I got in contact with ROSALINDE and that's how I got to find my true identity. I went for several meetings and appointments. There I was taught and educated about gender identities that is the LGBTQ. I was shy and based on my culture and believe. I was scared to talk and pronounce the words. At times I will say it and come back to the camp in my room and pray and ask God for forgiveness. It was really weird, but sometimes I thought to myself I'm doing the right thing. Then came me! With the double identity. I loved the presence of ROSALINDE, because I could talk all about myself and still not be condemned. I found it as a safe space where I could talk all my little secrets and things I really loved. Eventually I was lying to myself not the ROSALINDE, because near friends I still hide myself and laughed at jokes of not being bisexual and having a non-binary identity. Slowly I did start to stop at such jokes, because it became my identity. Anytime I laughed, I realized I laughed at myself. I smiled at times because I couldn't believe it's happening. I was reborn. I was free from pretending. I became bold. I remember me lying on the bed and had this smiling face, while staring at the ceiling.

The asylum procedure

My personal experience wasn't fun. I was later called by the court and I realized it's all a system. It's a chain reaction with the first reaction being the most important, depending on your response from the BAMF that's how much chance you have to win in the court. I don't know if it's so, but am saying that was my experience. I went to court, had a hearing with my lawyer present, a translator and a person from ROSALINDE. That was actually my first time to sit in front of a judge, he sat and listened to me so kindly. He was like a father studying his child. He starred at me deep in my eyes, analyzing my every move, body movement, sound and facial expression. He made me feel comfortable, even though I was so scared sitting in front of a judge. Even after speaking he still stared at me, but I couldn't stare at him bac. I am thinking it was disrespectful, but I later found out, speaking and starring at him in his eyes would have made me sound truthful.

After that, like after some weeks later, almost like 2weeks, I received a post saying sorry the decision stays the way it is. It was still a negative decision. The information hit me so hard. I had a break down, got sick and got me thinking what next. By then I had contact with ROSALINDE and I already knew it was negative decision, because my lawyer told me with such a decision from the BAMF. I don't stand a chance to win in court either, also my interviewer at ROSALINDE had told me it won't be positive. Like I said I didn't trust no one,

only later did I realize they were with me not against me. I didn't even have an idea I could ask for another asylum known as a subsequent asylum. When I heard I could ask for another asylum I was so happy within me, but I showed it to RASHA (my consultant at ROSALINDE) like I was like acting sad but within me was a whole party going on. I was happy, because my new identity was an entire new beginning in my life and a new start. This made me love the community more and I was ready to show it in every aspect. That I was proud belonging to the community, I began looking for more ways to tell people about ROSALINDE, because I understood their aim and love for queer refugees.

So in a few days my lawyer was contacted and asked if a subsequent asylum was possible, he said for the moment he will have to confirm. So we waited and waited, then came his phone call, with a positive news that the subsequent asylum was possible with certain laws met. I don't know those laws, but the requirement had to be met for a subsequent asylum to be accepted. Since my asylum was rejected in court the appeal date was soon coming to an end and I haven't still made the appeal in the higher court. As usual I had negative thoughts always. This voice in my head told me, don't trust this people they setting you up. I became worried and every time I was sitting with RASHA I tried to understand her. She was studying me, I was studying her. She always smiled and talked to me calmly. I didn't still trust her, but I gave it a shot. The 2 weeks for my appeal came to an end, I just hoped for the best. It was a risk, but it was worth it. I don't think I had a better choice to make, it either works or it fails.

Current situation

I am still waiting for the answer from the BAMF at the moment. In the meantime, I continue to go to school to be able to do an apprenticeship.

The uncertainty is hard to bear. But I am trying to make the best of it and distract myself. I just know I can't go back to Cameroon under any circumstances. There is no life for me there. My life is in danger there.

I want to stay in Germany. I feel comfortable and safe here. I have contacts in the queer community and can live here freely and in safety.

The anarcho-queer part of the community

In 2020 Queering Defaults arose from criticism towards the existing pride structures. Most CSDs have stopped being fierce Demonstrations. Instead they are more like a big party with tons of alcohol. They are sponsored by companies and political parties and are full of their banners. Emancipatory blocs with political demands are sent to the back. Accompanied by the police and walking next to BMW and the Deutsche Bank instead of leading the Pride. Pride is not an election campaign and/or publicity event! The police, or rather the cops so called LGBT contact person is often times actively invited. We on the other hand reject the police! It is the same authority that violate humans by deporting Queers and other people they declare to be illegal. It is the same police, that vacates queer safe spaces as it did with the house project Liebig34 in Berlin. It is the same police that has to be so manly it gets insecure when getting mischievous compliments for their snazzy eyebrows. Sorry, just a little insider regarding an encounter with Robo-Cops.

No pride in repression, no pride in the police!

On top of that, CSDs are often *white*, cis-gay spaces, where trans*, inter* people and queer BIPOCs often have very little space or don't feel comfortable. In summary: Oftentimes CSDs have stopped including all queers and started moving in a direction that represents *white*, cis, well-earning and not illegalized parts of the community.

We as Queering Defaults are aware that we are not achieving a satisfying representation of the diversity of the queer Community. We ourselves have a lot to work on, but we try.

What annoys us, is seeing CSDs mostly striving for assimilation. Meaning they just want to be seen as a part of society and not stand out or cause a stir. This does not apply to us: **Be gay, do crime!**

We don't want to earn a „you are normal too“ sticker from the state or patriarchy. Your „normal“ is racist, queer-hostile and ableist. We don't want it!

After our first pride in 2020 a comment on instagram called us the „anarcho-queer part of the community“, because of a speech in which we called for the abolition of the patriarchal family. A name we had and have no problem being called. It makes perfect sense to us, that being queer and anarchist can go hand in hand. But what does being queer and anarchist mean and why does it match so well?

Anarchy means no authority and accordingly opposes structures of domination and power.

This includes wanting to overcome economical relations of power that come with capitalism.

But it doesn't end with criticism of capitalism. The main effort of anarchy is to remove hierarchy and therefore power from one person or group over another. The classification of cis-hetero on the one hand and queer people as „others“ and a deviation of the norm on the other hand is part of this patriarchal power structure and more than a „side contradiction“

Capitalism, the cis-heteronormative patriarchy and racism are closely intertwined and work together. *White* cis men occupy positions of power, while women and Queers, often not *white*, are doing unpaid care work, precarious jobs to survive and are constantly confronted with sexist, racist and queer-hostile violence. „Gender“ and „Sex“ themselves are constructed categories, that have changed over the centuries. „Sexuality“ as a form of identity has not always existed. In colonialism it became clear: Heterosexuality and the binary of gender and sex are *white*, western constructs, that were used to oppress people!

There are many more power relations. Racism and colonialism, antisemitism, ableism...

These are just some terms of many more. They describe forms of violence that people who don't fit the *white*, cis-hetero, able-bodied norm experience.

For anarchists, it is also about opposing state or discriminatory violence. Anarchism has to be antiracist, feminist and as accessible as possible, otherwise it did not succeed. Abolishing hierarchies means fighting the state and its friends, as this is the center of power and force. Abolishing hierarchies also entails creating own structures as a counter-draft. And in such a way that those who have previously experienced violence can participate. Be self-critical! We don't want an exclusively academic, white Antifa, talking about „anarchism“ while thinking their opinion and analysis is the only correct one!

But what makes queerness and anarchism such a good couple?

For this, let's briefly clarify the many meanings of queer.

"Queer" was originally a slur against LGBTQIA+ in the English-speaking world and was appropriated in the late 1980s. One use of Queer thereafter was as an umbrella term for non-cisgender and/or non-heterosexual people. Then in the 90s Queer Theory was established. This is an academic study of the power structures based on so-called gender identity and sexuality. Queer Theory looks at all of this in their intersection with other actual and perceived affiliations.

But „Queer“ is more than a term for an identity and an academic theory.

Queer has also been used as a deliberate distinction from LGBTQIA+ who merely want to assimilate into mainstream society. For example, queers like Sylvia Rivera at the 1973 New York Pride Parade charged that gays and lesbians would rather marry and be "normal" than stand in solidarity with trans* people.

"Queer" also functions as a verb. "To queer something" / "to make something queer(er)" is an act. For example, by taking cis hetero penis in vulva sex and changing it to dildo in cis male anus sex, something "normal" can be made "queer".

These are very different meanings - as to be expected! Queer, in its origins, is not a distinct description of anything. Queerness is so hard to pin down because it rejects fixed identities. There is no right or unambiguous way to be "queer." The popular claim that queer feminism gets hung up on so-called identity politics is wrong. A fixed identity is what bourgeois cis gays and lesbians have always wanted in order to demand rights in the form of laws based on those identities. Just like German nationalists talk about "German people" as identity and legitimize it with laws and borders. And for some authoritarian communists, carrying an organizational flag almost seems to bring along a unified identity.

Be that as it may - in any case, queer is opposed to "normalization" and the supposedly "normal". Queer questions the existing order and revolts against structures of domination. Being against the existing order and domination is what connects queer and anarchism.

Being queer or making things queer(er) is an active process. For us, "being queer" means living in resistance to the prevailing norm and acting in a resistant way against the state, capital, patriarchy and other power relations. Sure, it's nice to fight for better laws. But just because §175 no longer exists and gay marriage now allows some people to call their children "their children" in front of the state doesn't mean we're satisfied. We can't rely on the state and laws don't do us any good because our friends are still legally being harassed, abused in prisons, and subjected to violence every day - **all because they are queer.**

Queer activists can do more than wave rainbow flags and are very capable of militantly taking to the streets and taking houses in the anarchist tradition. **Stonewall was a riot!**

For us, that means remembering the BIPOC trans* people and their fellow activists who resisted police violence for days in 1969. We remember the White Night Riots of 1979 that sparked as a result of the assassination of gay politician Harvey Milk. We continue to express our anger at the eviction of house projects by cops, whether it was as long ago as the first "Tuntenhäuser" in Berlin or as recent as Liebig34. We keep in mind the courageous inhabitants of the Syrena Collective, which was destroyed by self acclaimed leftists. We remember groups as diverse as the George Jackson Brigade or as short-lived as a queer militia in Rojava's fight against IS.

Being anarchistic and resisting successfully doesn't require throwing stones either, even if that is an understandable, resistant political action. What's important is that resistance doesn't have to be a martial patriarchal performances. Riots are good and necessary, but preventing sexual violence or checking in with each other if we are okay is just as radical and politically courageous.

The state, capital, and patriarchy want us to isolate ourselves, to work against each other, to behave neatly and tidily and form our nuclear family with a stable job. Whoever doesn't comply with this, we define as resistant. If two men kiss, their act is a queer act. They are not conforming to the hetero norm at that moment. Starting a house and considering non-related people as family is a queer act. This turns the nuclear family of mother-father-child, into a different family. To deliberately destroy expected roles during sex in the context of BDSM is a queer act.

As a person in a wheelchair, not allowing yourself to be labeled as an inherently asexual, genderless being is a queer act. To behave differently from what is expected of you based on your ID is queer. Refusing to make rainbow flags an item for sale and instead organizing an accessible party without fixed entry fees is actively queer. Queer action is diverse and necessary in every regard. Eliminating hierarchies is such a relevant goal and so currently needed. There are so many queer no-border activists, so many queer feminist squatters, so

many activist queer communities that see themselves as anarchist, so many people working towards dismantling hierarchies.

Last but not least:

We want to fight together with other queers in an emancipatory way. That's why we don't want to assume that everyone has the same amount of time, energy, physical strength and knowledge. Therefore, it is important for us to say that the riot is not the golden standard of queer resistance, but rather one of many options. For us this is a profound anarchist self-understanding. We think, anarchism means examining our own structures for hierarchies and reflecting on ourselves. So we want to work on reducing knowledge hierarchies, reducing performance pressure and taking people as they are and bringing them together into a community. We don't have to attack the cops at every demo if by doing so we can achieve walking a powerful Pride together with illegalized people without residency status or traumatized people. Empowerment and a good time together, which gives us strength in the long run, are more important to us in such moments than to perform the anarchist "warhorse" of hating cops in a martial way.

As you can see, anarchism and queer is a logical union for us. Power, structural violence and hierarchies are fought by anarchists and Queers alike. What rises up against normality, patriarchy and state harassment should stand together.

By the way, queer and anarchism should already make a good couple, simply because not all anarchists are white cis straights. [wink ;)]

With fierce greetings, the "anarcho queer faction of the community".

L in FLINTA*- Lesbian Perspectives

This speech is intended to address the issue of why an L is part of the German acronym FLINTA* (Frauen, Lesben, Inter*, Nonbinär, Trans und Agender, see translation in next sentence) and why it should stay that way.

Every so often voices emerge that consider the separate enumeration of lesbians into women, lesbians, inter*, nonbinary, trans* and agender to be strange and unnecessary. "Lesbians are women, too, aren't they?" they often say. Or "The letters stand for gender identities, lesbians just don't fit in there as a sexual orientation."

Yes, that's true, many lesbians are also women and F I N T A * stand for gender identities, but that's not the point.

First of all, it should be mentioned that not all lesbians are women, as there are definitely people who identify as lesbians or dykes but not as women, and that transwomen are of course also women (and can be lesbians), and that in conclusion, being a "lesbian" is understood by some people precisely not only as a sexual orientation, but also as a gender identity.

In order to understand why the L in FLINTA* is important, we must first consider why this acronym FLINTA* exists in the first place: What is actually meant by it -not only in its literal sense- and what is its political meaning and purpose?

The term FLINTA* links women, lesbians, inter*, non-binary people, trans* and agender people with each other and constructs a new group of people. The different components merge into one subject in FLINTA*.

This subject of the FLINTA* person stands in distinction to cis men. To put it in a negative way: FLINTA* are all those who are not cis-men and therefore do not benefit from the patriarchal social structures in which we have to live - unlike cis-men. This social standing can express itself in different ways - depending on our positioning, patriarchy puts different obstacles in our way and patriarchal violence itself expresses itself in many different faces and forms.

The L makes sense and is necessary because lesbians make specific experiences with the patriarchy that differ from the experiences of non-lesbian FLINTA*s. Lesbian experiences are highly underrepresented - even in feminist contexts - and it is not for nothing that "lesbian invisibility" has established itself as a phenomenon. With this speech I want to narrate lesbian perspectives in relation to patriarchy and cis-men but also within feminist and FLINTA* contexts and thus make them visible. These elaborations are based primarily on my experiences as a cis lesbian. Partly these experiences overlap with those of bisexual FLINTA*s, who can be marked and read as lesbians in lesbian relationships in the public space, or lesbian transwomen - but often not.

I and many other Ls consider ourselves as not only female, but also as socialized lesbians. We lack many experiences presupposed as collectively "female," but instead we make other, specifically lesbian experiences, related to a lesbian reality of life. Some of these experiences can be labeled as "good" in the sense of "lucky" or as "bad", some cannot be labeled. Yet, they all show why the L sometimes makes a difference and needs to be thought about.

Lesbian socialization for me personally as a cis lesbian means to have no experience with romantic and sexual relationships with cis men and therefore no experience with contraception, fear of pregnancy and pregnancy testing.

Lesbian socialization to me means to have no need to fight for the right to one's own orgasm in sexual encounters, nor the difficult and tiring trade-offs and challenges feminist FLINTAs must endure in romantic and/or sexual relationships with cis men: to put in an exaggerated way: there is no political enemy or oppressor in bed and in a romantic-emotional relationship. For me, **lesbian socialization** means not wanting to and not having to please men and therefore being able to develop other free spaces and a different political clout and radicality - being able to lead feminist struggles from another perspective. This can lead to lesbian FLINTA*s feeling thwarted in radical feminist actions and demands by non-lesbian FLINTA*s, but on the other hand lesbians can also act as forerunners and thus relieve feminist FLINTA*s in relationships with cis-men.

Lesbian socialization makes it easier to break with patriarchal ideas of femininity, beauty and desirability. Unfortunately, it also means being heavily sanctioned in the public sphere. By their mere existence and presence, butches turn patriarchy and its logics upside down, and by doing so they provoke the ruling order in their own way and therefore quickly become the focus of patriarchal violence, which probably finds its most brutal form in the so-called "corrective rapes", i.e. rapes with the purpose of "normalization", i.e. feminization and heterorization.

Lesbian socialization means being excluded from speaking and exchanging about sexuality in teenage years, because one's own is not included and not thought about.

Lesbian reality means not being considered again and again by the majority society as well as in feminist contexts.

Lesbian reality means to have a feeling of exclusion in cis-hetero or bi women's groups, in which it is tacitly assumed that everyone shares certain experiences, although this is not the case, which leads to lesbians not being allowed to be part of this collectivity. Or they are not able to. Or they don't want to.

Lesbian reality means not being seen or thought about at all by doctors and especially gynecologists.

For me, **lesbian reality** also includes the paradox of lesbian sex. On the one hand, lesbian relationships are often extremely sexualized by cis-men and integrated into their own idea and construction of pleasure and eroticism, whilst on the other hand, lesbian sexuality remains invisible as act of sexuality. Having lesbian sex is not considered as having "real sex."

Lesbian reality therefore also means having to make an effort to convince oneself of "somehow having sex, too". Lesbian sexuality is in most cases not taken seriously by cis-men, which leads to lesbians devaluing their own sexuality- there exists a specifically lesbian inferiority complex towards cis-men. Concepts like OPP (One Penis Policy) where cis-men allow their partners only "harmless" and not competitive sexual contacts - i.e. only with people with vulvas - so that their own penis is the only one their partners come into contact with and thus remains without significant and serious competition.

Lesbian sexuality also means radically questioning and unhinging the hegemonic ideas of sexuality in this society, it is by its very existence and practice a subversive act.

Lesbian reality also means not being thought of in feminist actions such as the striking of emotional care work in intimate relationships. These actions testify to a heteronormative point of view, since they partly presuppose intimate relationships with cis-men as a matter of course, or the concept is not designed for FLINTAs within FLINTA environments.

Lesbian reality means

Lesbian reality means

...dot dot dot

These descriptions come mainly from personal experiences, but they can also be abstracted. They show that visibility is important for lesbian struggles.

The collective concern which FLINTA* share within the patriarchy requires a solidary togetherness, it is thus elementary for our feminist struggle that Fs, Ls, Is, Ns, Ts, and As understand themselves as allies, are there for each other and support each other in their struggles and challenges.

Together, we are not only, but most importantly, strong. Strong enough for this seemingly endless and so arduous struggle against this fucked up cis-straight patriarchy.

That's exactly why it is an indispensable prerequisite that we also see and understand our differences within our FLINTA* group. That we are sensitive to the life realities and specific relationships of the other FLINTA*s to cis-men.

Lesbian visibility is elementary for feminist struggles, only in this way can we profit from our different experiences, learn from each other and have each other's backs.

And thus the L in FLINTA* is also elementary for feminist struggles and its power.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Audre Lorde which sums up my thoughts quite nicely:

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to acknowledge, accept, and celebrate those differences."

For the L and for visibility of all perspectives in FLINTA!

Queers in the rural area - creating, sharing and financing spaces!

Queer life exists beyond cities and is multifaceted. Representation in villages, areas with low population density and small towns leads to a domino effect. But visibility can't spread if it isn't accompanied by safety on multiple levels. This does not only depend on the solidarity of local and city Queers. It requires constant consolidation of queer structures, dependable local engagement and work as well as infrastructure to uphold and secure this. This is not always manageable by Queers of small towns alone. They also need support of non-queer people.

Creating spaces: It is important to acknowledge, that queer people do live in small towns and villages - This might sound trivial, but is actually an essential step. Saying „we don't have people like that here“ shoots down every argument from the start. Therefore it is necessary to expect and adjust to queer existence and life; with knowledge, clear political positions and structures for education and raising awareness. In this context practical solidarity can mean taking a stand in conversations, enriching libraries with queer literature, handing out flyers and including queer education in school curriculums. These actions create a space and climate that makes it easier for people to (be able to) out themselves and have a self-determined life. Non-queer groups and organizations supporting local CSDs and demonstrating together sends an important message.

Providing spaces and rooms: Not every town will have a queer center or queer youth organization, let alone the premises and financial capacities. Practical solidarity means providing rooms for regular meetings and making them possible: in bars, schools, youth clubs or cultural centers. This is also essential for mobile counseling services, that are looking for rooms to use. It also includes having a queer perspective in the medical infrastructure - starting with as little as a list of (close by) specialists for queer health and making it accessible. And this is where it all comes together: The public infrastructure such as busses, trains and internet in rural areas can not be dismissed as luxury. They have to be strengthened as integral parts of social participation, especially if queer spaces and supporting structures can only be found in the next city.

Financing spaces: At the end of the day queer engagement and work are dependent on cash. Thank you to all volunteers working for queer safety in rural areas. Your work is phenomenal and vital. But if queer involvement depends on single people and falls to pieces without them, the continuity of queer emancipation is at risk. Implementing queer rights is work. It has to be structurally fixed, secured and paid by the public purse - not with precarious salaries, but living wages and budgets, that are more stable than being decided on every year for each project application. Queer work is the implementation of human rights and not a fancy extra.

It secures existences. Ensuring this work requires hard-core redistribution in addition to all the soft-politics.

At the end of the day this is about people growing with their surrounding instead of apart from it. Not all small town queer want to move to the city and not all of them share the same concept of freedom.

And yet the freedom of choice requires: Queer life has to be financially, infrastructural and physically safe in rural areas just as it does in cities. At the same time urban spaces have to stay accessible - with affordable rents and without the privatization of government services. With a declaration of war against precarization, physical and verbal violence and for a self determined life for everyone.

translated from german

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