



queer *in* the city
dossier

Note for the reader

The dossier *Queer in the city* is an open-ended dossier proposal produced within the context of an academic internship with the “Urban Interfaces” research group. As a research group connected to the Utrecht University, they centre a critical examination of urban contemporary socio-cultural phenomena. I seek to comprehend the uses of Queer *in* urban environments and situations, where the city works as a setting and stage for urban culture transformations.

On the title choice, “Queer *in* the city” allows me to take a positionality as a queer body living in the city. While “*Queering* the city” or “Queer *and* the City” could fit the purpose of this document, I could not resist the promise that queerness approaches a subversion of the city as space and discourse, as well I did not want to see queer and the city as two separate bodies. As such, I invite you to look around, hold my hand, and let me guide you through the encounters I had in this exploration.

Have a good read.

Acknowledgments

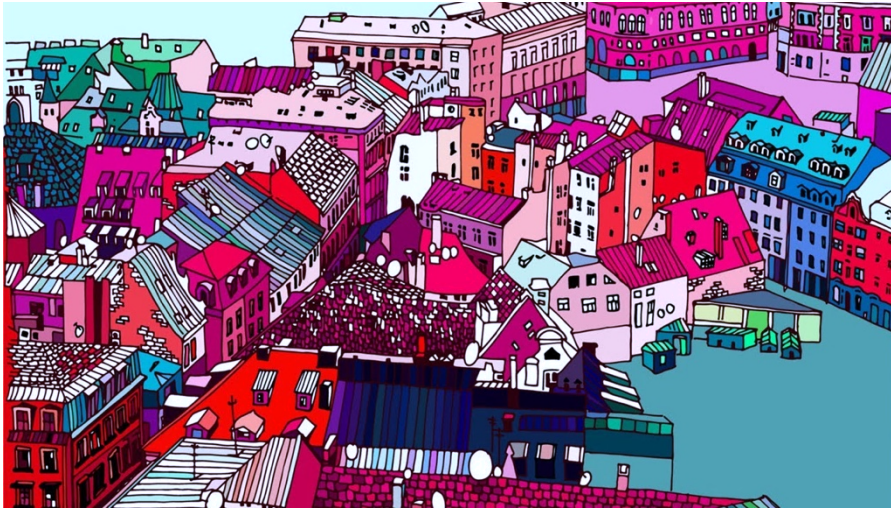
This study and exploration were only possible thanks to the inspirations I encountered along the way. *Hartelijk dank* to Sigrid Merx for your valuable guidance and for sharing your expertise. My gratitude also extends to Nanna and Michiel for the support and patience. Continue feeding minds and bending walls. To Gustavo Nogueira, Sune Kjeldsen, and Julide Sezar, thank you for your insights and stories. The world needs you. To the academics, queer artists, and authors featured in this dossier, your lifetime of hard work and dedication is hugely appreciated. I am fortunate to access this knowledge and to continue planting the seeds of critical and creative thinking.

Author bio

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1. Introduction



(UCL, “Queering Urbanism: thinking climate change through queer time” lecture, 2023)¹

Queer (being) in the city

How can the city be observed through queer lenses? What bodies, subjectivities, epistemologies, and politics may we encounter from a queer perspective on (and emerging from within) the city?

What do we mean when using the term “queer”? With a multifaceted meaning, queer is commonly understood as an umbrella term for LGBTQ+ individuals. As an umbrella term, queer is often used in western political discourses and culture to refer to social beings that feel oppressed by their gender or sexual choices. However, it becomes clear that queer as an umbrella term may homogenise specific social power relations amongst those sexual identities’ experiences, as it pertains to other identity and material markers, such as race, class, and mobility. Therefore, what firstly is relevant of queer as a term is not its use as a demarcation of a sexual identity, but more interestingly, how individuals develop their subject construction, where specific personal details, environments, and experiences relevant to our orientations in space and time and, forming who we are. In the last decades, studies on performativity and body agency question the idea of identity, expanding it to the context.

¹ Image from a UCL lecture, Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYBgsg0A11c>, 2023.

Nikki Sullivan, in the chapter “Queer: a question of being or a question of doing?” (2019), explores ideas about queer as socially constructed: “Is it an attitude, an identity, a particular approach to politics?”². In the context of this dossier, and following David Halperin definition, “queer” demarcates a positionality that is at odds and in friction with how the naturalized hetero and homonormativity³ has organised and shaped gendered, sexualized and racialised urban individuals, institutions, and politics⁴. Thus, queer goes beyond sexual identity, expanding its meaning to a community and global scales. Here, queer (beings) requires the practice of queer (doings).

In addition to identity and political positionality, queer behaves as an anti-identity⁵ as well. It is precisely in the idea of non-identification that the power of queerness resides. In this way, a space that is not sociality or culturally dominant is formed, as a site of engagement, contestation, and imagination of possibilities within and beyond normativity that shapes our surroundings. Identities, contestations, and imaginations slide through and are formed within, dominant social dynamics that take shape through specific environments, sites, and formations. Thus, queer sparks different meanings in different geographical, economic, and cultural contexts, as much as urban structures differ according to transformations through time.

Queer (doing) spaces

According to the urban researcher Stephany Pincetl (2017), cities transform land as they expand, and leave it contaminated as cities contract. Although cities cover only

² Sullivan in *A critical introduction to queer theory* (New York, 2019), 43.

³ McRuer refers to the “normal” – normal bodies and relations as the heterosexual abled body identity which queer fails to achieve. Yet, he says “Yet the desire for definitional clarity might unleash more problems than it contains; if it’s hard to deny that something called normalcy exists, it’s even harder to pinpoint what that something is.” (2006, 303). In addition, Halberstam gives to us an example of the way in which critical languages can sometimes weigh us down, consider the fact that we have become adept within postmodernism at talking about “normativity,” but far less adept at describing in rich detail the practices and structures that both oppose and sustain conventional forms of association, belonging, and identification. (2005, 17).

⁴ David Halperin (New York, 1995), 65.

⁵ Historically, in the English context, the word queer was first used as a slur to refer to poor and dangerous areas of the city; “weirdos”, transsexuals, prostitutes and so on. Later, the word was reappropriated to refer to gender and sexual identities politics. As mentioned in the text *Introduction to Fucking Solidarity: Queering Concepts on/from a Post-Soviet Perspective* “the roots of the word Queer: our working-class background / our interest in feminist punk / our distrust in politics of respectability / our struggle with the old and new conservative movements that aim to shame and control bodies, sex and sexuality / our loneliness and togetherness in all of this.” (Katharina Wiedlack, 2021, 2).

two percent of the world's land surface, they consume over seventy-five percent of the earth's material resources⁶. Given how they concentrate human activity, cities become ecosystems of human and non-human experiences. To start, what we call "the city" is explored by [UI] in the special issue "Urban interfaces: between object, concept, and cultural practice". Here, the authors present the city as:

a material setting assembling bodies and objects in time and space, a medium forging connections between entities by acting as a platform for communication, memory-making and exchange, and as a stage for performing and effectuating specific identities, subjectivities and differences, and instigating transformations⁷

This dossier aims to explore what emerges from a queer perspective within this material setting, medium and stage that is the urban. The urban, in my perspective, comprehends the environment in a broad sense, both cultural and material, encompassing both sensations and perceptions of a queer body in the specific context of the city. According to Gordon Ingram in the text "Queers in space: Towards a theory of landscape and sexual orientation" (1993), social categories/modes of survival shape our ways of inhabiting and navigating in space. "Evaluation of space must first be based on our needs and desires. Queer observation is then based on the dynamic of exploration of experiences and the persistent imperatives for survival. And the basis for such informed critiques vary radically on the basis of gender, race, class, culture, mobility and individual development."⁵

The concern with the current problematics led me to an UCL lecture on "Queering Urbanism: thinking climate change through ideas of time"⁸. Vanesa Broto (2023) cites the idea of the urban as "inhabitation", which considers that the contemporary human has always been urban. The urban, in this sense, becomes a way of inhabiting the contemporary space and time as a subject being. Urbanization reflects and has strong ties to, the development of modernism, capitalism and historical processes of segregation and accumulation. On the other side, cities are increasingly

⁶ UNEP, 2016, in Stephany Pincetl "Inhabiting a post-urban twenty-first century", 2017.

⁷ De Lange et al, "Urban interfaces: between object, concept, and cultural practice" (2019)

⁸ UCL Faculty of the built environment, Youtube, 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYBgsg0A11c>

shared spaces, where community boundaries and the blur of social identities come into being. For the author, inhabitation brings into question on how we can live together despite significant differences.

In order to create a queer space, the question of what one does with “the body” in relationship with an “other”, becomes crucial; both as an analytical term but also as a lens through which a subject comes to explore their surroundings. To help me explore the idea of inhabiting the city, both conceptually and physically through a queer lens, I have adopted Sarah Ahmed’s (2006) “Queer phenomenology” as a philosophical tool and navigator. For Ahmed, Queer phenomenology “emphasizes the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready to hand”⁹. In her book *Queer Phenomenology: orientations, object and space* (2006), Ahmed discusses the concept of “Orientation” which I have found particularly helpful in shaping my research for this dossier. Orientation, taken from “sexual orientation”, explores how “we”, as (queer) bodies, come to reside in space, how we inhabit spaces and who or what we inhabit these spaces with. When we are oriented, Ahmed claims, we know and understand where we are or how to get somewhere. We know “how we begin, how we proceed from ‘here’, which affects how what is ‘there’, appears”¹⁰. This is how we form ‘lines’ in time and space. These “lines” Ahmed claims, we internalize into our lives, influencing how we are oriented physically in space and the directions we may take. In the author’s words: “certain objects are available to us because of lines that we have already taken”¹¹. This perspective impacts the way we perceive and engage with what lies ahead of us.

Clearly, within the specific normative social and political configuration of urban spaces, the lines produced by some orientations (be it male, white, heterosexual, ableist) are more dominant than others. Seen as the “right” or “straight” line to follow they inevitably create processes of exclusion, inclusion, participation, representation and meaning. Exploring the queer city means to complicate, clarify, and counteract normativity within an urban context. As such, in this dossier, I invite the reader to follow a series of queer-urban lines that can lead to meaningful deviation or a

⁹ Sara Ahmed “Queer Phenomenology” (2006), 31.

¹⁰ Ibid, 8.

¹¹ Ibid, 22.

counterforce to dominant straight lines that suggest that there is only one direction of progress possible.

Queering urban studies

Queer studies agenda exposes frameworks for difference and more authentic alliances between LGBTQ+ individuals, the problems of capitalism, race and class, and the unprecedented and global ecological crisis. While Urban studies concern itself with the question of land, ownership, housing, and planning, it begs the question; where does queer theory fit into these discussions? Queer theory brings a creative agenda to urban studies. Since urban studies are seen as an objective and precise field, queer theory can propose a view on and of the city that considers the queer mundane, moments of enjoyment, transnational solidarity, care and kinship, community and relationship, as well as alternative lived stories - aspects of the urban sometimes deteriorated by the neoliberal mindset that leads our desires.

In response to the question of “queering” urban studies, the special issue “Queering Urban Studies”¹², offers a series of attempts on studying queerness and the urban. This issue demonstrates how categories of gender and sexuality are locatable and spatial, functioning accordingly to social and political transformations in cities. The editor Rivke Jaffe says that queering urban studies departs from questioning dualisms that hierarchize areas and people, such as rural/urban, nature/human, developed/underdeveloped as much as gay/straight, man/women, subject/object, active/passive and so on¹³. Lefebvre (2003) has already suggested that cities have exploded out of the historical space of the city to create worldwide urban society, erasing the qualitative differences between the city and the countryside¹⁴. Moreover, queering the urban means contesting the direction urban structures takes in relation to late-neoliberal capitalism, xenophobia and racism which configures ideas of progress and development. It suggests imagining “unclassifiable other ways of being, loving, working and creating”¹⁵. This dossier, in a related vein, wishes to explore queerness as a

¹² Jaffe “Queering Urban Studies - Introduction” (2006) in *International Journal of Geographical and Regional Research*.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Lefebvre (2003) cited in Angelo and Wachsmuth (2015).

¹⁵ Jaffe “Queering Urban Studies - Introduction” (2006).

critical lens to analyse concrete urban issues. It also seeks to embrace an exploratory approach to academic and non-academic materials, seeking to position itself as open ended and introductory as well as an asset for readers interested in the connections between queer and urban culture.

Topics and Dialogues

Inspired by Sara Ahmed's emphasis on the importance of lived experience, besides drawing from my own perspective, I have made 'live encounters' an integral part of my writing. The discussion of each topic in this dossier has been informed and inspired by dialogue. In my view, topics often crystallize when subjected to conversations with others, since a person may embody specific traces of experience and knowledge that I have not encountered yet. This approach seeks to cultivate a supportive and activist-oriented queer network of ideas, highlighting the significance of situatedness and the exploration of marginalized and underground practices. The act of engaging in dialogues and making a safe space for contestation resonates with the foundational essence of queer thought.

Starting from my own queer position, by looking at what was near and what I could recognize - people I know, places I have been to before, books I have read - I have tried to remain open to what or who I would encounter. During my research I have allowed connections and directions to emerge, thus allowing this dossier to draw its own "life-time line", questioning which lines I am making and already oriented towards. The goal has not been to stick to the 'right' line but to draw queer perspectives and problematics in similar ways to how one may inhabit and live in urban contexts.

My dialogue partners in this dossier are all part of my current network of research-oriented scholars I connected with during my graduate education between 2022-2023. I started each dialogue with an invitation letter¹⁶ in which I presented my own thoughts about a certain topic in the form of a friendly provocation to open our conversation. In the dossier I combine fragments of these conversations, that I recorded and transcribed, together with other sources of thought and my own thinking.

¹⁶ See appendix

The first text in this dossier offers a queer exploration of how time is understood and regulated in the modern urban landscape. “Queer Temporalities in the Urban Landscape: challenging normative time structures” is inspired by my dialogue with Gustavo Nogueira. Gustavo lives in Amsterdam and is from Brazil. He is a researcher at Temporary Lab which works at the intersection of time, technology and culture. By exploring the concept of “Queer Temporalities”, this text challenges linear and universal notions of time by questioning how lifetime lines take shape in a capitalist heteronormative urban. I invite the readers to rethink how hegemonic lifetime lines appear in the urban arena as productive and successful.

The second text is titled “Let’s go out? Queer dancefloors and the outside world” and provide an insightful exploration of the multifaceted world of Queer dancefloors in relation to the “outside world” urban. In this context, I share the significance of the queer dancefloor as a space that is more than a place for mere entertainment, but also is a dynamic arena for social experimentation. This text unpacks the transformative potential of queer dance spaces, shedding light on the intricate dynamics between bodies, spaces, and urban environment and its politics. This will be in dialogue with a dear friend Sune Kjeldsen (2023), who lives in Utrecht and is from Denmark. He is a research master student in Gender Studies at Utrecht University, and has authored a paper titled “Choreographing the Future: Queer Dance Events in the Netherlands” (2022).

Lastly, in “Leaning on each other: queer-feminist approaches to urban catastrophes” I explore feminist and queer solidarity within context of the earthquake that hit Turkey in February 2023. More specifically, I explore how the idea of “home”, even in temporary city tents, reaffirm binary gender roles while also promoting feminist grassroots movements that can propose a city otherwise. This will be in dialogue with Jülide Eza Sezer who lives in Utrecht and is herself from Turkey. She is an alumnus in Gender Studies at Utrecht University, and have graduated with the thesis titled “Sustaining Resistance, Cultivating Liberation: The Enduring Bond of Rooted-Resistance-Companionship between Palestinians and Olive Trees” (2023).

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2. Queer temporalities in the urban landscape: challenging normative time structures



(Pexels, "Man walking around", 2024)

In the urban, time seems hard to grasp, although perceived in multiple ways. Time is inscribed within cities rhythms, density, work culture, climate, and technologies. For the queer artist Felix Gonzales, time has been a crucial topic in his work, showing how love, relationships, disease, and politics, are interconnected by notions of time. In a more theoretical vein, Hartmut Rosa, in the book *Social Acceleration: a new theory of modernity*, time is assumed to be given as a matter of *nature*. However, and as he insists, culture rather than nature heavily inscribes the ways one should invest their lifetime and how time is experienced in their everyday life. This opens time, and the perception of such, as a socio-political matter of concern ripe for critical analysis.

Following Rosa's provocation, I want to explore urban time through a queer perspective and analysis, to understand what it means to live in a "queer" inhabitation of time. What stands central to this essay is an investigation of the ways time influences and structures the urban life (for queer subjects) and vice versa, as well as an exploration of the emergence of the concept and analytical lens of queer temporality in

cultural and urban studies. For instance, in our dialogue, Gustavo Nogueira (2023) narrates his experience of researching time, in which he points to the ways in which time is perceived differently across cultures. He illustrates saying:

For example, in Brazil, we have this mixture between the European, the African culture that came with the enslaved people, and South America natives that were already there. It is a pot of different temporalities altogether. Indigenous people borrow their temporal metaphors from nature. Time, for example, is associated with the rivers, with all the movements, that is not a “straight” line.¹⁷

I think it's very interesting when we look to representations of time, in different societies. The linear time or, the straight line, as in straight line as a form, but also straight as in gender, points that we have only one direction to follow from the day you were born, in one line.¹⁸

One follows orientations in order to fulfil time with a life-time line order. In the western urban, the uses of time are prescribed according to neoliberal and normative development of cities. These structures encompass, for example, the development of modernity, economic systems, geographical locations, and cultural implications. Celebrations such as Pride, or even crises, such as the HIV epidemic and recently, Covid-19 lockdowns, also disrupts conventional experiences of time, as in the reality we live right now. I argue that in both material as well as cultural ways, urban structures orient and regulate human bodies in space and dictate how they spend their lifetime in the city.

Critiques of normative time in contemporary society is pointed out by queer theorists such as Michel Foucault (1975), Paul Preciado (2013), Jack Halberstam (2011) and Sarah Ahmed (2009). They propose examinations of the dominant understandings and experience of time as well as normative lifetime lines; critiquing the inherited and institutionalized orders that shape, capture and orient urban subjects. Following this perspective, I use the term “lifetime” and will seek to apply a queer analytical lens to

¹⁷ In dialogue with Gustavo Nogueira, 2023.

¹⁸ Ibid

investigate the way that human lifetimes are exchanged differently within economic and gendered social systems. A point which reflects on the everyday lifetime experiences of subjects as well as our desires and plans of the future. As a socio-cultural construction, time is shown through two main perspectives: first, as a measure of time given by an individual and invests in certain activities; and second, as a linear life order or stages such as education, work, mortgage, reproduction, retirement, and death. The notion of life “as a whole”, with a beginning, middle and an end.

Foucault, in his work *Discipline and Punish*¹⁹, discusses various urban institutions and infrastructures, such as prisons, schools, temporary residences, hospitals, and workplaces, as examples of places whose spatial and temporal regimes regulate subjects’ behaviour, and discipline their bodies on a daily basis through processes of internalisation. Foucault sheds light on how resistance is created, and power is distributed in space and time, offering social commands that orient the ways we fill out time and how time is conceived. Paul Preciado discusses the work of Foucault on regulation of time through the commodification of body agency²⁰. From the 18th century Panopticon and the state Brothel to the invention of birth control pills, the author points out how the play of technology and architecture influences the formation of the domestic home and the public space. Preciado elaborates on how contemporary time is embedded in locatable and specific places, spaces, epochs, and situations.

Turning to Halberstam’s text “Postmodern geographies”²¹, the author helps us to explore the imagination of a future outside of dominant lifetime lines that casts out social groups that do not aligned with white, cisgender, ableist²², heterosexual norms. “Queer time” is a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction, family,

¹⁹ Michel Foucault *Discipline and Punish – The birth of the prison* (1975)

²⁰ Paul Preciado *Architecture of Sex* (2013)

²¹ Jack Halberstam “Post-modern geographies” in the book *In a Queer time and space* (2013)

²² Both Ljuslinder (2020) and McRuer (2006) in the text *Crippling time – Understanding the life course through the lens of ableism* brings a relevant insight on lifetime course in relation to ableism. Through ableism lenses, the authors understand that is hard to ignore that a normalcy exists and, as much as hetero, white and fully able identity as privileged is temporary status. MuRuer states that “it is a question of time” for bodies to become “disabled”. That is why Ljuslinder reclaims the slur “crip” to urgently rethink the connection of space and time posing how queer temporality challenges ableist normativity and recognizes diverse bodies and minds.

longevity, risk, safety, and inheritance²³. Critiques of economic and political approaches to time is part of the queer theory agenda, putting into question the meanings we attribute to the different temporal concepts like industrial time, family time, time of progress, immediacy, postponement, free time and so on. Therefore, I understand that the longing for family, reproduction and inheritance are culturally constructed ways of survival and inhabiting the city, which in turn influences the distribution of power across the availability of urban space for certain subjects as well as material matter.

Practical examples that illustrate how normative temporality, and more interestingly queer time, influences our urban lives and how we may move through the urban are numerous. For instance, housing architecture often considers different life stages (e.g., single, married, family, retired) when constructing and designing houses and their proximity to key city infrastructure sites such as city centres, schools, green areas, and shopping opportunities. In the construction of city grids, entire areas (as in the case of the suburban) become demarcated as “family” zones from which the construction of certain types of houses (a master bedroom, two single rooms for kids, and a backyard for a dog) reproduces certain types of kinship structures and organization linking the urban to specific life stages that can and must take specific forms. Additional examples may be the link between property inheritance and queerness, which puts into question material accessibility as not defined merely by kinship forms, but rather also questions of gender, sexuality, and class. The linear progression of time—past, present, and future—impacts how we think about our future in terms of care and social security, where access to jobs within the urban may be compromised or queer people may not be able to count on the support by urban communities or institutions to provide safe and reliable care, being forced to commit to non-institutionalized forms of care and support. Interestingly, life trajectories of trans identities may be disrupted by late puberty, a sense of “rebirth” appears linked to transgender processes, gender and sexually are developed through time and in different life stages, even if it depends upon institutions firmly embedded within the urban. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly for this text, I question how city infrastructures “optimize” time, convenience, and performance, reflecting on ideas of

²³ Jack Halberstam “Post-modern geographies” in the book *In a Queer time and space* (2013)

progress and development, and on the creative ways we work and live together in cities. Material examples including accessibility and ease of public transport, shopping opportunities, land ownership and access to free public infrastructure such as public libraries, walkable sidewalks or bicycle paths seem pertinent, while questions of aesthetics, politics and cultures of the urban (as it spread differentially across different urban sites) open up the urban for further analysis and questions as a non-neutral site of contestation. In our dialogue, Nogueira critically questions how we understand time in an era of time acceleration and performance: “what is happening in the urban fabric around us right now? and how a western mainstream perspective on time, which became a straight way, is also the idea of performing - performance as the idea of increase production, to perform faster, to perform better, to perform more”²⁴.

For Rosa, a western postmodern notion of time represents a great crisis of form and meaning, as well as an “opportunity to rethink the practice of cultural production, its hierarchies and power dynamics”²⁵. Rosa provocation leads me to how notions of ageing, productivity, success, and social participation are highly constructed by mainstream and heteronormative notions of living and are in need for re-evaluation. These concepts form our reality and understanding of epochs, generations, life stages, or specific life experiences.

Therefore, queer ways of living and thinking come into friction with urban demands. If states and institutions play a role in regulating individuals timelines accordingly to urban social status, finding secure housing, accessible health care and professional development may not be experienced by everyone in the same ways. Living within queer temporalities can offer a critique to the way society organize and reorient themselves according to time. Besides challenging a system that controls lifetime lines and benefit some more than others, queer temporalities invite us to perceive time nuances beyond the normative.

As pointed earlier, the form of linear time, posited by the above theorists as “straight” time, is entangled within the logics of modern culture. Halberstam points out

²⁴ In dialogue with Gustavo Nogueira, 2023.

²⁵ Hartmut Rosa *Social Acceleration: a new theory of modernity* (2013), 15.

the way we can think queer temporalities, and how they intervene in immaterial and material hierarchical tendencies of the urban:

For some queer subjects, time and space are limned by risks they are willing to take: the transgender person who risks his life by passing in a small town, the queer performers who destabilize the normative values that make everyone else feel safe and secure; but also those people who live without financial safety nets, without homes, without steady jobs, outside the organizations of time and space that have been established for the purposes of protecting the rich few from everyone else.²⁶

Halberstam critiques the mainstream uses of time by the economic system, where one may be asked to acquire certain status in specific moments in time in order for your life to be considered a worth living life. Examples are expectations such as acquiring marriage, having children or moving out of your hometown house within a “reasonable” time. Access to job positions, ownerships, inheritances, loans and specific health care are at stake when discussing time, since these categories, in their original form, are beneficial for those who follow straight time. Halberstam criticizes how life status can contribute to hierarchy, accumulation, privatization, and control of other human resources.

In another perspective, Ahmed’s concept of “Orientations” indicates that it is by moving *towards* some culturally defined objects (e.g. heterosexuality) and *turning away*, deviating from other objects (e.g. queerness), that we navigate through time and space. She says that is by following some lines more than others that we embody a notion of social identity and turn away from others. This lens helps us to understand how racism or xenophobia, for example, “orientates” bodies in specific ways through the individual and political spaces we habit. Ahmed asserts that: “for a life to count as good life, then it must return the debt of its life by taking on the direction promised as social good, which means imagining one’s futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life course. A queer life might be one that fails to make such gestures of return”²⁷. The discussion on how cities make certain lifetime lines more visible and “worth” living than others, tells us something about our relationship with the time and space we live in. In the introduction of “Queer Phenomenology”, for a life to be

²⁶ Jack Halberstam (2005) 23.

²⁷ Sara Ahmed “Queer phenomenology” (2006), 21.

considered good, it should fulfil a societal obligation by moving in a direction that aligns with what is perceived as socially beneficial. This involves envisioning and pursuing a life course that reaches certain points or goals that are considered valuable for the individual and society. A life that deviates from or does not conform to societal expectations or predetermined life courses may be viewed as not making the expected contributions or gestures of "return".

In the dialogue, it became clear how queer lifetime lines are already eschewed compared to straight notions of time, even as it attempts to “return” to this line as the right line to follow, leading to a sense of social disorientation/reorientation:

It's interesting to see how this 'straight line' reflect on a queer person in different levels. For example, if from the beginning you are thinking about your first girlfriend, that maybe will be your wife, maybe have children together... but then you're *gay*. You are somehow already in and out of this line since the beginning.²⁸

A queer life, in this context, means a disorientation from, but nevertheless a longing for, the material and cultural security that a traditional lifetime line may offer. When Nogueira mentions “but then, *you are gay*”, it marks an opposition to the normative that somehow resonates between the prescribed and non-prescribed life in the urban. Assuming that confrontations exist between the socially expected and the critical reality of queer subjects, a queer may fail in returning to a position in which they may provide determined societal contributions, and as such put into question hegemonic notions of what constitutes a good life. Following Ahmed’s quote, I argue that urban social fabric demands from individuals to take a linear direction in life to be able to perform roles that provides major access, safety, care, and political participation. Adopting a queer perspective in this discussion implies recognizing that lifetime lines are valuable in their locatable and diverse shapes and nuances.

In conclusion, a nuanced examination of time through a queer-urban lens reveals the complex interplay between societal norms and individual experiences. Temporal perceptions are culturally contingent and socially constructed. Queer temporalities

²⁸ In dialogue with Gustavo Nogueira, 2023.

question the ways we spend our time in the city and how that is connected to gender and sexual orientations, established norms and hierarchies associated with linear “straight” lifetime lines. It asks for a re-evaluation of the societal structures that rigidly control and privilege certain life trajectories over others. The call for a queer perspective on time serves as a critical inquiry into the ways urban spaces shape and regulate temporal experiences, inviting a broader and more inclusive understanding of time and its role in our lives.

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3. Let's go out? queer dancefloors and the "outside world"



(Fun House Party in Amsterdam, 2014. "I dance alone" project)²⁹

Clubbing culture has gained popularity within urban scenarios in the last decades, serving as a meeting point for LGBTQ+ community. My interest in dancing in the city resonates with what it means by dancing in the urban public space as well as designated spaces, such as disco or techno clubs.

In the last ten years, art curators and artists have engaged in archival methods that placed dancing bodies at the centre of their analysis. For example, through visual documentation of dancing in clubs in Europe, the project *I dance Alone* pose the question: "are social and political changes manifested and filtered through dance floors?"³⁰. In this text, I would like to expand and orient this question to the "queer" dancefloor, so as to ask "what does dancing in queer clubs inform about the urban context?". To do that, I take into consideration theoretical as well as *in-loco* experiences at queer parties of my own, as a Brazilian queer male body. I also include a dialogue with Sune Kjeldsen, a Gender Studies scholar and friend from Denmark who has conducted ethnographic research within queer party-collective dance parties in the Netherlands.

²⁹ Bogomir Doringan, *I dance alone* project. <https://bogomirdoringer.info/i-dance-alone>, 2015.

³⁰ Bogomir Doringan, Small Museum event. <https://www.paradiso.nl/en/news/small-museum-presenteert-i-dance-alone-door-bogomir-doringer/1376959>, 2024.

Broadly, by speaking of queer parties, I am referring to what I tentatively define as non-straight dominant dancing spaces such as mainstream parties in traditional LGBTQ+ clubs, but also more interestingly for this project, subcultural queer techno parties. Although one may ask “what is political or transformative about a dance party?”, I argue that queer dancefloors offer a concentration of identities and social performances about relating to each other that are relevant for the individual and the collective which projects beyond the club as a physical space.

It is by gaining access to the club, spending eight to twelve hours dancing, and going back to the city that a dynamic relationality with the urban is observed. When inside the club, practices clearly come to differ from the normative practices and negotiations of daily life. In our dialogue, Kjeldsen mentions that on queer dance floors, social dynamics around consent and boundaries as well as sexuality, sensuality and identity happen in condensed ways that seem unique to the queer dance floor³¹. At the same time, despite queer dancefloors proposing safety guidelines as well promoting an open-minded social-justice oriented party culture in response to heteronormativity, the dynamic of entering and exiting the club serves as a site of contamination through which the outside urban world imposes itself upon the queer world-making project of the inside, making urban world visible. As Kjeldsen states, “you've internalized ideas of consent, gender or sexuality that you cannot just simply dispose when you get in.”³²

When entering the club, a concentration of queer bodies becomes immediately visible, and usual social codes in relating to each other and the space used in the urban may gain other meanings. I offer examples of the re-working of social codes from my experiences attending two queer dance parties in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands: *Riposte Queer Art Techno Party* and *Queer in Wonderland*. At the entrance, you are asked to leave your belongings in lockers and phone cameras are covered with stickers to protect the identity of participants as well as to counter infringing social media cultures. A “dancefloor angel”, different from a “security guard” make sure that visitors are aware of the specific party’s house rules, which usually includes topics on drugs, sexual harassment, transphobia, and racism. Moving inside the

³¹ In dialogue with Sune Kjeldsen (2023).

³² Ibid.

inner sanctum of the club, we see stylised queer bodies interacting with each other in the bar, while others are dancing in the dancefloor. Some parties have a dark room, a space designated for intimate play. From these main features, a suspension from the outside social individual is observed, and a transition into a queer collective experience, starts.

The book *Dancing Desires: choreographing sexualities on and off the stage*, focuses on how embodied gender and sexual identities are organised and perform by dancing, shaping ways of being and interacting with others. In the essay “Queer Kinaesthesia: Performativity on the Dance Floor”, Jonathan Bollen (2001) affirms that from the dancefloor perspective, the outside world is perceived as a “reality” to be suspended, only resuming when returning home. Once back to everyday life, the after-club temporality is labelled as periods of “recovery”, “hangover” or more interestingly, “coming down”³³. The temporal contrast between inside versus outside questions: Who and what is the contents of the ‘we’ that gathers within the proximity of the queer dancefloor, and how does it relate to the spacing of the ‘we’ in the urban outside? And how is such gathering dispersed in hierarchical terms in the context of neo-liberal individualism and capitalism? The transition between the inside and outsides marks the dancefloor as space for momentary deviation from the assumed “normal” expectations of the outside. As such, I propose that the queer club offers an understanding of the multiplicity of experience of a city, while also serving as a space allowing us to practice alternative, or “strange” ways of being.

Dancing, for Bollen, provokes a temporal rupture of the normative “here and now” in the role of moving, dancing, watching, and being watched. I came to recognize that queer dancefloors possess an aesthetic and socio-political dimension that invites experimentation and distortion of the aesthetic “normal”. For instance, by dressing for the event and dancing with others, party goers constrain and exaggerate degrees of queerness in relation to their everyday life self. By playing with “imaginary morphologies”, such as “feminized fag”, “girly poofster” or “phallicized dyke”³⁴, queers can puzzle the ways identities and gender perform in urban public spaces.

³³ Jonathan Bollen (2001) 285.

³⁴ Ibid, 302.



(Party goes at Riposte queer art techno party. London, 2019)³⁵

Following the attempted suspension of “the normal”, and the strategy of constraining and exaggerating ways of being, alerted me to the concept of *Camp*³⁶, which is not only a concept that often appears in analysis of queer clubs alongside other concepts such as “*camouflage*” and “*drag*”, but is a well-known colloquial term utilized within the context of the LGBTQ+ community. First, to be camp or to camp, is to observe the world through style and taste. For Susan Sontag (1964), even the rural is camp, which makes me think of the rural more as an aesthetic rather than a place. Thus, camp signalizes a meaningful aesthetic dimension that communicate a taste on ideas, social orientations, and politics.

Secondly, if a place like the queer dancefloor has contains elements of “campiness”, they do so by consciously creating a style that is either oppositional to or cleverly plays with elements of, a dominant “straight” aesthetics. While offering space for ‘campy’ aesthetic play and social experimentation that provokes the idea of dancing safely together, it is central to remember the extent in which people move in relation to others as products of an intended aesthetic culture and rules proposed by the party organizers, but also as products of the urban outside from which they arrive.

³⁵ Instagram post. <https://www.instagram.com/riposte.london/>, 2023

³⁶ Susan Sontag’s seminal article *Notes on “Camp”*(1964).

Camp seeks to escape singular assumptions, always offering another layer to a single composition and multiplying possible interpretations. As Sontag notes, “the Camp is one that is alive to a double sense in which some things can be taken [...] behind the “straight” public sense in which something can be taken, one has found a private zany experience of the thing”³⁷. In my view, the concept of camping offer layers of meaning beyond the normality that seeks to playfully and strategically ‘disidentificate’ with social rules and aesthetics of the normal for its own means, what José Muñoz (1999) later terms a form of ‘disidentification’ with the normative present; a strategic move most famously utilized by queer individuals evident in black ballroom culture as essential for surviving. To “Camp” in the context of the queer dancefloor, is to suspend what comes “raw” from the outside world and do not fit the atmosphere created in the club which demands of it to be rearticulated, camped or disidentified in queer ways.

In his text, Tim Lawrence (2011), states that on the queer dancefloor, assumptions on gender, race and sex are left behind and a new experience with the body happens. The author notes how dancers engage in a cultural practice that do not affirm their maleness or their femaleness, or their queer or straight predilections, or their black, latin, asian or white identifications, but instead positioned them as agents who participate in a “queer ritual” that recast the experience of the body through a series of “affective vectors”³⁸. For Lawrence, the dancefloor seems to neutralize social categories or identities, highlighting other aspects of human body and technologies. Yet, I argue that on the queer dancefloor, categories such as race, gender or sexuality are not neutralized but rather they are affirmed and recast in new political forms and aesthetics. Where they are affirmed instead of obfuscated. Lawrence’s “affective vectors” is useful in recognizing that bodies relate to aesthetical and political dimensions of the dancefloor in a subjective, rather than objective ways not unlike the outside world. The rules and structures of the outside are not left aside but reformulated, where sensorial and cognitive connections become part of the dancefloor sociality that adds to but also complicates ones position on the dance floor.

³⁷ Susan Sontag’s *Notes on “Camp”*(1964), 5.

³⁸ Tim Lawrence, “Disco and the Queering of the Dance Floor”, (2011), 234.

Moving with, against and amongst others in a confined dance space deemed queer produces an experimental mode of sociality. In our dialogue, Kjeldsen states that “dancing, in a queer perspective, is experimenting with new possibilities of togetherness and difference, since many different bodies come closer and still need to find a way to coexist in space, more or less successfully”³⁹. Indeed, despite clubbing being considered a space of liberation, visitors must continually negotiate the space available and move with strangers in a confined room. The queer dancefloor opposes normative structures and heterosexuality, but is not opposition to strictness, since party goers not only strictly follow the rhythm of the music as well as feel inspired or intimidated to mimic how other bodies move. Understanding and thinking through proximity is key in the effort to build and imagine a queer world in which being *with* others is not only crucial in how bodies relate and share space, but also in our understanding of what is experienced as lacking in the everyday life of the urban outside world.

By observing features that composes a “queer” dance space, boundaries in relation to others and the outside world is formed. In the end, the demand for maintaining a space “as queer as possible” rings clear, even if the diffuse difficulty of such demands becomes clear as examined in this text. However, as Kjeldsen puts it, “in the end, the dance space is like any other space, it is porous and leaks”. Although the dancefloor seems to accomplish a separation from “straight” aesthetics, I argue that what is productive is precisely the queer dancefloors ability to make attempts as well as failures rather than achieving an ideal success, that enables those re-doings and experimentations to take place and through that a queer world can be manifested and imagined.

The sun is rising, and it is time to go home. By “coming down”, the city is presented to us again and we are reintroduced to our daily routines. In contrast to the dancefloor, the city is presented as a shared space where individualist and capitalist orientations dominate. Although this can be true, we cannot ignore that queer dancefloors are only possible in the city. Dancefloors are a product of the urban, not because they are completely oppositional do the daily life of the urban or for that sake the rural, but because the queer dance floor demands not only the infrastructure of the

³⁹ In dialogue with Sune Kjeldsen (2023).

urban, but more importantly it depends upon the normativity which is present in the urban social and architectural landscape as to present itself as a queer liberational space that allows for collaborationist ways of relating to oneself as well as other bodies which is different from everyday life. That is, by questioning the controlled and policed ways we move in the city and how we come to relate to our own identity as well as others through the act of dancing.

If dancing alone in public space can be seen as mental illness, dancing together can be a powerful tool for rituals and activism. Be it in the shape of celebratory events to protests against state violence. Queer clubs have always been a refugee and political space for gays and trans-individuals; especially during the American AIDS crisis as a result of the cultural prejudice and shame of the outside world. Nowadays, the impact and presence of queer dancefloors in the city can be a strong indication of processes of gentrification, shifting cultural formations and shrinking municipal willingness to offer larger buildings for party organizers. The disappearance of queer clubs and their current strategies of hosting parties in already established ‘straight’ clubs as opposed to renting an autonomous space may indicate not only a negative trend of underground and alternative spaces disappearing from the city space, but also the rise of far-right political ideologies in power within the context of the Netherlands and the UK in particular, since queer parties, as I have shown, tend to engage with a range of social issues related to gender, race and sexuality as well as provide the space for not only their reformulation, but also new ways of relating to others and the self in non-normative ways.

On the other hand, it is assumed that queer spaces are about unity and safety. But as I have attempted to argue, (re)negotiations and contaminations between the outside and inside of the club is inevitable. This is apparent from the perspective of the club and the city. Whereas a body in a club one must deal with friction relating to confinement and community, a body in the city must deal with orientation and movement through and within institutions as well as urban space overall.. In the move between stepping inside and outside the club, a simultaneous deviation from the queer world happens together with a deviation from the normality of the everyday life of the urban space. This is a move which informs not only who we are in relation to ourselves and others but also who we are becoming – all beyond the light of the day.

To conclude, a queer space is shaped by the presence of bodies in their “ways of being”⁴⁰ both within the expansiveness of social performances within the outside urban space, and in the realm of the inside of the queer dancefloor, where *doing* queerness in strategic ways in relation to normativity is crucial. The resulting friction between these “worlds” and their relation to normativity and the distinct ways we are (un)able to move within and between such worlds, suggests that queer place-making, in a political and institutional sense, questions the ways in which ideas take shape within the city composition. What does it mean when enjoyment is restricted by cultural and municipal policies? What does it mean to make a queer safe space in the city and what does it mean to make the city safe for queers? Despite the intriguing questions remaining, this essay reveals how queer dancefloors concentrate and dilute queer bodies in the city and manifests the tension between the queer and the city notably in the phenomenon of exiting and entering the club/city. In understanding the nuances of aesthetic and political dimensions at play, we deepen what it means to dance together in the contemporary city and what the contemporary city could become.

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4. *Leaning on each other: queer-feminist approaches to urban catastrophes*



(City-tent camp at Kahramanmaraş stadium, Turkey. 2023. Photo: Reuters)⁴¹

Syrian people are doubled displaced, they are displaced from their home in Syria and they come to Turkey, and are displaced within this earthquake. I know in some years people will frame this as a climate migration. They have to move, and they are living into tent-cities now, trying to make home there. Feminists really know how to live in that, because living in the context of Turkey, under a patriarchal regime, they know how to create a life and living⁴²

Catastrophic events have significant impact on cities infrastructures and the lives of its habitants. Often referred to as “natural disasters”, tornados, earthquakes, and floods disrupt the everyday life of people, which demands the manifestation of collective mutual aid from local as well as international governments and organizations. Undoubtably, such disasters will continue to occur regularly in many parts of the world as a cause of the ongoing global climate catastrophe, even as we assume that we are incapable to prevent them.

However, by exploring the terrain of the Turkey Earthquake in 2023 and its aftermath through the lens of queer and feminist works of solidarity, I came to understand such natural disasters as “urban catastrophes”. As such, instead of seeing

⁴¹ Image of a city-tent camp. <https://en.vijesti.me/world/globus/643350/disaster-from-the-air-in-turkey-and-syria-after-the-earthquake-filmed-by-a-drone> (2023)

⁴² In dialogue with Julide Eza Sezer (2023)

them as merely “inevitable” or “acts of God”, natural events are considered an outcome of the unruléd mass exploitation of land and natural resources that lead to greater carbon emission and land erosion. As pointed by Rosi Braidotti (2019) the term “biopolitics”⁴³, refers to how modern states govern populations, emphasizing the regulation of life as well as death. Indeed, although they are considered acts from nature, the disasters we refer to are effects of human activity and further exasperated by economic, ecological, and social policies. Such policies, in addition to profit-maximizing building policies, erode the possibility of effective resistances and responses of not only humans, but also buildings and the land itself, to a catastrophe such as the earthquake in Turkey. The consequences and experiences of such biopolitical work is further intensified within the urban context and demands local analysis of human experience.

In addition, queer and feminist theories have critically considered which subjects come to be classified within the “human” category (e.g. Male, straight, white, able-bodied), as well as how non-human lives also come to be put into risk as a result of human modifications to land in favour of profit-maximizing economic growth. In the middle of a city falling apart and where many are without homes, the uneven distribution of vulnerability across communities and neighbourhoods makes clear and underscores how social differences along race, class and gender are exacerbated during times of crisis. The intertwining of socio-cultural factors with natural sciences and urban politics paints the earthquake as a bio-political urban catastrophe. The “urban”, in urban catastrophes, also includes the ways cities are planned and rebuilt. The question of what it means to think the city in a different way puts at stake the allocation of resources, infrastructure quality, and how role institutions play in shaping the understanding of urban catastrophes as well as its impacts.

In the context of Turkey, the experiences of women and queer individuals seem heavily influenced by heteropatriarchal norms specific to questions of social reproduction as well as domesticity. For instance, through a queer lens of the urban catastrophe, displaced LGBTQ+ Turkish and Syrians may confine their identity to their bedrooms and their close group of friends, but at the same time keeping such identity a secret to their parents and others who belong to the public sphere. In an online interview

⁴³ Rosi Braidotti borrows from Foucault in *Posthuman knowledge* (2019)

for Xtra magazine, Hussam, a queer survivor of the earthquake who is not out to their family, states “My queer books and other personal possessions are still at my home. My building was only partially destroyed so I’m nervous that my family will be allowed to return and discover my identity... I don’t know if this will actually happen but there’s still the fear”⁴⁴. The statement by Hussam centres the queer trouble of simultaneously having to worry about finding a new temporary home during a catastrophe while also worrying about returning to the ruins of your old home and risking being outed to their parents’. For queer people, a home is never neutral grounds, which reveals the sedimentation of heteropatriarchy within the question of housing and “the home”. Observing the home within the context of an urban catastrophes through a queer lens, reveals interesting points. Firstly, how returning to buildings that were already in precarious conditions is far more dangerous for some people than others, which in term suggests how the replication of the domesticity to temporary homes is observed to exclude and include certain individuals. Within a chaotic reality, transnational solidarity plays a crucial role.

Here I bring in a few ideas that emerged through my dialogue with a Turkish feminist friend, Jülide Eda Sezer⁴⁵. Both of us, as non-Dutch individuals based in Utrecht (NL), find the question of transnational urban solidarity particularly relevant and interesting, especially considering our own experiences as gendered and queer individuals who have ties to cities who are, and have, faced an urban disaster, and who have had to experience such disasters from a distance. For instance, Sezer denounce the Turkish states management of the crisis and the breach of the social contract expected between the state and a population in need. She found that the unequal ways in which the state relates to especially queer and trans people before the crisis, was carried on over into the management of said crisis. She states: “Trans people couldn't get access to the hygiene, clothes, healthcare, nothing, nothing. But it is not because they are ontologically trans, but because of state and institutional relationality to them”⁴⁶. With the appearance of city-tents as official temporary homes, binary gender and sexual roles

⁴⁴ Jacob Kessler, “LGBTQ+ Syrians face discrimination after surviving earthquake”, <https://xtramagazine.com/power/relief-lgbtq-turkey-syria-earthquake-fundraiser-246391> (2023).

⁴⁵ At the time, Jülide Sezer worked with earthquake donations through ATGENDER (European Association for Gender Research), based in Utrecht.

⁴⁶ In dialogue with Jülide Sezer (2023).

enforced within the confines of home and family were carried on over into these new temporary constellations. Wives were automatically confined to domestic labour, household duties, and child-rearing, and children were expected to conform to heterosexual orientations. This pattern is mirrored in the city-tents, as Sezer points out:

They have to take care of child in tents, they have to provide food, they have to cook in tents, they have to make it home; safe feeling area, in a tent, under many conditions, sometimes minus five degrees, maximum ten degrees. So, as mothers, they had to give the care to their fellow women and their children. I am not doing the division of what men were doing because of course they are suffering as well, but the labour, the domestic labour, continued on the tent.⁴⁷

Through observing from an outside perspective one of the city-tents villages in the Turkish Diyarbakır, a question emerges: how does the complication of home as a safe space, and the displacement of an entire city, impact urban planning and the future of cities? According to Jülide, the poor and late response to the catastrophe by the current president Erdogan was tied not only to the at the time upcoming elections, but also reflects the conservative inclination to exploit current urban catastrophe for political gain, rather than ensuring accountability in urban planning and government funds management.

Academics and scientists have already raised concerns about the fragility of the soil and the poor construction of buildings in the affected areas in 2023, given that this is not the region's first earthquake. The text “On planning and disaster: notes from an earthquake” explains that a catastrophe is not only determined by natural forces but heavily influenced by urban planning. As Burç Köstem (2023) says:

Disasters are instead shaped by a “social calculus” that determines and distributes their every aspect – from the structural causes that lead to the collapse of some buildings and neighbourhoods while leaving others intact, to the level of disaster preparedness in different regions, or the effectiveness of the response and the reconstruction that follows.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Köstem “On planning and disaster: notes from an earthquake” (2023).

The initiation of a new cycle of construction starts, which points out how urban disasters can serve to displace the population strategically. Some areas become more habitable than others, and some are deemed inhabitable, which puts into question how power is distributed in space and why it takes the shape that it takes. However, I argue that reconstruction efforts are based not only on factors of economic growth, but also political interest, which creates a dominant framework that determined how cities are shaped.

After asserting that an urban catastrophe largely results from urban political planning, Köstem elucidates: “One could argue that the grassroots mobilizations that emerge after a disaster is demonstrative of what planning truly means: not only coordinating knowledge but building the capacity to exercise collective power and self-sufficiency”⁴⁹. This statement encourages us to rethink the city *otherwise*⁵⁰ orients me towards Esteban Muñoz statement that queerness is not yet here, which promises a city that is about to come and that must necessarily orient our political desires towards so as to find ways of existing in the present toxic city. Catastrophes of this kind highlights the centrality of housing and the organization of collective aid, and its interaction with positions of gender, sexuality, race and class, which became central to how we think through our relationality with the city. Also, it questions how we can visualize urban planning beyond the limited landscape of the here and now.



⁴⁹ Ibid, 9.

⁵⁰ Natalie Oswin “The city ‘not yet’ here” (2019).

(Women's tent during the day. 2023. Photo: Aslı Zengin)



(Preparations for the Purple Truck. 2023. Photo: Aslı Zengin)

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the city-tent offered an opportunity to observe the complication of structural gender and sexuality roles and how solidarity came to be a powerful feminist tool of survival and imagining otherwise. Following the idea of a city otherwise, we turn to a more intimate context: the “inside” of a city-tent camp. By examining the organization of feminist movements and mobilizations, the article “Why do we need feminist responses to disasters?”⁵¹ exemplifies international feminist solidarity, which emerged as a grassroots response network, distinct from aid coordinated by Erdogan and his representatives. Feminists strategically seek aid that recognizes the unique needs of themselves and their communities, emerging from specific locations of experience and knowledge.

In the precarity of the tents, the flow of solidarity is crucial. Beyond survival needs, solidarity connects humans with non-humans, subjectivity with body action, the “inside” with the “outside”, and unite feminist women and queer activists in a political positionality against state surveillance and control over the city, as well as tents borders and flow of supplies. Women and queer individuals manifest and make claims for safe spaces where specific biological, social, and cultural needs can be acknowledged and

⁵¹ Aslı Zengin “Why do we need feminist responses to disasters?” (2023)

met. In the Turkish context, what emerged were feminists organized transnational support groups that deviated from the way mainstream solidarity is performed and how support was circulated by the state. For example, the Women's tent and Purple Truck cases⁵² reveals transnational network of community and mutual support beyond the normative that centred unique material and political needs in times of crisis.

As such, solidarity in the context of material (and political) catastrophe emerges as a force that entangles the ways we relate with the urban. How the displacement of the home challenges our understanding of solidarity, and how feminist thinking can help in the ways we manage urban catastrophes aftermaths. In our dialogue, a cultural difference caught my attention. When observing the etymology of *Solidarity*⁵³ in English, which comes from Latin and means “whole” and “unity”, a western view on solidarity may be understood as an exchange of values. Beautifully put, Sezer instead translates the concept of solidarity from English to the Turkish context:

In my language, solidarity (*dayanisma*) does not come from a Latin word, it comes from '*dayanmak*.' *To lean against*. You're there for one another. And the word itself has that mutuality. *Dayanışma*. It's not like I am leaning against and you are supposed to hold me. My body's leaning against your body is a mutual pressure. We are holding each other, leaning against each other. So, the verb itself is already showing the mutual care.⁵⁴

Arriving to another perspective about solidarity may be a starting point on rethinking the sociality of the home, which radiates through individuals, communities and more broadly, the city. By looking at feminist examples of solidarity, we understand ways of performing collective survival, and question how urban systems must rethink the ways we build spaces and live together. Our dialogue shows that feminist and queer solidarity is crucial for urban catastrophes and that urban catastrophes reveal already sedimented unequal political, cultural and urban policies and norms. This approach is not blind regarding categories of gender, race, and religion. Instead, it considers these categories as locatable knowledges emerging within social, political,

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Online Etymology Dictionary (2023).

⁵⁴ In dialogue with Jülide Sezer (2023).

and geographical contexts. Although the demand for political justice in the context of climate catastrophes has been a widely global concern, specific local material formulations and discourses matter in a context where the primary goal is survival and safety.

The practice of mutual aid and care in a large scale may become more frequent with climate changes. Such mutual aid and care highlights questions of social participation, cooperation, biases, grassroots and mainstream solidarity movements etc, and how such questions leads us to reconsider forms of actions and responses regarding the critical transformations that cities are facing. Transformations that are the result of biopolitical management of space and human activity. On a more personal note, I observe that queer and feminist approaches to solidarity views vulnerability as a powerful social bond that moves cross borders. It finds alternative ways to attend to specific groups and their needs and tries to not act according to biased dominant orders. Sezer points out how language and cultural differences affect the ways we move in space in order to practice solidarity. When saying *dayanisma*, one is not “giving solidarity or showing solidarity”, but “doing it, like mutually. Embodied practice”⁵⁵. Language and culture play a crucial role in critically forming the ways we understand social roles in the urban and rethinking these conceptual formulations may shed light in facilitating transnational practice of mutual aid.

To conclude, the exploration of the aftermath of the Turkey earthquake through a queer and feminist lens shows urban catastrophes is a concept that shows these events as products of the relation between human interventions, societal structures, and political decisions. By delving into the experiences of women and queer individuals, this essay sheds light on the reinforcement of heteropatriarchal norms during crises which in turn impacts concepts of home, identity, and safe spaces. The feminist critique extends to governmental responses, emphasizing the urgency of accountability in urban planning and resource allocation. Through the lens of feminist solidarity, the transformative potential of collective care and mutual support becomes evident, challenging classic notions of solidarity. The city-tents emerge as dynamic platforms for feminist solidarity, challenging heteronormative norms and creating spaces for specific

⁵⁵ Ibid

groups. A queer approach to solidarity calls for a re-evaluation of urban planning, advocating for collective power and self-sufficiency as indispensable elements in shaping cities otherwise.

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