



University of Utrecht

Negotiating Differences:

Discussions around social exclusion in (queer) feminist spaces

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INTRODUCTION

My research undertakes the task of observing the ways in which differences within marginalized groups are negotiated. To pursue this aim this thesis analyzes two discussions that happened around exclusions in (queer) feminist¹ spaces in the German speaking context. As these discussions have mostly, yet not exclusively, taken place in online and written new media, the investigation focuses on the articulations of these negotiations within written language. The authors, the situatedness of knowledge (Haraway 1988), the language used, as well as the ‘relationality’² between the writers and how they relate to the discussed topic are important focuses of the analysis. Social exclusions (also referred to as cultural exclusions) in the German speaking context have been widely researched, especially by scholars from the social sciences. Research on social inclusion focuses mainly on schools and how to include, for example, children with different abilities and different advantages (e.g. Baumert 2013; Killen/Rutland 2009). Other studies focus on topics such as inclusive churches, wealth differences, social justice within the education system and the integration of migrants. Generally speaking, social structures of different exclusions and possibilities of participation within the social and political sphere in the EU context have been broadly researched (e.g. Henderson 2005; Ludwig 2007; Woodward/Kohli 2008; Mayrhofer 2009). On the social level, forms of discrimination that lead to exclusion can be seen as a wide field. This field ranges from micro-aggressions and so called ‘positive racism’³ to acts of violence like hate crimes. I argue that it becomes crucial to interrogate the discussions of ‘belonging’ at the roots of these acts between individuals and groups. In the past, different identity-based groups, like women, or gays, or Blacks gained political and social recognition by strategic moves to create a sense of belonging within society.

¹ Throughout the thesis I use the term (queer) feminism and (queer) feminist(s) in order to describe a politically radical feminism—radical meaning the aim of going to the roots of a problem—which has to be seen as plural and at times even contradictory in its aims. When using the terms (queer) feminist or (queer) feminism I refer to the crossroad between political queers and feminists. Both groups are partly linked to the radical left-wing scene in the German speaking context, either ideologically or by personal ties. This research does not aim to clearly define a group that is imaginable as a clear cut entity and name it. Rather it wants to work with the term (queer) feminists or (queer) feminism as a term that subsumes political queers with a feminist understanding as well as feminists who do not identify with the term or the politics of queer. To define and re-define what this term encompasses is one of the ongoing projects within this thesis.

² I work with the concept of relationality to account for the situatedness of subjects as well as to the complex relations in which subjects are embedded and through which they are connected in the social and cultural sphere.

³ With the term ‘positive racism’ I refer to discriminatory practices which are based on allegedly positive attributes and stereotypes. By using ‘positive’ I don’t suggest that this particular form of e.g. racism is less marginalizing than other forms.

These inclusions of identities have shown to be politically necessary, while at the same time, as various research about social inclusion of e.g. trans* people⁴ and Roma show, they are still not fully achieved. Although those inclusions are followed up by research, little attention has been put onto the occurrence of so called soft-exclusions⁵ within already marginalized groups. This research focuses on (queer) feminist groups and the negotiations of in- and exclusions within these rather broadly defined communities (see footnote 1). How does a marginalized group that includes differently marginalized⁶ identities (women, trans*people, sexual minorities) deal with the ambiguous reality of practicing or/and reproducing exclusions⁷ as well? Feminists and people that can be subsumed as (queer) feminists are referred to in this thesis as marginalized or less privileged. The term ‘marginalized’ is also used for the (queer) feminist community as (queer) feminism and feminists, their different theories, calls for action and political change are still not widely included and accepted in the mainstream. Nevertheless it is not suggested here that all radical feminists or/and (queer) feminists are in marginalized positions. Rather my idea of (queer) feminists as less privileged is a contextualized one. This thesis speaks concretely of radical forms of feminism and its differing ideologies in relation to the mainstream. To support the ‘relationality’ of this claim I quote Crystal Harris who asks, in a conversation with Z Nicolazzo that has been captured in the publication: *This is What a Feminist (Space) Looks Like: (Re)conceptualizing Women’s Centers as Feminist Spaces in Higher Education:*

“In a society oppressive to feminist ideology, how can we find a way to build community and means of connection for feminists without marginalizing those who have been historically left out of the movement” (Nicolazzo, Harris 2014: 5)?

This question, which combines the historical negotiations around in- and exclusion in feminist movements (e.g. by Black⁸ women⁹ or lesbians) with a strong notion of community building, is

⁴ See more on the problems trans* people face for example on the labour market and in the education system in chapter 2.2.2. *Discrimination on the basis of trans* hate.*

⁵ By “soft exclusions” I refer to exclusions that can be conceptualized as anything insulting, discriminating and degrading. The extreme side of action that can be subsumed under soft exclusion is “hate speech”. Yet it also refers to the respect a collective space has for different identities (especially stigmatized ones). For Deen Freelon “soft exclusions” signal i.e. your presence is not valid, “we” don’t want you here (Freelon 2014).

⁷ How different feminists reproduce oppressive societal structures like racism and transphobia can be read for example in the book of Julia Serano (2013) *Excluded: Making Feminist and Queer Movements More Inclusive*. The book concentrates on issues in a US context and relies mainly on examples from the Bay Area.

⁸ I write Black with a capital letter at the beginning to show that it is a political self-identification and to distinguish it from the former discriminatory word ‘black’. The word was reclaimed and re-signified politically in the 1960ies as it was made into an expression of empowerment (Ha 2007: 13).

one of the questions that guides me through my research. Before I proceed to the how of my research, I want to contextualize this question for the reader by explaining the path that has led me to questions around community building, critical engagement with forms of oppression within, and the question of how to deal with the problem of marginalizing others when partly being marginalized. The initial idea for this research stems from the repeated discussions and experiences around in- and exclusions within radical political groups, such as the anarchist and radical left-wing scene and the (queer) feminist scenes. I consider myself part of these scene(s) as well as a negotiator in those discussions. My personal theirstory¹⁰ is that of feeling a strong belonging in terms of ideology towards the radical left-wing scene; yet, simultaneously to that feeling of belonging, I encountered difficulties existing within the scene as a queer-identified and female-embodied person. When I got to know other feminists in 2010, we understood that our experience was a collective experience of female-embodied people and other femininities within the broader movement. It was an experience of not-belonging, or not really or just partially being part of something. This realization came upon us in different situations, often in direct interaction with other activists. For example, several texts have been written by activists on masculinity and the masculine centeredness of e.g. anarchist movements. The experiences of women and queers in the anarchist-scene fostered the term ‘manarchists’¹¹ which refers to the habitus of being a masculine activist with certain male-centered characteristics. This experience of what I want to call for myself *half-belonging* sharpened my lens on the reproductions of patriarchal traits (masculine centeredness, the masculine subject as ‘the starting point’) but also left me and others feeling invisible and less-belonging on different occasions. However as I am able to, and do perform, what is considered masculine behaviour, I also felt partly at home and was recognized as a so called female masculinity (Halberstam 1998 xi-xii). But my theirstory with sexual

⁹ See for example the speech of Sojourner Truth with the title Ain't I a Woman? (Truth 1851) or the statement from the Combahee River Collective (Eisenstein 1978). Both instances represent the fight of women of colour to be recognized as women. And to add the more recent theirstories of women of colour criticizing their exclusion and claiming their inclusion in the wider women's movement e.g. “An Open Letter from Black Women to the SlutWalk” (blackwomensblueprint 2011) and for the German context see for example the critique which can be found online (Slutwalk 2012).

¹⁰ Searching for their own silenced and excluded histories, feminists started to use the term ‘herstory’ to make the silence around their histories visible. As a result of this, especially *white-* middle-class women and their living realities of the past are included more in historical research nowadays. Nevertheless other women as well as queers and *their stories* have been widely ignored. In an attempt to make the missing stories of especially trans* people and People of Colour visible I will use the terms ‘theirstory’ and ‘theirstories’.

¹¹ The term ‘manarchists’ came first into being with a questionnaire, that was made for anarchists to reflect on their role in re-producing sexism within the movement.

harassment, a queer sexuality and the fights for recognition of those experiences were often not considered part of ‘the political’ fight. This knowledge was sharpened by small yet often painful encounters with traits of sexism, homo- and trans* hate within the left-wing scene. Soon after entering the scene I started to strive for visibility and to create my own networks of queer and feminist people from within. We attempted to create a ‘safer space’¹² as part of the movement so to speak. My personal background in these ongoing discussions and my struggles around belonging within the (queer) feminist and the broader radical left-wing scene animated me to understand more about the processes and mechanisms that are at work behind the occurring negotiations. But, I can as well recall other encounters in which the group I was belonging to excluded others. One instance I remember was when me and a friend started to set up a ‘traditional second wave awareness group’¹³. I remember one meeting where a flash of awareness of the ‘we’ that we had created, maintained and constituted hit me. I understood that ‘our’ women’s meetings were *white*¹⁴ and that this could mean that we failed to account sufficiently for the differing experiences of women of colour. This proved to be true when one of my friends came to the meeting once but then decided that she would prefer to create a separate meeting for women with a Muslim background. An understanding that other people in our feminist group felt the not-belonging I had felt elsewhere started to develop. Witnessing situations in which ‘we’ as a political group failed to ‘include’ those we considered part of ‘us’ made me think more deeply about how we as political communities conceptualize inside and outside, visibility and invisibility, exclusion and inclusion, self and other, we and they. Speaking of inside and outside, it strikes me that the problems we as activists and feminists ascribed to an ‘outside’, for example mainstream society excluding ‘us’ as queers or feminists or women, always occurred on the ‘inside’ of a group too. A good example would be a (queer) feminist

¹² See chapter 3.2.1 ‘Safer Space’ discussions in (queer) feminist scene.

¹³ Those women’s meetings are meetings that are supposed to be empowering for women. This happens by creating awareness about power structures by sharing experiences such as sexualized violence or forms of discrimination like body- shaming and politicizing them by showing that they are a collective experience.

¹⁴ The term *white* will be written small and in italics throughout the work in order to point to its political constructedness. It names a positioning within a racist societal context (*white* supremacist societies) in which the person or the group talked about have not experienced racism in any way (e.g. structural exclusions within the education system, individual discrimination or misrepresentation by media and politics), during their life. *white* people wanted or not, implicit or explicit have a more powerful position regarding participation as well as economic possibilities etc. in society as large. That does not mean though that a *white* individual is not disadvantaged in any other way (e.g. according to their ability, sexuality, class or gender). Nevertheless despite a less privileged position they are still privileged regarding their non-experiences with the structural and individual racism that is at work and re-produced on differing levels.

group in which we discussed violence against women, yet when a case of ‘domestic violence’, in this case stalking, occurred in a male same-sex constellation we were deeply troubled and struggled to contextualize the problem. What took the community especially by surprise was that, what we deemed to be the ‘outside’ became a reality on the ‘inside’. The illusion of a (queer) feminist safe haven from oppression and harassment was destroyed. Antke Engel, a queer-feminist scholar situated in Hamburg and Berlin, who published a text about the ongoing engagement of Lesbian Studies and Queer Studies with the title “Loud and Lusty Lesbian Queers: Lesbian Theory, Research and Debate in the German-Speaking context” in 2008, refers to this illusion by stating: “It is no surprise that traditional gender hierarchies as well as other relations of power find their way back into queer contexts” (Engel 2007: 270-271). I want to conclude from this that a clear cut inside which is ‘safe’ from a clearly definable outside means ignoring the complex differences that are constituting subjectivities. This thought will be explored in more depth in chapter 4 *Theoretical insights – inspired by Bracha L. Ettinger*, which engages with the before provided analysis and gives philosophical insights that offer a different, more relational engagement with the topic of exclusion that is at stake here. Coming back to Antke Engel, she concludes that Lesbian Studies have their future in Queer Studies by designing the latter from a lesbian perspective. Informed by this intervention, her definition of Queer Theory is a fruitful understanding that enables me to re-think and understand the experiences me and many others had in a more complex light. She also writes: “Queer Theory takes into account, not only the binarity of sex and normative heterosexuality, but also criticizes any kind of identity category for effecting internal homogenizations and external exclusions” (Engel 2007: 267). Using this definition, Queer Theory can become one of the starting points for this thesis. Coming back to the reproduction of oppressions within social justice movements such as the radical left-wing scene, women’s groups or queer groups, I present one possible engagement with the way those communities struggle and negotiate topics of exclusion. Encountering differences of experiences, exclusion, differing struggles and the ambiguous reality of feeling non-belonging where others can, and feeling belonging where other others¹⁵ cannot, made the topic return to me as a person and a researcher again and again. As these reproductions and negotiations around oppression ‘within’ seem so prevalent, I find it an urgent topic that I aim to analyze within this

¹⁵ My reading of Hélène Cixous’ writing suggests that different others are possible at the same time. This deconstructs the idea that the self is constructed by its relation to a single other. More about this can be found in chapter 4. *Theoretical insights – inspired by Bracha L. Ettinger*.

thesis. The task this research undertakes is to investigate negotiations around exclusions within (queer) feminist communities more closely. This is done by focusing in depth on two occasions of exclusions that are discussed online. One is a discussion on a (queer) feminist mailing-list that occurs after racist connoted terms are used in one e-mail that has been sent in spring 2013. The second discussion took place recently (spring/summer 2014) in a BDSM¹⁶ forum. The discussion is about an exclusion from a trans* person from an offline event. I choose these two cases because they illustrate how negotiations of exclusions look like within the context under focus. For example they give insights into strategies around in- and exclusion that are used by community members and show how community building, inclusion and the formation of ‘we’ look like. The analysis then focuses on the locatedness of the speakers/writers as well as on their underlying understanding of subjectivity and ‘we’, if they express such a thing. My political intervention is concretely linked to the locatedness of the research within the community; hence I will be conducting so-called Community Based Research¹⁷. This is an approach used to account for and invest in this location as both an active community member and a researcher. The outcome of this thesis is therefore two-fold. On the one hand it investigates an activist context from the perspective of a partially university-based researcher, in the form of a master thesis. Yet on the other hand it brings the knowledge of different activist communities into the realm of the university. In line with Antke Engel I argue that: “The movement has to be seen as a site of theory production [...]” (Engel 2007: 269). She further states that historically, the German lesbian-feminist movement provided theoretical exchange, research, debates and knowledge production. Moreover, other parts of the movement, for example the *Lesbenforschungssymposium* (Lesbian Research Symposium), represent the academic branch of that knowledge (Engel 2007: 268-269). To deconstruct the idea that some knowledge is more valuable than other, the research process includes knowledge from different sources. Traditionally, academic knowledge has been held in higher regard than any other knowledge, for example, that created directly within political movements. The knowledge I am referring to here is one that is based within the communities and beyond them in terms of experience, education, creativity and imaginary. In the context of this thesis, knowledge is therefore a rather broad term

¹⁶ Margot Weiss proposes that BDSM is a coalitional acronym (Weiss 2006: 104). The abbreviations which stand for: B/D (bondage and discipline), D/S (dominance and submission) and S/M (sadism and masochism) include a wide range of experiences and practices. The differences and diversity among the practitioners has to be stressed here.

¹⁷ See *chapter 1.3.3*.

that includes so called academic knowledge or theory, whilst assuming that other kinds of knowledge are just as valuable. This leads to the fact that the quoted sources in this thesis are only partly academic publications, while blog-posts, political discussions in forums, open letters, art and articles are often quoted and considered as equally reliable knowledge. As the whole thesis is located in this tradition of closely re-intertwining and re-connecting¹⁸ academic knowledge with more activist based knowledge, it is neither activist nor academic. Engel calls this, referring to the 1990s, a “double infra-structure of feminist activities outside and within the Academy” (Engel 2007: 269): this is where I locate my research position and the research outcome. The differing kinds of knowledge and how they are connected historically are contextualized in chapter 2. The outcome of my enquiry is still open, yet there is a hope that it will contribute to the negotiations within the activist realm in order to add a different perspective to the discussions. So my act of intervention can hopefully contribute back to the communities that inspired this thesis in the first place (see chapter 1.3.3 *Community Based Research*).

After this introduction, the thesis is divided into five chapters that include numerous sub-chapters (that will be introduced below). The first chapter is called *Language, Key Concepts and Methodology*, and as the title already suggests, it explores the use of language and its implications regarding some key terms, the core concepts used in the thesis, as well as the methodology that is applied. The second chapter includes background information on the investigated context which is German speaking and embedded in particular, historical shaped by socio-political contingencies. The chapter’s title is *Activism against specific forms of discrimination in the German speaking context*; it explores the complex forms of discrimination as well as the types of activism that have been formed as a reaction to them. This chapter includes an introduction on the two forms of discrimination I am focusing upon: those based on anti-Romaism and those based on trans* hate. Moreover, it especially presents forms of activism that work on the intersections of different structures of oppression. The elaborations presented in this chapter provide the basis for the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis that is outlined and developed further in *chapter 1.3.1*. The heart of the thesis is the analysis of the two case studies

¹⁸ I use the terms re-intertwine and re-connect here as I assume that any knowledge is already connected and can never be seen as totally separated from one another. By now highly academic concepts like “intersectionality” (Nash 2008; Kocięda 2013) have an activist theirstory. Yet becoming concepts for academic research did not fully disconnect them from their activist ‘origin’, as researchers and activist (and people who are both) are invested in making this knowledge travel back and forth.

of discussions around in- and exclusion, which are thoroughly presented in *chapter 3 “Do you mean to include us as well?”* What follows is *chapter 4* which provides some additional *Theoretical insights – inspired by Bracha L. Ettinger* and *chapter 5*, a short *Conclusion*.

1. LANGUAGE, KEY CONCEPTS, METHODOLOGY

This chapter develops different aspects of the theoretical framework that is deployed in the thesis in order to investigate the negotiations of exclusions in the (queer) feminist community at the centre of this study. The negotiations under focus are discussions about the social exclusions that happened towards individuals in the (queer) feminist community. In this chapter the theoretical framework is connected to the methodology, in order to show how the two work together throughout the analysis, which is then presented in *chapter 3*. In the first part of the chapter I engage with different opinions on the role of language within discrimination and marginalization of certain groups. In the second part I discuss some of the key concepts that are important within my analysis, such as experience, identity and sex-gender-sexuality, critically. Finally in the third part of *chapter 1*, I present the chosen methodology which includes among others a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, the concrete methods such as Community Based Research and elaborations on the chosen material. After this brief summary of *chapter 1* I will start with the elaboration on the power of language.

1.1. LANGUAGE OF POWER – THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

“Like desire, language disrupts, refuses to be contained within boundaries” (hooks 1994).

Language as an instrument of communication (here written communication) is a key element in this thesis. This is supported by some participants in the online discussions, who claim the exclusionary power of e.g. words. As I will show in this chapter, language is able to convey power but also the critique of that very power. Moreover language enables a creative engagement with dominant structures and is, for all these reasons, considered a matter of

feminist concern. As Nollaig Frost and Frauke Elichaoﬀ summarize in the chapter “Feminist Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, and Critical Theory”:

“Thus many feminist writers and researchers have focused on the language used to describe the world and the people in it, to show how understanding and perceptions are developed and then become accepted and reinforced” (Frost, Elichaoﬀ 2005: 44).

Historically, ‘writings’ from political collectives (such as the Combahee River Collective¹⁹) have been a medium to express grief over and direct critique at power structures and towards those who keep them in place. In this early case of discussions around exclusions based on race within feminism, the critique comes from within feminist and activist groups and is also directed at them. However, even more importantly than transporting critique, I would argue that writing has been a site of creativity. Language and struggles about the terms used are often a form of envisioning something else, something that could exist in the future or something different from the status quo. Often, discussions concerning the use of a particular language have been triggered by the wish for social and political change on a micro-level (the collective or the feminist sphere) and a macro-level (the inclusion of one’s interests into society as a whole). Writing as a political practice in order to counter the dominant language that creates repressive structures has had a long feminist history²⁰. Referring to Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous, Frost and Elichaoﬀ state that “the focus on language that these and other writers have developed is based on the premise that there is an inextricable link between language (or knowledge, expressed through language) and power” (Frost/Elichaoﬀ 2005: 45). For my research language is understood as a site of political struggle in which power manifests itself. Yet simultaneously language is understood as a creative process that envisions and creates possible alternatives. Understood in this two fold way I hope that a language-based method such as Feminist Critical Discourse Analyses²¹ is not only giving me the tools to criticize and expose power structures that are at work through discourses, but also the tools to see the creativity within, which allows to detangle, play with and adjust those structures. Discussions concerning discriminating language in the German speaking context in the last years have shown that it is a field of strong disagreements. In a brochure of the monthly

¹⁹ The Combahee River Collective was a political group of Black, lesbian feminists and their statement from 1977 (Eisenstein 1978) is one of the first “open feminist letters” that addresses topics of difference in a creative manner (and by creative I mean the process of writing here).

²⁰ See for example H el ene Cixous’ *Reveries of the Wild Woman* (2006) or *Sorties. Out and Out. Attacks/Ways Out/Forays* (2008) or bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions* (2001).

²¹ See more on the methodology of CDA in section 1.3.1.1 *Why Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis* and 1.3.1.2 *Re-working Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis*.

left-wing newspaper “ak” (analysis and critique²²) with the title: “Critical Whiteness: Debates around antiracist politics and non-discriminating language”²³ questions concerning the power of language are discussed. In this newspaper three different standpoints are presented in order to give the reader a short overview on how topics of language and its power are addressed within the German speaking context that is the focus of this thesis. Before stating my own position towards language as an expression of power, I introduce the three standpoints briefly. All of them try to answer questions around writing practices and address issues such as: “What role does language have in the (re)- production of social reality? Could a different kind of language change reality? And, is a language without “power” actually possible” (AK 2013: 18)? In the interview with the title: “Dynamic language against power and discrimination: practices of language are not subordinate to political movements”, Lann Hornscheidt speaks about the relationship between language and political movements. Her opinion is that social and language based change should generally not be distinguished from each other, since according to her, politics of language always play an important part in political movements. Questions around what a movement calls itself or what kind of language a movement should use are always a field of negotiation, she argues. Hornscheidt states: “If people reflect and want to change their social reality, than they want to change their language” (AK 2013: 20). After this interview, Hannah Wettig sheds a critical view on the new developments in discussions of language use in a text entitled: “Just for insiders: N-word, sl*ts and trigger warnings – the new left-wing practices of speaking creates primarily one thing: new exclusions”²⁴. In this text she makes the important point that creative neologisms have the potentiality to create new exclusions. She states:

“Such an approach creates more racism, classism and sexism than it pretends to fight against. Because everyone who does not have the time or the education to learn those new word constructions is under constant danger of becoming guilty. Even worse: the academic has to admonish the hairdresser with a “Hauptschulabschluss” [secondary modern school qualification] who earns seven Euro’s an hour. The German student forbids the activist from Afghanistan to speak²⁵.”

²² Analyse und Kritik.

²³ Critical Whiteness: Debatte um antirassistische Politik und nicht diskriminierende Sprache

²⁴ “Nur für Eingeweihte: N-Wort, Sl*ts und Triggerwarnung – die neuen linken Sprachpraktiken schaffen vor allem eines: neue Ausschlüsse“ (AK 2013: 22).

²⁵ „Eine solche Herangehensweise schafft mehr Rassismen, Klassismen und Sexismen, als sie zu bekämpfen vorgibt. Denn all diejenigen, die nicht die Zeit oder die Bildung haben, sich die neuen Konstruktionen anzueignen, laufen ständig Gefahr sich schuldig zu machen. Schlimmer noch: Die Akademikerin muss die Friseurin mit Hauptschulabschluss und einem Stundenlohn von sieben Euro ermahnen. Die deutsche Studentin verbietet dem Aktivisten aus Afghanistan den Mund“ (AK 2013: 23).

There are some important points here that I want to address and that I believe need thorough consideration. As Wettig states, especially the rhetoric of “educating others” has the potentiality to create new hierarchies. The danger of reproducing exclusions along the lines of classism, for example, should be kept in mind. Yet, rather than dismissing new ways of speaking altogether, I would take this danger as a reminder to create accessible language. Moreover it might be important to listen before urging other people towards using new expressions. From my own experience with political discussions I can say that misunderstandings are fast to come about if we assume to know already what the other person is saying exactly. I want to give the reader a brief example from the later analysed discussion that happened on the BDSM forum. In the discussion the meanings of words, terms or definitions have played an important role for the participants to foster understanding between each other. How important such struggles over the meanings of words are is shown by the fact that the discussion apparently animated some readers to think about their own definitions of certain terms:

“As [Plum] mentioned, some contributors use the same words, but understand them to mean different things. That led me to ask how I actually define some of these concepts myself, and how that influences my ideas and feelings about them” (see Appendix B, Response 59).

Ergo, asking critical questions when terms are used is often helpful as the engagement with the different usage of the same terms can be an interesting field for exploring each other’s possibilities of speaking and understanding. Moreover, I want to add a critical note here. Wettig’s article and her above-mentioned quote in particular give the impression that neologisms are exclusively created by higher educated and/or *white* people. However, as the creation of new words has often been linked to political movements of which some were not exclusively or not at all based in the academic and/or *white* realm, this is not necessarily always the case. However Hannah Wettig suggests that language is a mere tool to describe reality rather than a form of creating reality (e.g. discrimination, exclusion) by itself. The last article of the three has been written by Sharon Dodua Otoo and has the title: “Who holds the power of definition? By choosing our words we change reality²⁶” (AK 2013: 24-26). Otoo presents different arguments that speak to my research. The first one is that language is often an insufficient tool to describe realities as it is not always able to contain them. She reminds us of the borders of language by

²⁶ “Wer hat die Definitionsmacht? Durch die Wahl unserer Worte verändern wir die Realität“ (AK 2013: 24)

giving the example of bilingual people, who can at times express a thought better in one language than the other. Moreover, she stresses that the words we need to describe somethings sometimes do not exist at all. This relates back to Hornscheidt's article as both authors are of the opinion that there is a close link between language and reality. Words, Otoo argues, are a reminder of societies' power structures. The expressions and terms a person uses, for example, can be a strong indicator of their consciousness regarding a particular form of discrimination. Although she states that words are not capable on their own of changing reality, she is convinced that "language is a reminder that we all have the task to work against discrimination and that we should start with ourselves" (AK 2013: 25). One possibility to do so then would be to reflect on one's language and the history of terms used. Summarizing the article, Otoo supports the argument that words have potentialities to re-produce norms, and also that language holds the potential for empowering self-designation; for example when new words are created by a minority in order to account for their collective experience. Regarding gender-identities the emergence of terms such as genderqueer²⁷ and neutrois²⁸, can be seen as empowering self-designations for those who feel that parts of themselves or their gender-experience can be contained or described with those terms. Similarly to Otoo, I understand language as an expression of power structures and as holding potentialities of creativity and change especially within political movements. The case studies considered in this thesis include negotiation of terms and their relation to reality (in the sense of lived experience). While being convinced that language can create visibility by naming not yet known or not yet translated experiences, as a researcher I keep an eye out for exclusions that could potentially occur as a result of using or creating a difficult language within political movements. Summarizing this discussion around language it could be said that an oversimplified co-relation between language and reality should be avoided. I believe this because all three authors made valuable points about the creative potential of language, the pitfalls of new exclusions and the possibility of naming the yet unknown. All three arguments are valid for this thesis as they focus on different kinds of exclusions: either the social exclusion that becomes visible (for example) by discriminatory terms or by a complicated/ less understandable language. I work here with the assumption that the relation between reality and language is far more complex than trying to simply define if

²⁷ A definition of the term genderqueer either as an umbrella term or a self-description for an identity can be found online under: <http://genderqueerid.com/what-is-gq>.

²⁸ To see an exemplary definition of the term see: <http://neutrois.com/what-is-neutrois/>.

language or reality was first²⁹. I try to work, therefore, with a dynamic understanding of the reality- language relationship. Some basic assumptions that are taken from the articles above for the analysis later are: language has ‘real’ consequences as it can express and re-inforce social power structures; language should not be underestimated as it shapes our experiences and makes the world graspable and nameable; and we as humans are able to create imaginaries and possibilities through the creation of new words.

1.2. KEY CONCEPTS

1.2.1. DISCONTINUITIES BETWEEN GENDER, SEX AND SEXUALITY

This elaboration on language and the meaning of specific terms connects to another important field that needs to be thought through in order to build a base on which an analysis of the genderedness of identities can take place. In the field of Gender Studies, much has been said about the relationship between the categories of gender and sex³⁰. The distinction developed to separate the biological/nature/body from the social/culture/mind- associated part of genderedness. So traditionally, for example in the social sciences, these terms have been seen as two separate sides, yet of the same coin. This feminist argument is often connected to Simone de Beauvoir’s famous quote: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman (Beauvoir 1973: 267)” which introduced the idea that socialization plays a major role in the gender-binary system that marginalizes women. This distinction between sex and gender gave feminists the vocabulary to think more along the lines of a socially constructed nature of femininity and masculinity, by distinguishing it from the biological sex (Bergoffen 2010). Accordingly the women’s movement

²⁹ A lot of research, also from feminist perspectives has been done on this issue. For an informative account of the complexity of this relation see for example: “*Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject*” by Rosalind Coward and John Ellis (1977).

³⁰ This is a very complex and huge debate which cannot be presented in its entirety in this thesis. Texts that engage in depth with the topic are Judith Butler’s “Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s *Second Sex*” (1986), her books “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity” (1990) and “Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”” (1993). Moreover a critical account that engages closely with the two positions, one that stresses either body or the mind as the force for the sexed determination of a subject, is Moira Gatens: “A Critique of the Sex/Gender Distinction” (1983). Gatens provides a valuable critique of the pitfalls of a purely behaviour-based feminist analysis of gender, yet from a cis-critical perspective I disagree with her usage of terms like “(normal) female bodies” (Gatens 1983: 149), because historically, characterizing one body as normal and consequently another’s body as abnormal or less normal has always been used to de-value whoever was constructed as ‘other’ (e.g. differently abled bodies).

of the 1970s could argue more successfully against essentializing arguments that were based on the biological assumptions of inherently male and female behaviours or traits. Yet this distinction still meant that in most cases gender—seen as the cultural and therefore malleable part— was followed and generally aligned with sex—still often seen as biologically and to a certain degree self-explanatory.— In this manner, a clear-cut distinction between the two was made. As an example of how the two concepts are accounted for in more complex manners, and to show how they are used within this research, I will quote a report with the title: *Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression*. It was published by the European Network of Legal Experts (EN³¹) in the non-discrimination field³² and stands exemplary for other reports and research that work with less binary understandings of sex and gender. Moreover it is one of the resources that are informing chapter 2.2. *trans* hate and trans* activism*. The authors' definition of sex and gender reads as follows:

In this paper a clear distinction applies with regard to the terms sex and gender. Sex refers to biological makeup such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics, genes, and hormones, while gender refers to people's internal perception and experience of maleness and femaleness, and the social construction that allocates certain behaviours to male and female roles which vary across history, societies, cultures and classes. Gender is hence strongly linked to society's expectations and is not exclusively a biological matter. (EN 2011: 12-13)

This is an example of how the distinction between gender and sex is often worked within reports and research today. A clear-cut distinction between sex and gender is made and the focus lies, as in the early women's movements, on the discontinuities between social and therefore cultural expectations, and the assigned sex at birth that is still assumed to be solely biological. The argument in the EN paper seems to be that everything that is cultural is falling into the category of gender while anything biological is subsumable under the category of sex. Yet theorists in the 1990s, at the forefront Judith Butler with her book *Gender Trouble*, argued convincingly that also sex comes into being through cultural practices; practices such as the assignment of a sex to babies after or even before birth and the constitution of subjects through being either a woman *or* a man in this world. Considering this, even the EN states, that the distinction they made is blurred when legal meaning is discussed solely on the grounds of sex. This is especially valid in the context of this thesis, because the discrimination under focus concerns people that are in one

³¹ From now on I will use the abbreviation EN, instead of European Network of Legal Experts in the non-discrimination field.

³² This report is summarized and quoted more extensively in chapter 2.

way or another destabilizing the traditional relation between sex and gender, namely the imperative that dictates that gender has to follow from or according to one's sex (EN 2011: 12-13). The discrimination that people who are gender non-conforming face is often based upon the trouble, to use Butlers words, that there is a discontinuity between their sex assigned at birth and the presented gender. This becomes even more complex if we³³ add sexuality as the third term to this so far two fold construction, since from the continuity of sex and gender follows sexuality, or what Butler calls desire,³⁴ that is assumed to be normatively heterosexual. For example, a person of female sex is usually expected to identify as a woman, live her life as a woman and to sexually desire men. Coming back now to the social consequences for subjects that are, in one or more ways, disrupting the normative order of sex - gender - sexuality, the EN elaborates on the binary gender system and its implications. The EN report provides explanations for forms of discrimination that are based on the discontinuity between these three, when they argue that:

“Negative attitudes towards trans and intersex people are directly correlated to the importance that a determinate society places on the binary gender model and the level of gender stereotypes, sexism and gender inequalities that exist within it. The binary gender model classifies both sex and gender into two distinct and exclusive forms of masculine and feminine identities. This system is maintained through a cisnormativity [...] system which legitimizes and privileges those who are comfortable in the gender belonging to the sex assigned to them at birth through various practices and institutions” (EN 2011: 13).

Although, as I showed with the quote earlier, the EN report starts off with a traditional and in my opinion insufficient understanding of gender and sex, regarding this quote one gets the impression that they move far beyond that simplistic model. The term ‘cisnormativity’ describes the prevalent norm that people who happen to match the expected continuity between sex and gender are seen as more normal than people for whom this assumption does not hold true. Cisnormativity can therefore be described as a system that bestows legitimization on some and less or none on others. This is an important concept for this thesis. I want to mention here that cisnormativity overlaps and relates to other norms for example the one of being abled bodied, in so far as it defines what is seen as ‘normal’ and which interests have to be served first. An easy example would be that most spaces are accessible for people that fit in an abled bodied norm rather than for people who have differing needs from that norm. Unfortunately this system of

³³ If I use a ‘we’ in this thesis I always refer to the ‘we’ that consists of myself, the researcher, and the reader. Whenever the ‘we’ refers to another grouping I will make that explicit.

³⁴ For more on the discussion of sex, gender and sexuality see also chapter 1. II in *Gender Trouble: The compulsory order of sex/gender/desire* (Butler 1990: 8-10).

norms reaches far into the institutionalized treatments offered to trans* and inter people, which is often based upon or in line with gender stereotypes. The EN report states rightly that:

Additionally, this norm systematically disadvantages and marginalises all persons whose sex, gender identity and gender expression do not meet social expectations. This happens through the enforcement of wide boundaries between the two sexes (and their corresponding genders) to discourage people from crossing them or establishing alternative third sexes or third genders (EN 2011: 13).

The EN goes even further by stating that: “In fact, gender stereotypes that favour a particular form of ‘masculinity’ in relation to men and a particular form of ‘femininity’ in relation to women expose many trans and intersex people to institutionalised discrimination” (EN 2011: 13). This holds true when invasive questions around sex practices, preferences of clothes or hobbies- all of them expected to be answered in a highly traditionally gendered fashion- are a major measure of evaluation in terms of who is diagnosed as ‘transsexual³⁵’ and, as a result, granted treatment. Summarizing this small elaboration of the theoretical/analytical distinction between understandings of sex and gender, whilst showing its practical problems of actual discontinuity. As gender identity has already played a role in this elaboration above, I want to proceed now to discuss the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘experience’ and how I intend to work with them in the framework of this thesis.

1.2.2. WHAT TO MAKE OF IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE?

Questions around ‘identity’ are at the heart of the majority of feminist research that deals with marginalized groups. This, as Katherine Zappone defines in her publication *Re-Thinking Identity: The Challenge of Diversity*, is due to the importance identity can have within equality strategies. She states: “Identity is found to be important in people’s positive sense of self, as a basis for people to organize and seek change, and as having practical implications for institutional policy and practice” (Zappone 2013: 2). The idea of a stable and fixed identity that can be subsumed under one identity category, e.g. ‘women’, has been challenged and mostly replaced with more complex views of simultaneity, particularly in feminist discussions and research. By simultaneity I mean the fact that people are often marginalized in more than one of

³⁵ For a historicized critique of the term see also chapter 2.2.1 *Definitions of terms used*.

their (ascribed) identity fragments. A very famous piece of feminist research that brought attention to the simultaneity of discrimination based on two or more identity fragments was Kimberlé Crenshaw³⁶ (1989). Since the publication of the article the definition of identity has changed towards one of multiple identities, a view which allows for more complexity and fluidity. Because of this change Allaine Cerwonka raises a concern with the discontinuity between new understandings of identity and choices regarding methodology in feminist research:

“My concerns follow from a sense that the methodological use of experience often relies upon and reinstates a notion of identity that reproduces humanist notions of the subject and contains assumptions about agency, resistance and the liberatory potential of research” (Cerwonka 2011: 60).

This research hopes to escape this dilemma of discontinuity by accounting for notions of subjectivity which are not exclusively dependent on the traditional humanist notion of a subject (*see as well chapter 4. Theoretical Insights – Inspired by Bracha L. Ettinger*). Like Cerwonka my concern is that an understanding of subjectivity that is based on limitless agency regarding choice, liberation and resistance, does not account for certain forces of power. As Cerwonka suggests further, identity and self-identification can better be regarded “as one moment in a larger process of practices of power and self”. This for her includes the articulations of a subject, yet understands those articulations as one moment in a larger process (Cerwonka 2011: 65). I argue that the concept of gender can be seen as such a moment in which subjects can articulate themselves. One’s own or someone else’s genderedness is always articulated within a binary framework. This framework, I argue, is given by language as well as by historical and cultural structures. Processes of self-definitions such as, for example, identifying one’s identity as a certain gender, are emerging within a binary frame of female or male, woman or man. Even if certain identities are extending such a framework (e.g. genderqueer people) those identities are still emerging in a setting that acknowledges certain identities (e.g. clearly male or female ones) more than others (gender non-conforming ones). These categorizations in ‘acknowledged’ and ‘less acknowledged’ identities regarding gendered identity, leads to material consequences (e.g. exclusions from a certain spaces) for certain ‘bodies’ (e.g. the ones who do not fit in any of the acknowledged categories). I argue that this difference of ‘acknowledged’ and ‘less or not

³⁶ Crenshaw, showed in her research about the insufficiency of antidiscrimination laws in the US how black women were discriminated against in the job-market on the basis of their sex and race. In the article Crenshaw explains how this intersection was a blind spot in the antidiscrimination law. As an effect of this blind spot the affected women could often not ‘prove’ their discrimination on either basis.

acknowledged' is at stake when differences, regarding identity, are negotiated. This follows Cerwonka's other important claim that it is crucial to ask "how experience and identity are constructed in relation to other identities and social categories or experiences" (Cerwonka 2011: 67). In Cerwonka's concern it becomes clear how identity and experience are closely linked concepts that are best defined together. This ties into the notion that experiences, such as discrimination, are linked to social and political structures of power. This thesis tries to trace the processes of power as well as the understanding of the self that are at work beyond the single moments of experience. An example could be the experience of racism which has the potentiality to make a person of colour identify as such. A certain kind of experiential moment can therefore construct a new identity fragment that becomes visible for a subject itself. Moreover, rather than assuming that subjects are defined by a single identity, I apply the thought of a kaleidoscopic and therefore multiple identity. This means that any subject consists of multiple identity fragments which form and inform its identity. And, like in a kaleidoscope, they can be shuffled (see figure 1 and 2 below). This figure can help to understand that different identity fragments can be visible at different times. This influences also the experiences we as subjects have. Intersectionality has become the framework that is most often used in feminist research to describe the (plural) intersections of power structures. I acknowledge that approaches that work mostly with the image of intersections are a feasible tool to understand and analyse the interaction between systems of oppression (see for example Weldon 2008: 193). The concept of intersectionality informs my approaches (e.g. I rely especially on resources that acknowledge more than one form of oppression and that are working with this plurality or as Aphrodite Kocięda states in her article: "Marginalization is messy: Beyond intersectionality" (Kocięda 2013), with the messiness of marginalization). Additionally however, I developed this idea of kaleidoscopic identity fragments (see figure 1 and figure 2), which I add to those thoughts on intersectionality. I shall illustrate my understanding of kaleidoscopic identities in more detail. A kaleidoscope contains a collection of objects. What is visible for the person who looks through the little peephole is just a collection of the objects that are actually in the container at the other end. When we see a person we assume that this person is a subject in terms of being 'whole'. The same we assume from what we see in a kaleidoscope when looking at the fragments of objects that are shaped together as an assembled picture by the mirrors that project it. The similarity I suggest here between the working of a kaleidoscope and the construction of subjects and identities is threefold. The first

one is: we as human subjects are never whole; rather, we form identities for ourselves and others by keeping our identity fragments together. The second similarity is that what the eye sees from the outside (a whole picture that can be defined or described) is visible yet an illusion, as in both cases all the fragments are never seen all together. The third similarity ties into the latter by suggesting that our identity-fragments, which we hold as subjects, are indeed re-shape-able and shift-able. Yet as subjects, just like the grouped fragments in the container at one end of the kaleidoscope, we are never able to fully re-new or dispose the invisible ones. Rather they are still there as, for example, memories or experiences as well as possibilities to come. They inform, yet not always construct, the picture that becomes visible in the end (as the fragments which are left out are as well the fragments which define the ones that are visible at a certain moment or encounter). This applies to how subjects view themselves as much as to how they are seen by other subjects.

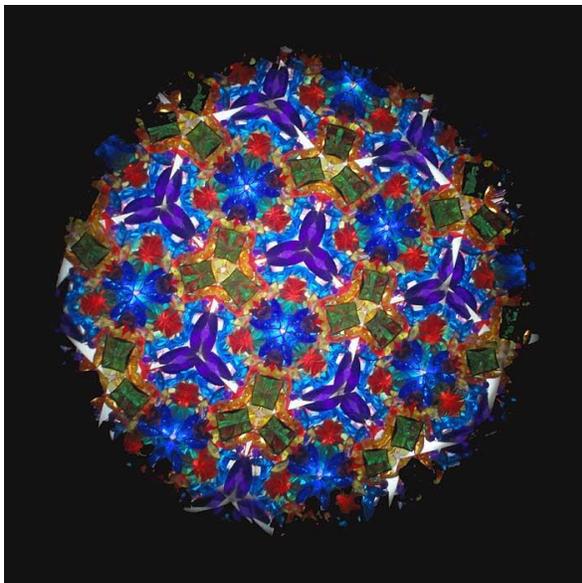


Figure 1 kaleidoscope (Funlearning 2014)

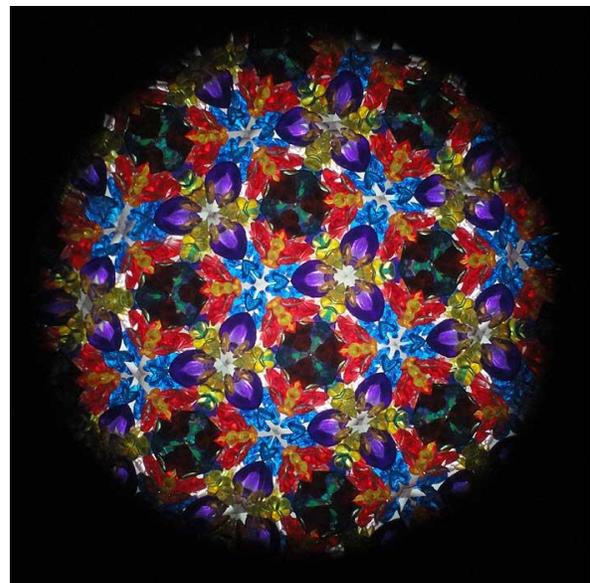


Figure 2 kaleidoscope (Funlearning 2014)

Identity and identity fragments are closely connected to the concept of ‘experience’, a concept with which I will engage now critically. Experience in this research is one of the defining sources from which questions around exclusion and inclusion – that often relate to differences and their negotiations – are drawn from. I use experience as a starting and connecting point throughout my work. This includes a critical investigation of the concept and its usage. Like John W. Scott, a historian who focuses among other things on gender, states in her article “The

Evidence of Experience”, the use of experience can have naturalizing effects on categories, but it is also able to decontextualize differences. This is why according to Scott we as researchers have to investigate assumptions and practices that have excluded particular considerations of difference in the first place. She states:

”Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one’s vision is structured—about language (or discourse) and history—are left aside” (Scott 1991: 777).

I position myself in line with Scott’s concern that it is essential to ask how vision is structured for example by language and history, in particular because, as we saw earlier, language always defines given frameworks and definitions. There is nothing that is outside of cultural meaning and the reference point is always language³⁷, understood as carrying certain kinds of meanings in a specific setting. In this thesis, a contextualized use of experience and deriving from that a critical lens on narrated experiences that occur within the analysed material are applied. This is done by investigating the role of self-reflexivity when experiences are narrated and if experiences are taken as a given or as something that needs to be explained. One of the discussion participants of the exclusion that happened in the context of the BDSM conference offers a critical intervention on experience, which I want to share at this point:

“I don't think that "safe space" is a holy term, because our feelings of safety are constructed socially and politically. Certain social groups are marked as "dangerous" because of their color, ethnicity, being otherwise marginalized. So sometimes it is good to reconsider what makes us feel unsafe, and why. To be critical of our experiences, even when our experiences are very authentic. At the same time, we all make choices as to how far we can and want to go in challenging our comfort zones” (Appendix B, Response 52).

By putting the experience of feeling ‘safe’ under thorough investigation by relating it to practices of racialization that happen, for example by marking certain bodies as ‘dangerous’, the narrator asks for a critical self-reflection on the experience of feeling ‘unsafe’. The author reminds us that it is necessary to apply a critical lens to what we experience, as everything experienced, even feelings, are always embedded within and related to a social and political context. The simple assumption of experience as an ‘original knowledge’, which needs no further reflection or explanation, is precisely what Scott warns the researcher about:

³⁷ See also the elaboration on language earlier in this chapter (*1.1. Language of Power – the Power of Language*).

“When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence upon which explanation is built. [...] The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world” (Scott 1991: 777).

All of these theoretical and critical reflections summarized above lead me to the approach of using experience as contextualized in the specific social- and political power structures in which they emerge. Therefore it becomes important to perform a critical investigation of the language which is available to discuss experiences within those structures. This is, for example, visible in the amount of time and words that this research invests in the definition of terms and their histories. For the aim of a highly contextualized usage of experience, chapter two summarizes trans* hate as a collective experience of people who are read as gender non-conform presenting. This includes also a self-reflexive understanding of my own experience as a researcher and part of the very community I study and the idea that experience rather than being *the perspective is a perspective*. Within this paper experience will, therefore, be considered as a possible perspective embedded in a complex framework of cultural meaning-making and power structures.

1.2.3. THE (QUEER) FEMINIST COMMUNITY OR WHO IS ‘WE’?

The Oxford online dictionary defines “community” as multiple things. One of the definitions reads that community is “the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common” (Oxford 2014). This particular definition of community is used for this thesis as it stresses the condition of sharing as a means of thinking about community and building those sharing points. Community building has been one of the most powerful strategies used by marginalized groups not only to survive, but also to flourish and to embrace certain identity fragments together (e.g. women’s movement, Black movement, gay movement). Those movements that built on the basis of identity fragments like ‘being women’, ‘being Black’ or ‘being gay’, referred to each other and their community as ‘we’. This can bring about certain struggles. Adrienne Rich already raised the question: “Who is *we*?” in 1984 when she wrote the text: “Notes toward a Politics of Location”, to a women’s conference. She writes: “[...] we never meant less than the making new of all relationships. The problem was that we did not know whom we meant when we said “we”” (Rich 1984: 217). So on the one hand ‘we’ can be seen as

a form of relating to each other, on the other hand ‘we’ often stands for a reminder of ‘our’ location. So when Western feminists said ‘we’, they often meant white, educated women and their struggles (Rich 1984: 230). Particularly because of this history of a self-referring ‘we’ that was often exclusively for certain groups of subjectivities, in this thesis how people refer to ‘our community’ or ‘we’ is investigated thoroughly. One question is, what differences within are glossed over when people think and speak ‘we’? I aim to investigate this especially in order to make the ‘location’ of speakers/writers and the way they locate their community or their ‘we’ visible. To illustrate this I quote one of my co-researchers³⁸ who reflected about the use and understanding of the words ‘scene³⁹’ and community:

“People often refer to "the scene" or "the community" as if it is a more or less static, singular entity. [...] In my eyes, there are multiple "scenes" or "groups of people with a shared interest and value system who have come to know each other". There is overlap between groups, obviously, and shared interests, but in some cases less than you might think. For instance, there's the lesbians who organize [a BDSM play- party] and who don't always feel at ease with the queers, the trans_ people who don't always feel at ease with the lesbians. They don't necessarily interact a lot and they don't always have a lot in common. The same for bois and old-style butches. And the bdsm scene in [the city] is large enough that they *don't have to* stick together; they can find their own "Bezugsgruppe" (peer group) within the larger bdsm scene without having to step out of their comfort zone to connect to 'the other'" (personal communication, Mango, June 16, 2014).

Without entering too much into detail regarding the different listed identity groups (some of them are defined by sexuality others by gender expression), Mango⁴⁰ makes interesting arguments here. She problematizes the assumption that there is a scene or community that is *one*. Rather in her opinion it is, what I would call *a complex conglomerate of linkages* and departures. Mango stresses the different interests that distinguish the scene’s fragments from one another and make them into “multiple scenes”. Relating to this I want to state critically that there is not one movement or one scene I am referring to, rather we have to imagine the context under

³⁸ Co-researchers are the people that contributed to the research by commenting, inspiring or providing material that they wrote. More on the concept can be found in the upcoming chapter 1.3. *Methodology*.

³⁹ The German word “Szene” can be translated into community or scene. The term is mostly used in political contexts or in other exclusive circles where e.g. a certain ideology is the uniting force. Interestingly but not surprising the word “Gemeinschaft” which translates more clearly into “community” is not often used for the left-wing scene or other political communities. Rather the term seems to be reserved for e.g. housing projects which can be counted towards the sphere that has traditionally been understood as ‘private’. Translating the word “Szene” into community in this thesis can therefore be seen as a small feminist intervention into this division of “private” equated with less or un-political and “public” equated with politics and activism.

⁴⁰ Mango is the pseudonym of one of the co-researchers. More detailed information on the ways pseudonyms have been chosen can be found in chapter 1.3.2.2 *Research Ethics Regarding the Material*.

investigation as a knot. That means that some strings run close to each other maybe even multiple times while others never touch or come even close together. Concluding we can say that although seemingly constituting an entity, communities, even if sharing similar interests and/or struggles are often divided. This is a knowledge that erupts several times within this thesis. Therefore, focusing on moments of ‘sharing’ within the negotiations under focus, but as well on the discontinuities and ruptures, are two important aims throughout this research.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

After having defined concepts and terms and their histories I want to proceed with presenting the methods of my research, which are embedded within my methodological framework. In order to keep investigating the role of language I use Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). A specifically developed form of FCDA is suggested and developed here, as the topics specificity so requires. In the second part of this methodological section I show how this research is strongly embedded in the idea of a Community Based Research (CBR) as it relies on a desire for exchange and a sense of responsibility between the researcher and her community. I am convinced that this approach supports a settled analysis, as in this way the research cooperates closely with the community and the socio-political context in which it is embedded. The research trajectory has been to start from the material in order to see what kind of questions and struggles are prevalent in the community. Moreover my so called co-researchers (other community members) inspired my choices for this research from the very beginning. This implies that the idea for this research stems directly from discussions within (queer) feminist communities that emerged about social exclusion, often focused on the usages of discriminating terms⁴¹. As the material has been extracted to a large extent from the internet, in the third and last part of this section the internet as an accessible yet very specific source for research material is reflected upon. In particular the question of the relation between online spaces and other “offline” ones is

⁴¹ As an example I can name the discussion that emerged with the Slut Walks, a worldwide movement against sexism and rape-culture that reclaimed the discriminating term ‘slut’. Women of Colour raised critique against the usage of the term, because women who experience discrimination based on their racialization and sexualization, according to them, could not reclaim the term in a positive sense. This discussion took place in the US context first, and later a similar discussion kicked off in Germany in 2012. After an open letter by a group of women of colour, different groups started a critical and controversial discussion on their usage of the term slut in German, namely “Schlampe” as an empowering term and if/ how this possibly excludes women of colour (Lesmigras 2012).

under focus in this part. All the choices made by the researcher are reflected upon by a critical engagement. In particular, I explore my role as a researcher coming from an academic setting that reaches out towards the activist realm.

1.3.1. FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

During the process of writing this section, the engagement with the book *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse* by Michelle M. Lazar was especially helpful and inspiring. The book is an important feminist intervention on rethinking and extending the political perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis. The following exploration of methodology engages with CDA first from a feminist but also extended from a trans* perspective. The chosen trajectory then leads into a re-working of FCDA from a cis critical and critical *white* perspective.

1.3.1.1. WHY FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS?

CDA in this research is a basis as it provides critical engagement with social and political power structures that express themselves within language (Hesse-Biber: 2014: 46-47). Feminist CDA is an extended version that adds a feminist perspective, especially the power structure based on the gender binary to this methodology. By using a FCDA I aim to deduce important information when investigating negotiations within (queer) feminist groups and most importantly how they/we (as feminists) use language and probably dominant discourses in order to exclude. Considering the political perspective of my research, which is already provided by the analyzed material (e.g. texts written by (queer) feminist collectives) the framework of FCDA seems to be a good choice that can give insights into the differences and similarities around discussions of in- and exclusion in dominant and less dominant discourses. By using FCDA I hope to be able to show in which ways the dominant discourses are linked to the discourses around exclusions in marginalized groups. Practically this means that the knowledge on discrimination against Roma and trans* people, that I summarized in chapter 2, is linked to the negotiations that are prevalent within the marginalized communities under focus. Michelle Lazar's book on FCDA is a collection of work about the representation of certain (marginalized) groups. Examples are gays

and lesbians in a Portuguese Newspaper (Gouveia 2005: 229), discourses about feminists in Hungarian Printed Media (Barát 2005: 205) or the remaking of fatherhood in Singapore (Lazar 2005: 139). All of these topics investigate a less privileged group and their constitution within the framework of a dominant discourse. Yet the methods presented and used in the studies conducted are not seamlessly applicable to my own questions, because it concerns negotiations of exclusions within already less dominant groups, namely feminists or (queer) feminist collectives and political groups. Compared to the presented studies in the articles, this research is more specific and in contrast not engaging too closely with questions of representation. Hence the task of the next section is to derive connection points from Lazar's book and gather important and valuable fragments that could be essential to my own questions. The chapter "Negotiating the Classroom Floor: Negotiating Ideologies of Gender and Sexuality" is by its topic most close to my own research. Kathryn A. Remlinger's chapter provides valuable information in it that support the purpose of this research. She describes and analyzes classroom situations in which power manifests itself through speech and speaking behaviours and explores how certain practices (e.g. interruption) create silences. She states that exploring silences within negotiations can be important indicators for the placements of power within, in this case, the classroom. Moreover Remlinger describes, how individuals and groups challenge dominant discourses, although mostly by strategically using domination strategies (Remlinger 2005: 134). This is interesting for this thesis as it is important to see which kind of strategies are used by members of the marginalized group towards each other and for which kind of purpose. While in Remlinger's research marginalized groups use dominant strategies strategically to challenge a dominant discourse, it has to be seen in how far this holds true for the negotiations that are under focus in this thesis. In chapter 3 I will, for example, present if dominant strategies are used in the two case studies of online discussions. If strategies of challenging dominant discourses are used I will furthermore investigate in how far they are applied to dominate or exclude others or in how far dominant strategies are rather used by more marginalized voices to reclaim a speaking-position within the discussion at stake.

1.3.1.2. RE-WORKING FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

It is important now to repeat that my main question is how already less privileged⁴² groups like queer and feminist activists produce exclusions in their textual production. This specific focus makes the situation particularly complicated. The complication derives from the fact that in these groups power, which is often assumed to be in a “center”, gets displaced and pluralized. In the context under focus it is generally less clear, who is the excluding and who is the excluded group. One example from the discussion that is analyzed later is that often people from different groups claim to be the excluded or marginalized group. As it is often the usage of particular terms that are creating exclusions of certain subjectivities or people with certain identity-markers, in both cases large parts of the discussion are about the question who feels excluded by what. In one discussion (the BDSM forum based one) people claim that certain groups get excluded for the ‘safety’ and therefore inclusion of others (see also chapter 3.2.1 ‘Safer space’⁴³, *discussions in (queer) feminist scenes*). This is due to often situational discrimination on the basis of ‘identity’ or to refer back to the idea of kaleidoscopic identities, on the basis of identity fragments (see chapter 1.2.2). Having these specific research questions and the particularity of the community-discussions in mind, Feminist CDA needs to be critically reworked. What stays is the attention towards words and phrases that are used by the writers as well as to the way meaning is given to the concepts that are constructed and deconstructed within the text (Hesse-Biber 2014: 47). In this way my research aims not to just ‘give voice’ to marginalized people⁴⁴ or groups—like traditional Feminist CDA mainly does (Hesse-Biber 2014: 50) —, rather I aim to push forward a critical approach that starts from a “multiple center critical”⁴⁵ perspective. Let me explain this more by quoting from the book “*Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*” by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber:

⁴² Under the term “less privileged”, groups that have little access to dominant discourses are subsumed. This does not mean that they have no access, but rather that their ideologies and beliefs are critical towards hegemonic assumptions and common-sense knowledge.

⁴³ I use the term ‘safer spaces’ to indicate that a space is never fully safe. In order to show that making a space ‘safer’ is an ongoing process that is never fully ending. Rather as people are fluctuating and interests are shifting a constant re-negotiation of what ‘safety’ means to different people or identity-groups is necessary.

⁴⁴ I write the gender neutral word “people” here as my research is critical about the idea that ‘women’ are the most marginalized group. At least since Judith Butler and the emergence of trans* studies, feminist research should pay attention to subjectivities that are non- categorizable or non-intelligible) within the women/men dichotomy (Butler 1990: 23).

⁴⁵ Dominant centers within and beyond subjectivities could be ‘whiteness’ understood as a non-essential social category that racializes certain kinds of bodies, languages, cultures and religions (Kerner 2007). Another one could be cis-genderism, which in abstraction to trans*, describes people who were assigned a gender at birth (usually informed by certain bodily features) that corresponds with their gendered expressions throughout their life.

“Discourse analysis offers the opportunity to ask new and relevant questions by reexamining and listening to the diverse women’s voices to create a rich tapestry of women’s experiences. Feminist postmodern analysis opens the doors to a dialogue that values and counts all women’s experiences within their cultural and societal contexts” (Hesse-Biber 2014: 47).

What this quote makes implicitly clear for me is that the questioning of the category of ‘women’, which has been a feminist project since the early 90s (see e.g. Butler 1990 chapter 1. “Women” as the subject of feminism), seems to be not yet sufficiently included. If ‘gender’ is regarded, as Hesse-Biber states later, “as one of the most pervasive discourses across many cultures,” (Hesse-Biber 2014: 50) should FCDA than not critically question the categorizations that are informed and constructed within that discourse? Although explicitly including different power structures, especially race, Hesse-Biber’s “*Feminist Research Practice*” handbook widely fails to include the significant re-workings around the main feminist category ‘women’. Also Lazar’s collection, although including nine different pieces of research using FCDA, includes no article that significantly challenges or reworks the oppositional pairing of the gender dichotomy. Rather, the articles work critically within the male/female, hetero/homo-sexual dichotomy in order to expose the different power structures that are at work to hold them in place. I aim to challenge those oppositional pairings, when applying FCDA, in my own research by exploring the following issues: What kind of new outcome can the discussion have if we focus on the complexities within and beyond dichotomously arranged groups (like trans*/cis, male/female, included/excluded, we/they)? How would this possibly extend or add something to a dichotomous framework? Rather than assuming that the research investigates a monolithic group called (queer) feminists, the assumption is that a knot of contexts and within that fragmented identities and subjects are speaking through the writing which is analysed here. FCDA supports a reflection on structures of power that manifest themselves within and through language. Therefore it is necessary in my research as a framework and a methodology. However, working with FCDA for me involves inevitably questioning and reflecting on basic assumptions and how they manifest themselves in written language. This leads to an extended framework of FCDA which tries to include a cis critical and critical *white* perspective.

1.3.2. MATERIAL AND DATA

After summarizing and re-working the methodology of FCDA, this section explains how the data and material that have been extracted from two online discussions have come about. I will first present the material that is strongly linked to the (queer) feminist community in the German speaking context and its specificities. Secondly I will investigate my own ethics in the ways of accessing and extracting the material that has been the basis for this research and for the analysis. Despite the fact that both negotiations around topics of exclusion took place on the internet, there are significant differences between the two discussions. For example, one has been rather openly accessible while the other contains more sensitive information and was less accessible for ‘outsiders’. This is the reason why the third part of this section is invested in presenting a critical reflection on the differences and similarities between the two discussions under focus (also accounting their medium specific qualities). The material I choose for this analysis includes a discussion that happened in a BDSM online forum⁴⁶ and a discussion that happened on an e-mail list which connects (queer) feminist activists, other feminists, Gender Studies students, politically left-wing located queer⁴⁷ individuals and the queer community under the label ‘gender’. Additionally I connect this material with blog posts of critical political networks like autotrans* & w.i.r.⁴⁸, in order to provide a better view on the discussions at stake and their context within the broader (queer) feminist community. All the analyzed material is located in the German speaking sphere. The texts that have been written bilingually or have already been translated into English are, for practical reasons, quoted from their English source. Other texts that have been written in German are translated by me. This brings about certain difficulties, for example that the original text is not accessible to all readers. Yet for the German speaking reader I will provide the original quotes as footnotes in order to provide transparency in my translation. Additionally I created and worked with two numbered tables which together form the Appendix of this thesis. In this Appendix all the material from both discussions (made anonymous), which I had worked with is included. The *Appendices (see p117-164)*, which are added after the

⁴⁶ I analyze this forum discussion as the conference group in which it emerged is closely connected to the kink scene of a German city including women, lesbian, trans* and queer people as well as feminists. Nevertheless it might be important to note here that the conference is not regarded as (queer) feminist in itself. But as it uses the idea of safer spaces (the conference is open for women, lesbian, inter and trans* only) that has a feminist and partly queer theirstory, I chose to include the discussion as material in my analysis nevertheless.

⁴⁷ Queer is used here to describe any person that identifies in one of the following ways: lesbian, bi, gay, trans*, inter, asexual, queer.

⁴⁸ autotrans* & w.i.r. are a loose network for radical left trans* and gender non-conforming people, as they state on their blog: <http://trans.blogspot.de/> The network exists since 2009 and is located in Berlin.

Bibliography, are named *Appendix A Mailing list* (table in blue) and *Appendix B BDSM Forum* (table in purple). Appendix A consists of all the mails that have been sent over the mailing list regarding the discussion of anti- Romaism. They are numbered and named from Mail 1 to Mail 41 and are provided in chronological order. The information that has been included in the Appendix A are the pseudonym of the sender, the day of the discussion and the written content of the e-mail including the subject line. *Appendix B BDSM Forum* consists of the “Thread Opening Post” by the conference and the 63 responses that followed. Again every post is numbered and named, this time from Response 1 to Response 63 and provided in chronological order. The posts which were written by discussion participants that did not give their written consent for using their material have as well been provided with numbers and pseudonym in order to show where these writings are located chronologically. In this cases, instead of written content the Appendix simply provides the information “No consent to quote”, as this text has indeed nowhere been quoted directly. Obviously in both cases whenever discussion participants refer to each other in their writing the provided pseudonyms are used.

1.3.2.1. CONTEXT AND WAYS OF ACCESS TO THE MATERIAL

The so-called ‘gender’ list, is an open mailing list which is used for different purposes within the German speaking (queer) feminist scenes. Mainly it aims to connect people, be it through ‘traditional’ organizing for political events and actions or by organizing life in a more communal sense. Let me name a few things that this list is used for: Calls for political action (founding new groups, solidarity demonstrations), flat or flat mate searches, announcements of (queer)- or feminist and other political events, discussions of past events, requests for information on queer friendly hairdressers, gynecologists, sports clubs, etc. Anyone can subscribe to the list online. I assume that most subscribers come from the German speaking context as most correspondence is held in German language. On a short yet important note I want to mention here that the analyzed discussion around anti-Romaism was one among others around the bigger topic of racism. Often this critique on racist practices has been raised by People of Colour⁴⁹ and therefore by people who were directly affected by the issues themselves. The discussion that I use as material for this

⁴⁹ The Term People of Colour or the abbreviation PoC is a political self-determination of people who experience racism (Ha 2007: 14).

research is one that took place over a period of seven days in spring 2013. Over this brief time period, the discussion included forty e-mails and an estimated number of nineteen people that participated as individuals or groups of two. I had access to all the e-mails that were sent, by being a subscriber to the list, which I accessed through the lists archive. This archive stores all the e-mails that are sent over the list by its members. Time, sender and e-mail content (e.g. attached documents) are stored and available to all group members as well as to the two moderators that support the list. I decided that this particular discussion around ‘excluding terms’ was interesting data for my thesis, because people were proposing an ‘exclusion’ of the discussion from the list. The people interested in the discussion topic were convinced that the termination of the discussion or a displacement e.g. to another list would mean the exclusion of the very people for whom this discussion was important⁵⁰. In the other case, the discussion on the BDSM forum, an acquaintance from the community gave me the tip enthusiastically when I told her about my research topic. As I was already a website member, gaining access to the discussion around the exclusion of a trans* femininity from a trans*-open event was easy. As the discussion was still ongoing, I decided that it would be particularly interesting to have such a recent discussion (from spring 2014) and relate it to the one year older discussion from the mailing list (winter 2013).

1.3.2.2. RESEARCH ETHICS REGARDING THE MATERIAL

Regarding the ethics of the research all quoted material has been fully made anonymous. This includes names, places, e-mail addresses and any other indication that could lead to the identification of the person behind a forum post or an e-mail. The people of the mailing list were ascribed pseudonyms that account at least for their gendered positioning. This means that in cases of less gendered names, less gendered pseudonyms were provided. The discussion participants of the forum thread were ascribed fruit-names that have been combined with their gender identity as stated on their profile. I decided this rather unconventional way of choosing pseudonyms as this resembles the name-choices within the BDSM scene that often recurs to non-

⁵⁰ One of my co-researchers that is active in the German speaking (queer) feminist scene since a decade provided the information that discussions around “unpleasant” (by unpleasant I mean here unpleasant for the dominant and/or privileged groups) topics like trans* inclusion and PoC inclusion are often postponed to ‘later’ by stating that it is not the ‘right’ time or place to discuss these issues. It seems this strategy of displacing or postponing is a common strategy and an attempt to silence the speech about a problem, in this case soft exclusions.

human figures or other phantasy names. It is important to add here that no other information except the gender-identity has been used from the personal profiles of the BDSM community members in order to ensure a higher level of anonymity. Regarding the information that is revealed there, this as I explain later, seemed ethically most appropriate. The two contexts I am analyzing have one particular difference that is worth elaborating on. While the mailing list is public and anyone can subscribe, on the BDSM website one needs to have a profile and in the case of the discussion even be a member of a specific group in order to access the discussion thread. This difference made me decide to take two different approaches in terms of my research ethics. In the first case (the mailing list), I simply changed my 'reading-status' from a usual list-member to that of a researcher. I did not find it necessary to make this change visible to the list members, as the list is generally an accessible and open space. Nevertheless it was important for me to see, if there was an interest from the side of the most active person (I will later introduce her under the pseudonym Rabija) in having the discussion she initiated researched under my particular research questions. After a brief e-mail in which I informed her openly about my research questions she replied by making some suggestions regarding the research, with which I engaged critically. Otherwise I made the decision not to inform all participants in the discussion about me using their contribution as material for a master thesis as generally the outcome of the thesis is not meant to be for the discussion participants as individuals but for the community in a broader sense. The importance of the topic is evident as discussions on cultural appropriation and racism are still prevalent on this list as well as in (queer) feminist communities in general. Regarding the discussion in the forum of the BDSM website, the case of ethics was very different. As the discussions in the forum are only visible to people who a) have a profile on the website and b) are members of the group for the conference, it is a more private setting. The information that is accessible when being a member is also very sensitive as most people present themselves with their personalized profiles often with pictures of themselves as well as self-descriptions. Being a BDSM website, sensitive information such as different fetishes, the sexuality, relationship(s), gender-identity and preferences are directly visible for other members. Although being a member of the website myself, the setting of the forum made it definitely unethical to stay invisible and extract information without clearly stating my location and the purpose of using the discussion as research- material. Therefore I wrote personalized private messages, including my aim, my positioning as a community member and researcher and the

hope for community-supporting outcome. This was particularly useful as the website has its own rules for researchers which can be bypassed when achieving written consent individually. Even without those rules it would have been my preference to get personal and written consent as I attempt to *work together with* rather than *write about* the community. Reflecting critically on my ethical choices I want to say that the difference in the ways I approach the material ethically is due to the difference of the two forms in which the discussions took place. Nevertheless one could argue that the outcome for the community could have been different if I had extracted the material in the same manner. If I had to make the decisions again, I would decide similarly, yet involving the community of both discussions even more. I will elaborate on this some more in the next section.

1.3.2.3. MATERIAL AND COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

In the case of the BDSM conference, I would argue that the specification (sending private messages for consent with information about me and the research) led to the fact that most of my co-researchers showed interest in my research and particularly in its outcome. Next to the guarantee of anonymity, I offered them the possibility to send me additional information as well as to re-read my analysis in order to see how I worked with their material and what I deduced from it. This was part of the chosen method of Community Based Research (see below) as it re-connects the research with the community. It does that by giving some information gathered from the community back into the community in a new form. The hope is that we as community members give inspiration to each other that help us deal with the issues and problems that occur in our negotiations. Most members of the community gave their written permission that I can use the material from their posts in the forum discussion. All in all from twenty-two requests for consent sent, nineteen people responded. The three that did not provide any response are regarded as non-consent. From the other nineteen co-researchers three responded with a no, yet one of the three was at least interested in a discussion by voicing discontent about the negotiation. It might also be of importance that two of the people that responded with a no were dissatisfied with the discussion topic and how it was negotiated. Later one more person withdrew her consent after asking critical questions in terms of what quotes I used from her. Although I had quoted her directly, she felt that her opinion was not represented. Finally thirteen people responded consenting to me using their posts. Moreover thirteen were also interested in the

results of the thesis and showed an active willingness to engage more with the topic and the analysis that I am doing in this research. Some community members asked critical questions before giving their consent to use their posts. Especially the person who was excluded from the BDSM Conference seemed to need the knowledge about my own positioning towards her exclusion in order to consent. Generally the widely positive replies and encouragement from the community showed me that the members still find the discussion important. Some stated that it was a very emotional and important issue for them. I even had the opportunity to meet one person for a conversation on the topic. After she told me that she is engaging with the same topic (by giving workshops in the community and by writing articles) we met for a coffee. In this meeting we exchanged information about how each of us relates to exclusions in general and in the specific case in particular. Moreover we critically discussed the politics of invitation to (partly) closed events, which inspired the section on ‘safer spaces’ (see *chapter 3.2.1*). The above elaboration thus bridges to the method of Community Based Research that is described in the next section. The way of collaboration with the co-researchers is, as I showed, closely linked to the material at hand.

1.3.3. COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

The idea of doing community based research was crucial from the very start of this project. As stated earlier, the topic itself has indeed been encountered within discussions in the researcher’s own political communities. For example by friends that shared their experiences of feeling excluded or non-belonging, but as well by blog posts⁵¹ that made experiences of discrimination within the community a topic. Linking these experiences back to the elaboration earlier on experiences and Scott’s warning that experience cannot be taken for granted, I started aiming to investigate these experiences of exclusion more thoroughly. As the inspiration for the research came from the (queer) feminist community, this research project is embedded at the intersection of community based- and feminist research. This intersection has been explored and summarized elaborately in the chapter “Feminist Practice of Action and Community Research” by M. Brinton

⁵¹ See the above mentioned example of different critique of women of colour or this blog post that writes about exclusions by “classism”: <http://highoncliches.wordpress.com/2012/10/21/der-diskurs-liegt-mir-einfach-im-blut/> (2012).

Lykes and Alison Crosby that is also part of the book *Feminist Research Practice* (Hesse-Biber 2014). Lyke and Crosby summarize how such a research can look like:

“Community-based, participatory, and action researchers engage with members of (...) diverse communities in partnerships and collaborative projects focused on social issues and/or problems that emerge within such communities, particularly those marginalized from access to power, resources, and decision making. [...] develop solidarity through which co-researchers can (1) identify and document a social problem, issue, or concern; (2) encounter and document circuits of power within the community; (3) generate new understandings and interpretations of the sources of inequalities, oppression, or violation; and (4) identify and take steps toward self- and social transformations” (Lykes/ Crosby 2014: 150-151).

My own research project is collaborative in the sense that my role as a researcher is not equal with, but considerate of my co-researchers. I am well aware that in the end, it is me, the researcher who is collecting the data, choosing, as well as interpreting them. Yet voices from the (queer) feminist community were important throughout the whole research project. After choosing topics that were prevalent in the community for quite some time, as shown above, my concern was to re-investigate the ways that the topics, usually connected to social exclusions by discrimination (namely trans* hate and racism), have been negotiated. As the discussion got more and more bogged down and groups or communities started to split up rather than stay connected, the concern became to provide a critical intervention that would benefit the community. The goal was to thoroughly examine what is at stake in those negotiations and discussions and how the community creates understanding or where that understanding is actually missing. Coming back to Lykes and Crosby’s quote this research is concerned with the problem of social exclusions within already marginalized communities. Its particular interest lies in the analysis of solidarity within communities and attempts to bridge differences (be they in terms of experience or/ and opinion or/ and social location). In line with the second aim of community based research, the research shows how “circuits of power” are prevalent in the (queer) feminist communities under focus. This is often documented by members of the community themselves, yet as a researcher I collect the data and bring two different discussions together. This is done for example by raising questions about the relation of both discussions to dominant discourses and new imaginaries that are prevalent within the community. This can be seen as the third aim which according to Lykes and Crosby is to generate new understandings of oppression, violation and sources of inequalities (Lykes/ Crosby 2014: 150-151). Finally, this research also aims at finding possibilities for social transformation within the community itself.

This is done by first observing the strategies that community members are already using (see chapter 3.3. *Bridging two and more exclusions, ‘oppression translation’⁵² as a strategy*) in order to negotiate their differences, and secondly by envisioning – different ways of relating (see chapter 4). After this brief introduction of the theoretical background and the aims for this CBR I want to explain more in depth how this was done in a more practical manner. As presented in depth earlier, this thesis includes two community-based analyses from two different sources. One is a discussion that was happening on a mailing list in 2013 and the other one is a discussion from an online forum in 2014.

1.3.4. IS THIS SPACE OFFLINE YET? – RESEARCHING ONLINE

I have already said some things about how the online spaces that provided the material for this research are approached. This part of the chapter engages a bit more with questions around online and offline spaces and how they relate to each other. The medium specificity of my research material, written discussion in online spaces, has been interpreted in two different manners. On the one hand it is often suggested that the internet is a free sphere with a high level of participation. On the other hand, as different research – for example the ones brought together in the book: *cyberfeminism 2.0: Where Have All the Cyberfeminists Gone?* by Radhika Gajjala and Yeon Ju Oh – suggest, power structures that are prevalent in offline spheres shape and influence the online sphere too. I agree with their suggestion as the discussions under focus show that indeed both spaces are closely intertwined. The book of Gajjala and Oh is a collection of articles that give important insights and conclusions on online and offline spaces that are also important for this research. The authors deal with topics concerning empowerment, visibility, exclusions, economic forces, structures of power, self-expression, safe-spaces and silencing in the virtual sphere. Again mainly focusing on women⁵³, the questions asked by the book are phrased as follows:

“How do race, class, place, space, ethnicity, religion, and nationalism play into how women negotiate various techno-mediated environments online and offline? [...] to find the answers,

⁵² The term ‘oppression translation’ is ajar to the concept of ‘radikale Übersetzungsarbeit’ (radical work of translation) that has been developed by Eleonora Roldán Mendivil who is an activist and academic in the German speaking context.

⁵³ See as well my critique on the mere concentration on women’s issues in chapter 1.3.1 *FCDA*.

the authors in this collection delve into the way in which digital technologies play out while interweaving the themes of female body politics, affective/reproductive labor, feminist geography, subjectivity formation, and social/cultural divide” (Gajjala/ Oh 2012: 2).

In addition to the key statement of the quote, that blogs and virtual spheres are not separable from the physical world (see also Angelone 2012: 82), there are two other key questions which span different articles in the collection. First the role of economy and “dominant culture” in cyberspaces, and second the role of (cyber-) feminism and how it is negotiated offline and online in a parallel move. This inseparability of online and offline spheres has been confirmed during this research project several times, for example: when an e-mail of the organizers of a BDSM conference excludes a person from the offline conference, and when this very exclusion is made explicit in a blog post and is discussed between potential and actual participants; or when the discussion on the ‘gender’ list reproduces racism by particular language and some People of Colour do not feel safe anymore in the offline community that is linked to that online sphere. Jessie Daniels’ chapter “BlogHer and Blogalicious: Gender, Race, and the Political Economy of Women’s Blogging Conferences” provides an elaboration that explains the role of economic influences within the blogosphere. This chapter offers a profound analysis of how institutionalized racism and economic powers shape possibilities for women of colour in online blogs. Moreover she looks at the ways in which meanings of gender and hegemonic discourses of gender are reinforced yet at the same time, deconstructed and shifted within online spaces like blogs (Gajjala/ Oh 2012: 4). She concludes that powers like economy and ‘dominant culture’ produce inclusions and exclusions off- and online. Daniels thus illustrates “the way in which the digital and the material overlap” (Daniels 2012: 52). Although she argues that online spaces can have emancipatory power for women bloggers, she stresses patriarchy, racism and other institutional powers do shape the web as much as the physical space. Rather than seeing cyberspace merely as an emancipatory arena, the book narrows the boundary between online and offline territory, while at the same time pointing to the limits of online spaces. Especially Oh asks the critical and border-pushing question: Where does offline start and online begin? (Oh 2012: 246-247) Keeping this question in mind I want to examine in this research what spaces of negotiations, coping strategies and opportunities the (queer) feminist community is creating on- and offline. Again I aim to extend the investigation beyond women’s experiences. Rather I want to see how differently located subjects negotiate their inclusions and exclusions online and offline. The interlocking understanding of on- and offline spheres and the focus on particular

interrelating knots of categories of representation is important for this research. Through some of the chapters in that book, I was able to understand the productiveness of this focus for my own research. The importance of online spaces for political communities like the (queer) feminist one, cannot be stressed enough. The scene is organized strongly through the internet and its different possibilities. It is unthinkable to have any offline political group or action that is not in one way or another connected to online spaces. In my experience, questions about creating blogs, mailing lists, Facebook groups and even online forums are at the beginning of most political self-organization around topics of (queer) feminism. These online spaces are used as tools in a wide field ranging from documentation, advertisement, organizing, ally building, discussions, network building, and critique to simple announcements. Summarizing, it can be said that online spaces are a crucial part of the political and organisational strategies of the community under focus. Regarding this importance of online spaces, online discussions are a good means for me to approach the activist realm. Next to being a crucial tool for maintaining and creating (queer) feminist offline spaces, to do research with the online sphere is a way to trace the on-going discussions as most of them are accessibly documented there. As I investigate usages of language and terms, an online discussion is a handy collection of material, especially as I assume that people that write an e-mail in a huge mailing list, or people who post in a forum are carefully choosing their words. This provides the chance to follow the arguments made in detail and to investigate the language used, writing style as well as the blanks⁵⁴.

1.4. CONCLUSION

In the first part of this chapter, *Language of power – the power of language*, a short history of the discussions around language and the role of language in relation to subject formation, representation and politics was introduced. I presented how this thesis is embedded within the so called ‘cultural turn’. Yet as well I could show how certain practices (e.g. the usage of discriminating or dismissing terms) lead to material consequences, for example to historical

⁵⁴ These blanks, as Spivak argues in her text from 1988 “Can the Subaltern Speak?” can stand for something that has been left out yet is significant within the knowledge production⁵⁴. In addition to this. Spivak states that the subject position of the Western intellectual and his knowledge is a ‘transparent’ one. She criticizes how this knowledge occurs to be ‘ideology-free’. Using her own words Spivak writes, “ (...) the intellectuals, who are neither of these S/subjects, become transparent in the relay race, for they merely report on the nonrepresented subject and analyze (without analyzing) the workings of (the unnamed Subject irreducibly presupposed by) power and desire. She concludes than, that ‘transparency’ which is produced marks a place of interest (Spivak 1988: 74-75).

exclusion and marginalization. Focusing on discussions around ‘racist’ terms that have been taking place in the German speaking area for several years, three different standpoints regarding the power of language have been presented. These discussions introduced us (the reader and the researchers) to a question that is, implicitly or explicitly, present throughout this thesis: How much power does language have? Without aiming at finding a final answer to this question I hope that the presented contextualization of my thesis within a well-known discussion (linked for example the discussion around the practice of blackfacing⁵⁵ and ‘racist’ terms in German children’s books⁵⁶) helps the reader to understand its connection to these present debates in mainstream media as well as in political communities and in the academic field (e.g. Critical Race Studies and Postcolonial Studies). In the second part of this first chapter I engaged closely with different important key concepts. After introducing the concepts of ‘gender’, ‘sex’ and ‘sexualities’ briefly on the basis of Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) the chapter explored how discontinuities between the three are creating troubles for individuals that are negotiating their identity in a cultural framework that is strictly binary. This clarification is particularly important for the analysis part, as these discontinuities often lead to the exclusion of certain identities or bodies from (queer) feminist spaces. Furthermore, this linked already partially to chapter 2 in which different forms of trans* hate are presented. As the thesis investigates questions of sexualized, racialized and gendered identities and their negotiations in the (queer) feminist community, ‘experience’ and ‘identity’ are two concepts that needed to be explained. These concepts have been critically discussed as the understanding of those concepts is a crucial issue throughout the thesis. The last concept that I defined was ‘community’, I gave a brief definition and provided an interrogation to find what the possible meanings of community are for marginalized groups and what role a community plays within political and social negotiations of exclusions. The third part of the chapter presented the methodology as well as the methods and approaches that are used in order to approach the afore-mentioned questions. For example: Does language play a role in social exclusions and if so how? In section *1.3.1. Feminist Critical Discourse Analyses*, I was shedding a critical light on the assumptions that often underlie

⁵⁵ A summary of what sparked the debate can be found online here: <http://www.exberliner.com/culture/stage/does-german-theatre-have-a-race-problem/> Moreover an article which investigates the strategies that have been used by *white* journalists in mainstream-media as reactions towards the critique is available online under: <http://www.textures-platform.com/?p=3142>, it has recently been published by Julia Lemmle (May 2014).

⁵⁶ A good summary of the debate that took place between 2012- 2013 was written by Sally McGrane. It is available online: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2013/01/a-fight-in-germany-over-racist-language.html>

feminist research that use this methodology. As questions of language and power are at the very basis of this thesis, I chose written discussions as the starting point for this community based research, as they allow for a close- reading under a FCDA that brings the power structures language contains into focus. I interpret the written material—consisting of e-mails and forum posts on the basis of a critically reworked FCDA. In chapter *1.3.2 Material and Data* I showed how the chosen material is analysed and how choices regarding data gathering were made. Additionally I showed how I will combine FCDA with a Community Based Research approach. An extensive elaboration of this way of researching has been presented in chapter *1.3.3. Community Based Research*. There I explained how community based research supports and makes feasible the close connection between the researcher and the political movement under focus. This last part of the chapter ended with a short section on the intertwined relation of on- and offline spaces. Moreover I explored the role of online spaces for the queer-feminist community. Now I will proceed with a contextualization of both discussions by providing some background information that is needed for the used methodology of FCDA.

2. ACTIVISM AGAINST SPECIFIC FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE GERMAN SPEAKING CONTEXT

This chapter summarizes the prevalent forms of discrimination against Roma and trans* people in the German speaking context. Moreover it shows how different forms of activism try to tackle the problem of, in particular, multiple forms of discrimination and which kind of strategies activists use to address issues, like marginalization, that are at stake. The background information this chapter provides is historical as well as current socio-political. This is an important basis for the applied methodology of a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. The first part of the chapter introduces anti-Romaism and Roma Activism in the German speaking context. After presenting the status quo of the prevalent forms of marginalization for Roma in the EU and the German speaking context in particular I provide a critical analysis of this status quo by referring to different activists and artists, this is followed by an elaboration on ‘the politics of naming’ which is one of the discussion topics in the anti-Romaism case study. The second part of the chapter engages with Trans* hate and trans* activism in the German speaking context. After an extended elaboration of used terms and definitions chapter 2.2 gathers data on trans*

hate and provides specific background information on the specific situation of trans* femininities. This section is followed by presenting different kinds of trans* activism that formed as a reaction to trans* hate and how activists focus on intersections of marginalization. Finally, in the third and last section of this chapter, I present and explore what bridges these two forms of marginalization.

2.1. ANTI-ROMAISM AND ROMA⁵⁷ ACTIVISM

In this brief chapter some of the terms that are used throughout the thesis, and particularly during the analysis in chapter 3.1 are explained. Moreover I will present the historical context in which the discussion around anti-Romaism is embedded. My first intention was to start this chapter, like the chapter on trans* hate and trans* activism—that follows, with the explanation of terms used. However, as I encountered certain barriers I had to change this strategy and start with Anti-Romaism activists and their activism. Let me explain why I made this decision. Activism against Anti-Romaism exists in the German speaking context in differing forms and is, as we can assume by such a complex population as Roma, far from univocal. What unites Roma activists is the historical and current structural and socio-political discrimination they and their communities face. This includes marginalization and lack of representation, misrepresentation, stigmatization, harassment and violence⁵⁸. What divides them are differing approaches, forms of critique and their aims. As this research is embedded within the political framework of (queer) feminist scenes, I aim to rely on critical Roma and particularly on critical Romnja⁵⁹ voices. This means that I do not include organizations that engage in more mainstream based discourses that favour assimilation and integration⁶⁰ over self-determination, empowerment and radical⁶¹ politics.

⁵⁷ In the German speaking context the double naming of Sinti and Roma is often used. According to EDEWA (introduced later) Sinti are included when the self-designation Roma is used.

⁵⁸ For further details see for example the European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: *Data in Focus Report 6: Minorities as Victims of Crime* (2012) and the *Data in Focus report 5: Multiple Discrimination* (2010). For the situation on the job market Elisabeth Gneisz' work provides a good summary (2010).

⁵⁹ As explained later, Romnja is the female plural of the word Roma.

⁶⁰ A critique on the perspective from which e.g. EU financed projects, here "Romanistan", work can be found here: <http://derparia.wordpress.com/2013/06/05/final-report-romanistan-by-teodora-tabacki/>.

⁶¹ With radical I refer again to the activist spectrum which includes analysis and critique that tries to tackle a problem at its roots. This strategy is contrary to other strategies towards e.g. social inclusion which focus on assimilation and integration into the mainstream society in which the marginalized group is forced to live up to the expectations of the dominant majority. See also the interview with Ljubomir Bratic: "ROMA in Europe - Taking a Look at the "Roma Strategy 2020" from ROMANISTAN" (EU-Infothek 2012).

Moreover, as shown also later during the analysis of the anti-Romaism discussion, I decided not to engage too closely with the research body of so-called antiziganism research. This is due to the critique from Romnja activists on how this kind of research is dominated by *white* researchers and often complicit in silencing the self-determination and voices of Romnja⁶². This finally changes the order of this chapter, as I will first introduce the activism and after that proceed on the basis of the critical thoughts and analysis from different activists (including Critical Race theorists) and artists towards the usage of terms which I discuss under the sub-title: *The Politics of Naming*.

2.1.1. ROMNJA⁶³ ACTIVISM - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS QUO

EDEWA - “Purchasing Cooperative of Anti-racist Resistance⁶⁴”, is “a touring exhibition group initiated in Berlin in 2011” (2013). The main focus of the artists’ and activists’ work is an exhibition “which consists of a redesigned supermarket which connects history, resistance and interaction as elementary products of knowledge, so that these become objects of critical discussion” (Demirova 2013b). EDEWA functions as a critical voice that speaks up against anti-Romaism (for example in the form of fighting for the renaming of certain products⁶⁵) and is a collective that empowers by aligning activists and artists that are engaged in the struggle against differing forms of racist oppression. I will present two outstanding women and their way of tackling anti-Romaism in their art and activism who are members of EDEWA. Filiz Demirova is co-founder and author of “Der PARIA”, an online newspaper that she runs with Georgel Caldararu, another Roma activist and author who lives in Berlin. These two, together with Marika Schmiedt, who is based in Vienna, form the so-called Roma Combinat which aligns art with other political activism. While Demirova is the critical voice of the collective (in spoken and written form), Marika Schmiedt engages as a visual artist with the topic of anti-Romaism.

⁶² For a thorough analysis of the historical misrepresentation of Roma in research and mainstream media alike, see also the article “»Auf vielen Hochzeiten spielen«: Strategien und Orte widerständiger Geschichte(n) und Gegenwart(en) in Roma Communities” by Isidora Randjelovic. Or the report on the panel with the title: “Who speaks in Antiziganism research?” (Demirova 2013a).

⁶³ In order to gain more visibility for the little known feminine plural form Romnja (as explained later), I use it as the generic feminine at times.

⁶⁴ die Einkaufsgenossenschaft antirassistischen Widerstands

⁶⁵ See also the provoking and racism / anti-Romaism exposing art of the activist and artist Marika Schmiedt: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/79824083@N02/7895897846/in/set-72157629609007042/>.

Her Artist Statement gives a thorough insight into the motivation and aspiration she tries to combine in her art:

“As Amnesty International continually reports, the Roma people are located in-between borders, in bureaucratic, social, and political no-man’s lands, where they are persecuted, often homeless and without education or political protection. My project aims to expose the racist undercurrents that perpetuate this situation, and continue to create divisions between non-Roma and Roma. Because most Roma have no access to any platforms of representation, my work as a[n] artist offers an important and largely unheard voice regarding the question of what it means to live in the EU today. By mirroring these widespread but generally unacknowledged forms of racism, and also highlighting the marginalized history of the persecution of Roma, I want to create possibilities for constructive dialogues about improving the situation for Roma in Europe today“ (Schmiedt 2013).

Schmiedt’s quote summarizes the problem of the specific racism and the complex marginalization that Roma activists try to analyse, expose and fight against in a thorough manner. I will present more on the situation that the quote refers to later. What interests me more here is that she as an artist is invested in “creating possibilities for constructive dialogues” and what kind of hints this can give me as a researcher. In view of the rather scarce resources and the low visibility of radical Roma activism, I conclude that activism that engages with the specificity of the situation of Roma in Europe is not yet an established force within e.g. radical left- wing and (queer) feminist politics. Rather Schmiedt’s artist statement gives the impression that activists, artists and different Roma communities seem to be busy in negotiating and finding a collective on the basis of their shared discrimination experience. Moreover Schmiedt wants to create a platform of representation and make unheard voices that speak about the situation of Roma living in the EU perceivable. I hope this rather short elaboration on radical Roma activism in the German speaking context provides the reader with an impression where this form of activism stands at this moment in time and that this brief yet incomplete insight can help to contextualize my first case study, the anti-Romaism discussion that evolved on a feminist mailing-list in spring 2013. Now I will engage more thoroughly with what I call the politics of ‘naming’ that is another important struggle that seems to be prevalent within and beyond Roma activism and evolves specifically in regard to so called anti-Ziganism research and its dubious naming.

2.1.2. THE POLITICS OF ‘NAMING’

In this part of the chapter I engage critically with the terms often used in mainstream and less mainstream analysis of anti-Romaism. I aim to introduce briefly how ‘naming’ of such a diverse population such as the Roma, is a form of politics that can either empower or marginalize. Moreover I want to shed light on the unheard⁶⁶ herstories of Romnja’s in Europe and within the German speaking context in particular. Let me start with the terms that are used in the heading of this chapter, ‘Roma’ and ‘anti-Romaism’. The term Roma is a self-designation that was adopted by the participants of the World-Romani-Congress in 1971 which took place in London. The term Roma is the masculine plural while the term Rom (masculine) or Romni (feminine) is used in the grammatical singular (EDEWA 2013). Romnja is the feminine plural, which as you will see later, is often used in the present discussion, for example in chapter 3.1.1. When used, the term Romnja is a political self-designation. It is very important for me to present the grammatical implications around the terms as it becomes very clear (e.g. when following the news) that the popular discourse exclusively uses the term Roma which is the masculine plural including women, while the other forms are rarely visible, probably because they are barely used by the wider public. I would argue that the fact that only one term entered the public discourse already speaks volumes about the marginalization the group of Roma faces. It also seems evident that Romnja, as women, are marginalized in particular. Moreover scholars have critically noted that the term Roma is supposed to be an umbrella term, yet in fact “there is no umbrella term that is used as a self-identification and accepted by all groups that are summarized under the term Roma” (Baumgartner/Freund 2004: 280 in Gneisz 2010: 14). Based on EDEWA’s elaboration that the term Roma was supposed to bring heterogeneous Roma communities –including their languages and cultures- together, due to the fact that they are facing similar forms of discrimination in the German speaking context, –I will stick with this term in the framework of this thesis, yet as a feminist intervention use the feminine plural. I proceed with a highly contested term that is not for debate here directly but is nevertheless relevant for the discussion, the so called Zi-word⁶⁷. I find it important to draw attention to the usage of the word before, and

⁶⁶ As Spivak suggests in the conclusion of her famous essay “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1988), the marginalized are speaking yet they are unheard or even silenced by the ones (standing as well for the discourses) in power.

⁶⁷ I use the term Zi.- word in order to avoid writing the racist term ‚Zigeuner‘ out again, as I am convinced that it represents historical and present-day violence against e.g. Roma, which does not need to be reproduced here. Moreover, after explaining the problem with the word, I will stop using it all together. More thorough explorations of the usage of the Zi.-word, which is a specificity of the German speaking context, can be found here: <http://ecoleusti.wordpress.com/2013/07/15/z-wort-stereotypen/> A more academic critique of the word and its

especially during National Socialism (NS). Rather than being a neutral description of a population living in Europe the term was used to stigmatize, prosecute and during the NS period finally murder the Sinti and Romnja population⁶⁸. Moreover it is still used today in order to ridicule, stigmatize and violate people that are seen as belonging to the Romnja population. Accordingly it is not difficult to see that the Zi.-word in itself is a term that is perceived as violent and dismissive by the Romnja population. This background information is of particular importance for the discussion which will be analyzed later, as the debate was sparked by the usage of the word ‘Ziganism’, or more explicitly ‘Anti-Ziganism’, which quite clearly resembles the Zi.-word as it shares the same word-stem. As outlined more thoroughly during the analysis of the anti-Romaism discussion, this term and its usage, even in ‘critical’ research that aims at exposing anti-Romaism, is highly contested. Especially politically active Romnja and People of Colour in the German speaking context work towards the abolition of the usage of discriminating terms. In this case the contestation of the term is due to its historical linkage to the Zi.-word which provides a high resemblance. Stereotypes and stigmatization of Romnja and their genocide during the NS period are strongly associable with the Zi.-word. It has to be said that the discussion of whether it is appropriate to use the term ‘Anti-Ziganism’ or if people, and especially critical scholars, should rather use the term anti-Romaism, is a rather recent one. In line with critical Romnja activists and Critical Race scholars like Susan Arndt (see footnote 67 above), who are active participants in the German speaking debate, I support the claims that the similarity of the highly problematic Zi.-word and the term “-ziganism” is reason enough to conclude that it is better to *avoid using both*, rather than possibly repeating the violence that this word(s) evoke(s) and therefore reproduce(s) (see as well the discussion about the power of language back in chapter 1.1). I will therefore use the term anti-Romaism. This conclusion brings us from this brief discussion of terminology to the experiences of this particular form of racism which I want to discuss in the following section.

2.1.3. SITUATION OF ROMNJA IN THE GERMAN SPEAKING CONTEXT

reproduction in the term “Antiziganism” can, for example, be found in Susan Arndt’s book *Die 101 wichtigsten Fragen – Rassismus* (2012).

⁶⁸ The genocide is called Porrajmos (devouring) or Baro Porrajmos (great devouring) see also “On the interpretation of a word: Porrajmos as Holocaust” by Ian Hancock (2006).

‘Anti-Romaism’ is a form of racism that is directed towards all the marginalized groups, subsumable as Romnja, that are living in Europe. I write terms of self-determination with a capital letter to foster awareness for these new terms, which as stated above, emerged recently out of critical Romnja activist circles. It remains to be seen if these critical voices succeed in promoting general usage of the term which evokes and reproduces less violence, said term consciously not making use of the foreign appellation “-ziganism”,– which I argue, in itself a form of anti-Romaism.

In a recently published report about the discrimination of Sinti and Roma Germanys Office against Discrimination⁶⁹ stated that:

“Racism against Sinti and Roma is wide-spread in Germany. The majority of the population associates negative clichés with Roma. This leads to severe discrimination in every walk of life, for example, in education, in the job market, in the housing market and when in contact with public authorities” (ADS: 2012).

Moreover EU surveys reveal that Roma experience the largest amount of discrimination at work. 19% of those polled stated that they have been discriminated against at least once in the last twelve months by their colleagues or their employer (ADS 2012: 247). Romnja have been historically criminalized and were subjected to racist and social persecution as well as murder in Austria and Germany. Finally, during NS this stigmatization culminated in the genocide which Romnja call ‘Porrajmos’ (see footnote 68). Today Romnja are confronted with the rise of Neo-fascism and attacks on their communities, with cheap media propaganda and daily racism, as well as sexist and racist exploitation. Despite the problem of the non-affected locatedness of the researcher and the usage of the “Zi-term” and in regard to the lack of other as comprehensive publications, I suggest the report: *Antiziganismus: Zum Stand der Forschung und der Gegenstrategien*, which was written by Markus End (2012), for further reading. It provides a very detailed summary including statistical data on different forms of discrimination and marginalization and engages with the different levels on which the forms of discrimination occur. For a historical account of the hardships Romnja faced in European history see also: “Romani History in Germany and Neighboring Lands: A Chronology to The Holocaust and Beyond” (Hancock 2007).

⁶⁹ Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes.

2.2. TRANS* HATE⁷⁰ AND TRANS* ACTIVISM

This chapter gives a short account of the situation of trans* people in the German speaking context. Firstly, I will introduce the terms I work with and how/why I use them. On the basis of reports and studies, I argue that trans* hate is expressed in various forms of micro-aggression, structural discrimination and violence. This part of the thesis aims to continue the project of creating knowledge and suggestions on how to work more successfully against trans* hate occurring in the communities that are part of this research. After giving an overview of the current problems and challenges faced by individuals that experience forms of trans* hate, I will then show how trans* activists tackle those problems and what are the current issues on their agenda, especially regarding their own communities. Secondly I will show how issues and aims of trans* organizations are concerned with multiple forms of oppression. This is why primarily the work of organizations that work consciously and critically on their own awareness and inclusiveness regarding more than just one identity-fragment is presented. This links directly to the place of intervention of this thesis, which is at the place of differences within communities.

2.2.1. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Definitions of terms are also a highly contested field in trans* activism and in trans* scholarship. Critique of terms and their historical context in a trans* hateful culture are a major topic within radical trans* activism and mark one field of struggle. I explained this more in depth later, for example, by providing a critique of the term ‘transsexual’. This links back to the power of language and certain terms that are concrete reminders of structures of oppression, which has been presented in chapter *1.1*. Accordingly this chapter starts with an exploration of terms that are used or criticized later during the analysis. I will start with the explanation of the term trans* hate. For my thesis, as explained earlier, I prefer the term trans* hate or, translated into German, trans* Feindlichkeit, rather than transphobia. The decision for this is informed by discussions within the community⁷¹ and my own understanding of –phobia as naturalizing a socially

⁷⁰ See the thorough definition on the following page.

⁷¹ Just recently the admins of the German Guerilla Feminism Facebook page, decided to use the term “trans* antagonism” (Guerilla Feminism –Deutschland 2014). After that a discussion between the users revealed the classism that is implied when using a foreign word. I therefore think that the term –feindlichkeit or -hate is most appropriate especially because it relates to so called hate-speech.

constructed 'hate' as a 'normal' reaction to one's fear. In this understanding the reaction to one's feelings of fear seems less changeable and mouldable; and, at the same time it takes away the 'co-response-ability'⁷² towards each other. Although the EN report uses the term transphobia, I will cite how they define trans* hate:

“[...] transphobia and interphobia [...] consist of cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/or hatred of trans and intersex people or against variations of sex, gender identity and gender expression. Institutional transphobia and interphobia manifest themselves through legal sanctions and the legal entrenchment of the binary gender system; pathologisation of trans identities and intersex bodies and inexistent/inadequate mechanisms to counter violence and discrimination. Social transphobia and interphobia manifest themselves in the forms of physical and other forms of violence, hate speech, discrimination, threats, marginalisation, social exclusion, exoticisation, ridicule and insults (EN 2011: 13)” .

What is of importance to this research in this definition is the plural group of people against which this kind of hate is directed. Moreover I agree with the EN that trans* hate is a hate that manifests itself on different levels of European societies. They name the legal sphere, the absence of mechanisms which counter violence and discrimination, as well as the social phenomena that are reinforced by individuals or groups. This research is mainly concerned with the latter. Now I want to engage with the terms 'gender expression' and 'gender identity', as they are often used in order to describe and distinguish between other terms. 'Gender expression' refers to people's manifestation of their gender identity, and often to the gender that they are perceived as by others. "Typically, people seek to make their gender expression or presentation match their gender identity/identities, irrespective of the sex that they were assigned at birth" (EN 2011: 13). 'Gender identity' is therefore the self-identification with a form of genderedness or un-genderedness made by an individual. It refers to an inherent feeling of self. It is important to stress here that gender identity and gender representation might not match each other. This often holds true for people who have experienced or are scared of experiencing discrimination based on their gender presentation if they were to match their presentation with their gender identity by e.g. clothing, style or body modification. A further elaboration on this can be found later in this chapter when forms of discrimination are discussed more. One of the most criticized terms in trans* activism is the term "transsexual". This is because of its history and usage as

⁷² Co-response-ability means the ability to respond with and to each other and recurs on Ettinger's idea of the impossibility of non-sharing. Co-response-ability is a "responsible respect of the other and of the Cosmos" (Ettinger 2009: 10).

pathologizing in terms of being deemed psychologically abnormal. According to Sandy Stone⁷³, the term “transsexual” is of very recent origin (Stone 2006: 222). She states that it was necessary to construct this category in the 1960s, when the first academic gender dysphoria clinics were established on an experimental level. According to Stone the category “transsexual⁷⁴” was established „along customary and traditional lines“ in order to have „plausible criteria for acceptance into a clinic.“ (Stone 2006: 227) In this way one of the most dominant discourse patterns, namely being in the “wrong body“ was generated. This misleading term, which assumes “right“ and “wrong“ bodies is rejected by many trans* scholars. One of them, Dean Spade, states that the idea of “right” and “wrong” bodies, along the lines of a binary gender understanding: “[...] produces a naturalized, innate gender difference outside power, a fictional binary“, which supposedly does not privilege one term, female or male, over the other (Spade 2006: 331). Yet as Spade rightly suggests the different realities of trans* women and trans* femininities compared to the lived experiences of trans* men and trans* masculinities tell another story. In a society in which femininity is devalued, trans* feminine people experience so called ‘transmisogyny’. According to Julia Serano this is “the way cissexism⁷⁵ and misogyny⁷⁶ intersect” (Serano 2013: 45-46). Serano, who is a US-American artist, activist and feminist summarizes:

“Trans-misogyny is driven by the fact that in our culture, feminine appearances are more blatantly and routinely judged by society than masculine ones. It is also driven by the fact that connotations such as “artificial,” “contrived,” and “frivolous” are practically built into our cultural understanding of femininity—these same connotations allow masculinity to invariably come off as “natural,” “sincere,” and “practical” in comparison” (Serano 2013: 52).

Thus transmisogyny is at the intersection of two forms of discrimination, one being trans* hate and the other being the devaluation of femininities. This form of discrimination is faced by

⁷³ Allucquère Rosanne "Sandy" Stone is an US- American based artist, performer, computer programmer, recording engineer, filmmaker and theoretician. She is considered a founder of the academic discipline of Transgender Studies.

⁷⁴ Despite the critique of the ‚traditional‘ usage of the term „transsexual“, there are also more open definitions like the one used by the EN: “Transsexual people identify with the gender role opposite to the sex assigned to them at birth and seek to live permanently in the preferred gender role. This is often accompanied by strong rejection of their physical primary and secondary sex characteristics and a wish to align their body with their preferred gender. Transsexual people might intend to undergo, be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment treatment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery). [...] Men and women with a transsexual past fully identify with their acquired gender and seek to be recognised in it without any references to their previous sex and/or the transition process that they undertook to align their sex with their gender. Transgender people live permanently in their preferred gender. Unlike transsexuals, however, they may not necessarily wish to or need to undergo any medical interventions” (EN 2011: 12).

⁷⁵ Cissexism embraces “forms of sexism that construe trans people’s gender identities and expressions as less legitimate than those of cis people (those who are not trans)” (Serano 2013: 45).

⁷⁶ Hate against women and girls.

people who are ascribed to be gender non-conforming—which as I explained earlier is often due to discontinuities between gender, sex and sexuality—and in one way or another feminine presenting (or read as such). It is important for me to stress here that this discrimination is, as most forms of discrimination, based on attributions that may or may not be true to the person affected. Therefore this form of trans* hate is faced by people who may identify as gay-men, trans* women, drag queens, feminine presenting men, cross dressers etc. Although Serano speaks from a US-based context, I argue that this is applicable to the German speaking context and to (queer) feminist communities therein. In order to try and break open the above described static notions of “transsexual”, I will use the umbrella term ‘trans*’, in which the asterix stands for a plural and open understanding of the term. As such the term is able to subsume more identities and experiences, their common struggles and experiences as well as their differences. The report of the EN proves to be a reliable source for the definition of those groups that can be subsumed under the term trans*. According to them (EN):

“The term trans includes those people who have a gender identity and/or a gender expression that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Indeed the term trans is an umbrella term that includes, but is not limited to, men and women with transsexual pasts and people who identify as transsexual, transgender, transvestite/crossdressing, androgyne, polygender, genderqueer, agender, gender variant or with any other gender identity and gender expression which is not standard male or female, and who express their gender through their choice of clothes, presentation or body modifications, including the undergoing of multiple surgical procedures” (EN 2011: 12).

I like this definition as it uses the expression ‘sex assigned at birth’, which is useful to explain the gendered assignment that does not stem from the individuals self-identification. Moreover they specify that trans* describes a spectrum that exceeds the traditional assumptions of binary sex and, linked to that, a binary understanding of gender. Although I am well aware that genderedness has multiplied over the last couple of years, I decided not to focus on some particular identity-groups in this thesis. Issues concerning transvestites, cross dressers⁷⁷ or the specific issues inter⁷⁸ people face, for example, are not explicitly referred to and therefore left

⁷⁷ Transvestite/Cross dressing people enjoy wearing the clothing of another gender for certain periods of time (EN 2011: 12), usually the clothing that is associated with the sex opposite to the sex they were assigned at birth.

⁷⁸ “Intersex people differ from trans people as their status is not gender related but instead relates to their biological makeup (genetic, hormonal and physical features) which is neither exclusively male nor exclusively female, but is typical of both at once or not clearly defined as either” (EN 2011: 12). Intersex people are not explicitly considered in this research as they often face particular issues. However whenever inter people face marginalization as trans* (e.g. if they are read as gender non-conforming) their issues are at least partly included within this thesis framework.

aside. However, under my broad definition of trans*, androgyne, polygender, agender⁷⁹ and genderqueer, gender variant⁸⁰ people and their struggles are definitely considered. To include these identities is important, because some participants in the discussions identify themselves as such. Moreover, as I will show in my analysis in chapter 3.2, the negotiations often evolve around these new identities and their needs. Now I want to move from the definitions of terms used towards experiences of discrimination and exclusions of trans* people. I will proceed to describe the violence and discrimination many people who are subsumable under one or more of the above defined terms experience within European societies. I will focus specifically on the German speaking context.

2.2.2. DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF TRANS* HATE

To exemplify and summarize the discrimination and violence against trans* people in Europe and specifically in the German speaking context I refer to different studies and sources (EN 2011; TvT 2012; ILGA 2006). The publications quoted here appeared between 2006 and 2012. This means that they are able to show continuities over a timespan of six years. However, newer data are added whenever updates and new figures were accessible. I will first introduce the focus of the three different publications and explain their strengths. The study *Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression* that was published 2011 by the EN includes, for example, concrete suggestions for the EU member states. It is a complex and differentiated engagement with the living realities of trans* and inter people with regard to discrimination. The project Transrespect versus Transphobia (TvT) is a worldwide project that includes the Trans Murder Monitoring. Its work focuses on trans* and gender variant people. The strength of the TvT murder reports is, that it concentrates on showing intersections of marginalization. The studies or projects mentioned combine qualitative and quantitative data in order to explain and show the complexity of discrimination against trans* people in depth. Another study with the title *Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender*

⁷⁹ Agender people do not have a gender identity and refuse to be classified as male or female or in any other way (EN 2011: 12). Yet in a world that distinguishes so thoroughly between women and men, I suppose this does not impact the gendered reading and forceful classification as one or the other by members of society.

⁸⁰ Gender variant refers to anyone whose gender varies from normative gender identity and the roles of the gender assigned at birth (EN 2011: 12). Gender variant seems to overlap with gender queer. The term stresses the idea that gender is a spectrum rather than two separate categories that are mutually exclusive.

(LGBT) people in Europe is from 2006 and was published by ILGA-Europe (The International Lesbian and Gay Association) and IGLYO (the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organisation). The paper focuses not just on the social exclusions of LGBT youth but also on their effects and impacts on the individuals afterwards. The strengths of this study are the multiple direct quotes of what the participants said, which exemplify their own experience and yet also show the common grounds of discrimination.

I will now elaborate on the different reports in more depth, starting with the TvT and its monitoring of trans* hate motivated killings. From January 2008 to October 2013, 84 killings of trans* people have been reported in Europe. This includes cases in 12 different countries. Generally speaking the estimated number of killings motivated by trans*hate is usually higher than the cases that are actually documented. Concerning the German cases, TvT states:

“For Germany, the TvT research team found two reports of killings of gender-variant/trans people in 2008. These murders serve as examples of transphobic killings, the failure of state institutions to take proper measures due to societal Transphobia, and intersections of discrimination” (TvT 2012: 57).

Trans* people who become victims are often engaged in sex work, are migrants and located on the trans* feminine spectrum. This can again be related back to transmisogyny, the intersection of hate which targets trans* femininities in particular. The quote stresses the responsibility of state institutions in individual cases of murders motivated by trans* hate, the underlying assumption being that the state has a high responsibility in decreasing trans* hate within societies. Moreover, the TvT states critically that “the court cases were reported inappropriately in the German media, which referred to the victims with male names and pronouns and described them as “transvestites” and “man in female clothing”, terminology that obscured the transphobic motives in both cases” (TvT 2012). This means that the murders occurred in a societal context that is generally trans* hateful, these sentiments even being reproduced in the aftermath of the killings. The TvT provides valuable information for this thesis as they show the intersections of discrimination and provide data for the most violent expressions of trans* hate as well as how this violence is embedded in society at large. I want to proceed from here to the other side of the trans* discrimination spectrum, namely micro-aggressions, with the ILGA study about social exclusions. As stated in chapter 1, social exclusions are exclusions that happen on a social level. They are often difficult to pin down as they occur mainly in daily interactions between

individuals. Often the individual affected by a social discrimination cannot be sure whether and on what basis (e.g. based on which identity fragment) the discrimination/exclusion took place. This is why this report outlines the characteristics of exclusion and tries to describe its mechanisms and consequences. As social exclusion are often subtle forms of discrimination the best way to trace them are the actual consequences for the individual. The report lists mental health problems due to discrimination and isolation due to harassment as issues that have an excluding impact (ILGA 2006). In particular, the consequences that may result from social exclusions are important for this thesis as they show why the engagement with this kind of exclusions is necessary in the first place. Although the report focuses on exclusions of different groups according to their sexuality, their sex and their gender-expression, I argue that there are some common factors of social exclusion towards LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Inter and Queer) people. For example gay people are often discriminated against on the basis of their gender-expression rather than on the basis of their sexuality. Thus the main stereotypes that circulate about gay men are related to supposedly feminine expression, clothing and behaviour, whilst it is often assumed that girls or women who present in a masculine way have to be lesbians. This means that non-conform forms of gender expression are traditionally often linked to homosexuality, which relates back to the described discontinuities between gender, sex and sexuality in chapter 1.2.1. In the following paragraph I will focus on the parts of the report that are concerned with social exclusions and their impacts for trans* people. Social exclusions occur on the basis of fear of bullying and/or discrimination which can have specific impacts on people's education and employment opportunities. This relates back to the discrimination of trans* people in the job market that, as the TvT argues, leads to the specific situation of trans* femininities in particular being forced to do sex work. That, they argue, is a result of the discrimination in the area of employment (TvT Website 2012). Referring to school and work place settings the ILGA report states further that the effects of social exclusions include: loss of confidence, isolation, attendance and/or participation issues, and lack of motivation and/or concentration. This "can impact upon a person's plans or aspirations for the future, regarding choice of studies and/or career, as well as migration concerns" (ILGA 2006). The conclusion, which is important for this thesis is, that the "fear of prejudice can be as significant and influential as actual experiences of discrimination for some people" (ILGA 2006). However, the report concludes also that, "caution is needed to not portray LGBTIQ people as 'victims'"

(ILGA 2006). This is also true in the context of this research as it specifically looks at strategies of negotiation regarding discrimination, such as social exclusions, experienced within (queer) feminist scenes. One could argue that, by making exclusions visible (e.g. by starting a discussion about them), a passive status—that is often ascribed to people who have become victims of exclusion—is transgressed. Summarizing the section above, I conclude that e.g. micro aggressions, which are a form of social exclusion, are a powerful tool of marginalization. As I showed, individuals who have or are ascribed certain stigmatized identity fragments (like being gay, having a gender non-conform expression, presenting feminine) are more prone to face such exclusions. As this report shows, the impacts on the lives and life choices of individuals can be tremendous. Moreover, the studies suggest that these social exclusions are not just rare cases. I support this and suggest, that individual and structural acts of social exclusion are most likely embedded in and supported by existing social hierarchies and power structures.

This contextualization of trans* hate in the German speaking context shows how trans* individuals struggle for non-discrimination and recognition. It seems logical to assume that these sentiments that are prevalent in German speaking societies are also manifest within smaller groups like the ones under investigation⁸¹. Indeed the negotiations that are analysed in this thesis show that stigmatized understandings of certain trans* identities in German speaking societies also occur in (queer) feminist spheres. As the ILGA report states: “One could also encounter discrimination and prejudice within the LGBT community – especially if one was bisexual or non-conforming to other “normative” expectations of the community” (ILGA 2006: 64). The forms of discrimination that are mentioned in these cases are directed towards feminine lesbians and bisexuals. Unfortunately no further attention is paid to the investigation of discrimination within the LGBT community. This is why questions around the difficulties encountered by trans* identified or trans* read individuals within (queer) feminist communities are raised within this research project.

⁸¹ From my own experience, I can say that stereotypical ideas about trans* people are prevalent within (queer) feminist communities. Prejudices that I have encountered are often based on the critique that trans* people reinforce gender stereotypes and therefore stabilized the gender-binary. Trans* women, who present very femininely are often at the hub of this critique; ‘very femininely’ of course being a subjective interpretation.

2.2.3. TRANS* ACTIVISM AND THE STRENGTH OF INTERSECTIONS

As a reaction to the above described disadvantages, discrimination and violence, different forms of trans* activism evolved in Europe and also in the German speaking countries. In this section I want to give a short overview of the theirstories of trans* activism and struggles within the trans* community. Struggles of trans* people have often been linked to lesbian, gay and bisexual struggles. In the last few years, the umbrella term “queer” has been used to unite different identities and experiences, also in the German speaking context. At the same time, trans* struggles, especially the ones of people that do not locate themselves or are not readable in the societal binary structure become more and more visible in their specificities. Generally the trans* community in the Germany speaking context is everything but united. This thesis focuses especially on the groups that have fought and are still fighting for their inclusion in (queer) feminist spaces. Moreover, struggles over who is trans* and what kind of trans* is acceptable in (queer) feminist spaces have caused large disagreements and even splits within movements. More on these negotiations around the questions of whether and to what extend trans* women and trans* femininities should be part of (queer) feminist movements and hence allowed in certain spaces can be found at the beginning of chapter 3 where the concept of safer spaces is introduced and discussed. To exemplify the kind of trans* activism that is important in the German speaking context, I will introduce two organizations that work on trans* and/ or other LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Inter, Queer) topics and that are striking to me⁸². This is due to the fact that both are very concerned with intersectional approaches that focus particularly on “Mehrfachdiskriminierung” (plural oppressions). One is named TriQ (Trans* Inter Queer) and the other one GLADT⁸³. TriQ’s website describes the organization as follows: “TriQ is a social center and a political, cultural and researching organization, which campaigns for trans-, intergendered and queer living people in Berlin and beyond⁸⁴“. Before I show how TriQ works by providing an example from 2010, I want to introduce GLADT. It is a non-profit organization that works as such since 2003 yet its roots go back until 1997. They are the only

⁸² I will stick to these two organizations despite the fact that there are many more active organizations in the German speaking context. I focus on these two because they take plural oppressions and the experience of multiple oppressions into account, which is more important for this thesis than a single-issue engagement with trans* hate.

⁸³ The name is an abbreviation for “Gays and Lesbians aus der Türkei” (from Turkey), because it was originally founded as an organization for and from Gays and Lesbians from Turkey.

⁸⁴ TriQ ist ein soziales Zentrum und ein politisch, kulturell und im Forschungsbereich aktiver Verein, der sich für trans-, intergeschlechtliche und queer lebende Menschen in Berlin und darüber hinaus einsetzt (TriQ website).

organization that is independent and working with queers having a connection to Turkey (GLADT 2010: website). GLADT states about themselves:

“With different experiences, knowledge and skills GLADT is seen as a centre of competence in questions around racism, sexism, trans* and homophobia as well as on the intersections/overlaps of those phenomenon’s. This is not just true for Berlin or Germany but as well in the international context⁸⁵.”

Important here is their focus on different knowledges, skills and experiences that are linked to experiences of multiple discrimination. Before proceeding towards the analysis part, I want to provide a brief example from 2010. It is about the engagement with exclusions that occur within the trans* movement. The motto of the 14th Berlin located Trans*conference that is organized by TriQ in 2013 was: “Trans* is for everyone!” In the documentation the critique from the community to the community reads as follows:

“Trans* is for everyone” is also directed to the inside, to a community that in the last few years has drifted further apart and that has thereby blocked itself socio-politically. Transgender, transsexual, transident – Who deserves what and why? Who can join the discussion? Which way of living is the right one? We say: Trans* is for everyone!⁸⁶”

What we can conclude from this critical engagement towards the community that happened as early as 2010, is that negotiations of belonging, here with regard to the category trans*, have a theirstory of at least four years. During the conference, a workshop with the title “Transphobia and plural affiliations) in the lesbian, bi-scene” took place. The focus was a critical questioning of the idea of whether trans* really is for everyone and who is welcome in different kind of spaces. The needs of the various agents in these scenes as well as perspectives for change in the future were discussed. The results were, among others, that more information, particularly provided by the people who are most affected themselves, is needed. Moreover, there has been a desire for more inclusive spaces with less fear of opening up, for a more mutually respectful atmosphere in the scene, as well as for more solidarity with one another (Berliner Trans*tagung

⁸⁵ „Mit den unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen, Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten wird GLADT darüber hinaus als Kompetenzzentrum für alle Fragen rund um Rassismus, Sexismus und Trans*- und Homophobie so wie die Überschneidungen/Überlappungen dieser Phänomene wahrgenommen – nicht nur in Berlin oder Deutschland, sondern auch im internationalen Kontext“ (GLADT 2010: website).

⁸⁶ „Trans* ist für alle da“ richtet sich aber auch nach innen; an eine Community, die in den letzten Jahren immer weiter auseinander gedriftet ist und sich so gesellschaftspolitisch selbst im Weg stand. Transgender, transse-xuell, transident - wem steht was zu? Und warum? Wer darf mitreden? Welcher Lebensweg ist richtig? Wir sagen: Trans* ist für alle da!“ (Berliner Trans*tagung 2010: 2).

2010: 29). These are exactly the negotiations and aspirations that are under scrutiny in this thesis. Summarizing the trans* activism in the German speaking context and in Berlin in particular, it becomes clear that the topic of this thesis is a concern that has been prevalent in trans* and (queer) feminist communities for some time. The topics, which include negotiations of belonging, discrimination that happens within the community resulting in, exclusions, are struggles that occur within different marginalized groups. These struggles are the focus of this thesis with the hope of providing another fruitful intervention to hold up those important discussions of creating understanding.

2.3. BRIDGING ANTI-ROMAISM AND TRANS* HATE

To comprehend whether and how it makes sense to research such diverse topic complexes as racism, specifically Anti-Romaism and trans* hate together, this section reflects briefly on the similarities that bridge those two forms of marginalization that, as I have shown, occur within the German speaking context. Historically speaking both groups, Roma and trans* people, have been highly marginalized within the broader societal context. By relying on studies conducted in the EU, and in the German speaking context specifically, I showed implicitly that trans* hate and anti-Romaism are highly prevalent on three different levels. One is the level of structural discrimination e.g. in the education system and in the job market. Another one is the representational level e.g. the media and negative stereotypes that are re-produced there. And finally the individual level, which includes actions of discrimination and hate against individuals or groups. All these levels impact individuals that are self-identified or foreign-ascribed Romnja or trans* people. In addition, multiple marginalized groups within the German speaking context face the highest levels of violence and discrimination. For example, people who have become homeless or women who work in the sex industry. Because of their high marginalization, neither Roma nor trans* people have a significant impact on their representation in order to challenge the stereotypes that are perpetuated by dominant culture and even by laws. As an example, I have previously referred to the fact that treatment for so-called transsexuals can only be accessed if the individual conforms to stereotypical ideas around femininity and masculinity. The assimilation attempts of politicians and law makers that force Roma into the framework of the dominant culture is a similar example. Despite the high level of marginalization, both groups

have developed forms of activism to confront and counter the oppression they face. As I showed earlier in my elaboration of the term ‘transsexuality’, as well as in the elaboration of the academic knowledge production around Anti-Romaism under the contested terminology ‘Anti-ziganism’, words and their historical meaning are a highly contested field. Closely linked to this, is the critique from trans* activists and Roma activists that is directed to institutions that often *write and know about*, rather than *engage in direct dialogues* with the ones affected most. These critical voices, in both forms of activism, are becoming more and more vocal, especially within the (queer) feminist communities that are under focus here. Despite this emergence of critical voices, as I have shown earlier, there is still very little alternative knowledge production that actually enters the so-called mainstream. What has been presented above are the critical activist circles from which new discussions evolve. I hope I could show the attempts that are visible in different critical movements (e.g. left-wing scene, (queer) feminist communities) to voice collective experiences of marginalization in order to negotiate their marginalization within already marginalized groups. The following presented negotiations are emerging at least partly from these critical movements of anti- trans* hate and anti-Romaism activists. As I will show in the following chapter (3) based on two case studies of online-discussions, people that are directly affected attack the dominant knowledge production that is prevalent within the political communities of which they consider themselves to be a part. It will be shown how critical voices of activists and community members start two different discussions that address a similar topic, namely forms of social exclusion within already marginalized groups.

3. “DO YOU MEAN TO INCLUDE US AS WELL ⁸⁷?”

This chapter summarizes and analyzes some of the ongoing discussions in various written online media such as blogs, forums and e-mail lists. More specifically, as previously introduced, I aim to give an impression of two different discussions about exclusions that have happened in (queer) feminist scenes between 2013 and now by providing two different examples of exclusions and their negotiations within the community or scene in which they erupt. One is an e-mail discussion on anti-Romaism and the other is a discussion in a BDSM-forum about an exclusion

⁸⁷ “Sind wir eigentlich mitgemeint?” From the speech about trans*exclusions at the demonstration on March 8, 2014 in Berlin by trans*geniale f_antifa.

of a transgender person from a real-life conference. I read this case studies through the lens of a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Moreover, the analysis presented here is moreover based on Community Based Research which means that the analysis is made for and with the community. Therefore in this chapter community members that were participants in the discussions are given a lot of space in the form of direct quotes, and their own critical analyses and interpretations are highlighted. The materials used (e-mails and forum responses) are the starting, connection and conclusion points, yet not without a historical and socio-political contextualization (see chapter 2) and a holistic close-reading on which the choices of the extracted material was made. It needs to be said that the discussions under focus are ongoing ones between and within different identity groups. Some of them have longer, some shorter theirstories, but all of them are embedded in a continuum of discussion. While the general discussions occurred in the form of blog posts and posted comments or responding statements, some of them were held over mailing lists, in political spaces or in online forums. I am well aware that in this investigation I can only show snapshots that cannot keep up with, let alone follow up all the negotiations in different spheres in their entirety. However, as stated earlier (see chapter: 1.3.4. *Is this space offline yet?*) I assume here that social offline spheres, like political groups and events, such as demonstrations and parties are closely intertwined with social online spaces. This interrelation is visible when we look at how online discussions are influencing people in their offline life. An online discussion, or rather its outcome, can open up or close down a space for a particular identity group or for individuals belonging to that, or in solidarity with, that group, for example when an event is not attended by some cis women because e.g. trans* women are excluded⁸⁸. In particular, this research aims at finding similarities between discussions on social exclusions in offline and virtual spheres. Moreover, this thesis examines the negotiation strategies that are used in order to make each other's differences understand-able and translate-able to one another. Chapter 3 starts off with the topic complex 'race' in which the discussion on anti-Romaism (3.1) is presented and analyzed. In the second part of the chapter, I will look at the exclusion of a trans* person from an offline BDSM event and how it has been negotiated (3.2). Chapter 3 then ends with an elaboration on the used strategies that emerge from within the community (3.3).

⁸⁸ To provide a personal example here, I refer to a brief e-mail discussion of my queer-feminist collective in Utrecht. After a person had sent an invitation to a women's festival, two people called for a boycott of that festival as apparently trans* women were explicitly excluded.

3.1. MAILING LIST: A DISCUSSION ABOUT ANTI-ROMAISM

Before presenting the first discussion for this research, I will introduce the people that participated in it. Tim is the person who kicked off the discussion by sending a call for papers over the mailing list. The title of the conference, for which the papers were called for, was "Antiziganism - what's in a word?". It took place in Uppsala in autumn of 2013. Rabija⁸⁹ is the first person who responds to the call. Her response is a critique towards the terms "Antiziganism" and "Antigypsism" used in the call. In her e-mail she states that she is a Romni herself and personally affected by the terms in a negative way. After that Kim is the first person to react, this time to Rabija's e-mail. He voices a critique on the way Rabija's critique is raised. After this, several others join the discussion around the usage of terms and the formulation of critique, but mostly the latter. Tim, the initial sender of the call, engages further in the discussion by e.g. sending an e-mail in which he apologetically states that the conference is not one where just *white* people present their research about anti-Romaism (and therefore Romnja), but that Romnja speakers are present as well. However, when questioned about number and balance, he does not provide an answer. Summarizing Tim's reaction towards the critique directed at him in the discussion, it can be said that although stating that he is in a discussion process about the topic within his context, he did not visibly react appreciatively towards the intervention. Instead he avoided answering concrete questions concerning the composition of Romnja and non-Romnja researchers/speakers at the conference advertised. Ana is the person who contributes the most to the discussion after Rabija. She supports Rabija's critique and provides critical analyses for the list-readers. Another person who supports Rabija's claims that the language used is problematic is Lisa. Finally there are Lola and Hannah who are against the discussion of these terms on the list. They are as well the two people that are calling for the termination of the discussion in the end. In the discussion that took place over a period of just seven days in spring 2013, but including 41 e-mails (see Appendix A) and an estimated number of nineteen people

⁸⁹ I choose the name Rabija as a pseudonym for the first intervening person in the anti-Romaism debate. I chose a name that is a female Roma name in order to make the position (gendered and PoC) from which the intervention comes clear throughout the analysis. I am unsure if this is a correct choice as one could argue that it could be read as essentializing, i.e. by giving the impression that all Romnja have 'traditional' names. This is definitely not my aim here, and I hope that my readers understand that this is a strategic choice only for this thesis.

that participated as individuals or groups of two, the terms used and Rabija's intervention were discussed.

3.1.1. WHAT'S IN A WORD?

The discussion started after Tim had sent the call for papers that included a list of topics that, according to him, could be of "special interest to people on the list". The topics were e.g. "Antigypsyism/ Antiziganism/ Romaphobia from the intersectionality point of view" and "gender/sex and sexuality in antigypsyism" (Appendix A, Mail 1). As the e-mail was sent in order to invite people to present at the conference; it was aimed at the university-associated people on the list. What caught Rabija's attention was the usage of the terms "Antiziganism" and "Antigypsyism" in the subject line as well as in the call itself. She intervenes from her own perspective as belonging to the group Romnja⁹⁰ by expressing that she is upset and by sending educational material as well as explanations via the list. The material and the e-mail relate to the problem that the word "Antiziganism" in particular reproduces racism. She claims that both terms are not empowering for Romnja. This she states is particularly true regarding German history and its leading role in the mass murder of the Roma and Sinti population (Appendix A, Mail 2-4). As I elaborated earlier in chapter 2 during the NS period, the "Zi-word" was used as a marker for Roma in the concentration camps. Rabija provides this information indirectly by sending links to websites that explain the history of Romnja. Providing this background I want to turn towards the reaction to this intervention and what kind of topics and negotiations evolved after Rabija's critique. In order to get a better idea from where people are talking in terms of how they are located in relation to the topic and to present this information in a succinct way to the reader, I made some categorizations. They are partly based on self-defined identity (e.g. *white* or of Colour), but more particularly on the way a person relates to the topic-complex of 'race'. Markers for extracting this information were for example: is the speaking person more concerned about the discussion topic or about the tone of the discussion? To whom does the person relate (which other discussion participants, authors, theories, critique etc.)? How does a person locate themselves socially, particularly in terms of the societal power structure racism? And how do the

⁹⁰ As Romnja is the feminine plural Rabija is speaking here explicitly from the perspective of being a woman and being a Romni (feminine singular). See as well chapter 2.1.2 *The politics of 'naming'*.

participants relate to the other people on the list or in the scene? Generally speaking I would argue that this kind of data is very difficult to extract from online discussions. But due to the fact that Rabija called for a self-positioning of the participants to the discussion regarding their experience of racism⁹¹, most people named their location accordingly. Moreover, through the lens of FCDA I have a tool to work with the valuable information the text provides me with. However, rather than working with the two categories that are prevalent throughout the discussion I decided to work with a more complex categorization. In particular, I moved away from the two, often binary understood, positions of *white* and of Colour, I chose to construct five different relational positionings. Relational, because they are all related towards the topic at stake, namely anti-Romaism or more broadly racism. They are: ‘unconcerned’, ‘critically unconcerned’, ‘directly concerned’, ‘concerned and supportive’, and ‘concerned and critical’. Let me define those categories more in depth. The first category names people who respond to the critique of the call from a position that is not being affected negatively racism. These are people who, i.e. in critical Race Studies are named *white* I prefer to locate them as ‘unconcerned’ for now as this is less referring to an identity fragment. This manner of naming gives the possibility of allowing for more complexity by stressing relationality, namely a relation to a topic (e.g. anti-Romaism) that can be shaped by a particular history (see chapter 2.1) and by social and political structures in which an individual or individuals as collectives with the same relation are located. This positioning can, for example, be deduced from the universal assumptions people who are positioned like this made during the discussion, as well as by their unwillingness to concretely name their position e.g. as *white*. There were at least five responses from this location. In contrast, the second group ‘critically unconcerned’ responds by taking their often *white* positioning and their privileges into account, at least by virtue of naming their locatedness. From this group twelve e-mails have been sent. Six e-mails fall into the category that I named ‘concerned and supportive’. These are often people who participate from a position of experiencing other forms of racism (e.g. Islam hate). ‘Concerned and critical’ are people who are also located as People of Colour and support the intervention partially while criticizing some ways of speech or practice. Rabija is the only speaking person who openly states that she is

⁹¹ To summarize footnote 53 (explaining the term People of Colour) and footnote 16 (explaining the term *white*) simplistically, people can be put into two categories according to their experience or non-experience of racism. The first group is often named People of Colour, while the other group is often named *white*.

‘directly concerned’. Moreover she is explicitly writing from her own positioning and describes the personal effects certain terms and ways of writing/speaking have on her.

3.1.2. WORDS- LOCATIONS- AND RELATIONS TO DIFFERENT THEIRSTORIES

One of the first e-mails after Rabija’s critique towards the call for papers was sent by an unconcerned (located) person with a male name, I will call him Kim. The e-mail starts by saying that he didn’t like the ‘reaction’⁹² to the call⁹³. After some rhetorical description about the people on the list who do not know each other personally and that communication via e-mail can create misunderstandings, Kim suggests that ‘we should keep to the rules.’ According to him: ‘These rules include respectful treatment of each other that makes it possible to exchange different ideas and opinions’⁹⁴. He adds that this way of communication has to be marked by respect so that differing opinions can be exchanged. By ‘we’ I suppose Kim means the readers on the mailing list. By including Rabija in this ‘we’, he suggests indirectly that she did not abide by the rules of communication. For him, what Rabija expressed in her critique was a matter of differing ideas and opinions rather than differing experiences regarding, for example, racism. Kim, who is the first person to answer to Rabija’s intervention, does not engage with the reasons for the intervention. Instead, he concentrates on the manner in which Rabija expresses herself in her e-mail. After this, more e-mails follow that engage with the matter at stake in the same way, namely by engaging closely with *how*⁹⁵ Rabija wrote, rather than with what she criticized. Moreover Kim’s words: ‘I don’t like the reaction to the call’, are including a personal judgment for which he provides no supportive argument or reason. Referring only to the ‘tone’⁹⁶ can be

⁹² What is meant here by the reaction is the intervention against the terminology in the call by Rabija.

⁹³ „(...) mir gefällt die Reaktion auf die Weiterleitung des Calls nicht“ (Appendix A, Mail 5).

⁹⁴ „Zu diesen Regeln gehört ein respektvoller Umgang miteinander, der dann auch einen Austausch über verschiedene Ansichten miteinander ermöglicht bzw. ermöglichen kann“ (Appendix A, Mail 5).

⁹⁵ At this point I want to provide the reader with an article that analyze the strategy of keeping or shifting the focus from the what to the how, which is apparently often used when racism is addressed. I suggest the article of Naamen Gobert Tilahun: The Privilege of politeness (2008) <http://theangryblackwoman.wordpress.com/2008/02/12/the-privilege-of-politeness/>.

⁹⁶ The so called tone argument is a well-known phenomenon for people that fight to achieve social justice for generally marginalized groups. An engagement with the tone-argument-problem can be found on the blog of Aaminah Khan: <http://jaythenerdkiid.wordpress.com/tag/tone-argument/> (2013), In her blogpost: “We need to talk about tone” she writes: “I could have written this non-confrontationally, and it would have made no difference,

seen as a distraction from the topic at stake. Kim then goes on by stating that the e-mail was sent by one person (Tim) and if there are any problems, misunderstandings, discontent or anger regarding the terms, people should contact the organizers of the conference. It seems here that the public discussion should be stopped in favour of more privatized ways of dealing with the topic (e.g. writing to the conference organizers or to Tim personally). In this way, Kim pushes the responsibility for engaging with critique of the usage of discriminating terms (Rabija calls them racist) from the mailing list elsewhere. In the next paragraph, Kim pronounces that the manner of the intervention is ‘not productive’. The speaking position here sounds assured with regard its objectivity and truth. Speaking generally, except when saying that he does not like the reaction, there is an underlying speech of universality. Kim uses, to speak in Haraway’s words, the god trick⁹⁷. As Kim does not mention or otherwise engage with the critique of the term “Antiziganism” that was provided and supported with background information, it is not difficult to see that Kim ignores the context in which he is located and probably even his own inherited history⁹⁸. I argue that ignoring the racist history that certain terms have, especially in the German speaking (post National Socialism) context, is not an innocent deed. Rather it is a form of violence, because it repeats the denial of past and present violence’s which, as Rabija reminds us, becomes visible in the usage of certain terms. As I showed in chapter *1.1 Language of power – the power of language*, this assertion has also been made by linguists and activists like Sharon Dodua Otoo and Lann Hornscheidt (ak 2013). The term “Antiziganism” stands as a reminder for the theirstory not only of a genocide, but also of the non-acknowledgement of past and present violence to which Roma have been subjected. The question is thus whether this reminder of violence and non-acknowledgement thereof is violence in itself. I will also refer to Spivak here and what she calls the “concealed subject” which pretends to have “no-geopolitical determinations (Spivak 1988: 67)”. She explains that because the Subject of knowledge ignores

because when people say, “you need to be nicer,” what they actually mean is, “you need to stop talking about these things I don’t want to hear.”

⁹⁷ The so-called ‘god trick’ is often used by scientists in order to suggest that there is a *knowledge* which is apparently objective. I would argue that this trick is not just used by scientists, but also by male, white subject positions that can also be inhabited by different people. The idea here is that, the subject position of the white, heterosexual male can be inhabited by more subjects than just actual white, heterosexual males. For example a female manager that exercises economic and social power over her employees could be said to inhabit this subject position despite not being that subject-. Haraway reminds us that we should attempt to avoid this eye of the so-called master subject of knowledge, as this subject position claims to see from nowhere (Haraway 1988: 586). In this way, a universality of a particular knowledge (derived from a white and male experienced position) is created.

⁹⁸ I am assuming on the basis of the language he uses and of his name that he has grown up in the German speaking context and does not face marginalization on the basis of migration.

its own location and the ideology from which it emerges, it ignores power structures (Spivak 1988: 67-68), in this case racism, which is, as I showed in chapter 2.1, a historically evolved underlying power structure of German speaking societies. Therefore we can say that if the subject of knowledge, in this case the subject that is not concerned with racism, ignores its own location in a National Socialist history that included mass murders which were justified by racist ideologies, it ignores those very power structures: structures which are shaped by racism and which are still meaningful as they shape the lives and social opportunities of *all*⁹⁹ subjects. Because we do not start from an equal level, for example regarding our different theirstories and the different traumas and pains¹⁰⁰ that can stem from them, it becomes problematic to speak of just one possible way of communicating. This is particularly so in the present case because the ‘we’ which defines a certain way of communicating¹⁰¹ does not name and therefore locate itself. Who, or should we rather ask, which kind of positioning stands behind this rule of ‘respectful communication’ in the first place? And when exactly and to which ‘we’ does this rule apply? Who can actually invoke the rule and in which situations? Can we speak of a discussion of ‘different opinions’ when the distribution of social and political power is unequal? And in a situation where one person already addressed and showed her pain? Regarding the fact that opinions are often related to the experiences that we gain according to the social and political social sphere in which our identity fragments are located, this leads back to bigger questions like: Is racism an opinion? Who defines if something is racist, sexist etc. and where does that knowledge stem from¹⁰²? Kim, who implies that everyone speaks from a position of equality, ignores differences that come about by e.g. the experience of being not affected negatively by racism. By suggesting an innocence of opinions, he seems to be disregarding their historical shaping. In the discussion as a whole, more critique was directed towards Rabija’s critical intervention than towards the language of the call. This could be another indicator that most people on the list are unconcerned by the terminology used in the conference call. I find this

⁹⁹ See for example Ruth Frankenberg’s basic argument that, “[a]ny system of differentiation shapes those on whom it bestows privilege as well as those it oppresses. White people are ‘raced’ just as men are ‘gendered’” (Frankenberg 1993: 1).

¹⁰⁰ I refer to the collective trauma of the so-called ‘Porrajmos’ (see chapter 2.1.3) - the genocide on the Roma population during National Socialism.

¹⁰¹ By communication I also mean forms of relating to each other and with the other.

¹⁰² Similar questions are addressed in an article that engages with the reactions of unconcerned (*white*) located people towards the critique of blackfacing in German theatres. Although it concentrates on the German speaking mainstream, it names similar strategies that are also present in the mailing list discussion: <http://www.textures-platform.com/?p=3142>.

important to mention here, because at least theoretically the engagement with so-called ‘antiracist work’ is one of the ideologies on which the radical left-wing scenes are built upon. But let me come back to the discussion. One prevailing critique in it is the fact that one of Rabija’s e-mails included Tim’s work address. The topic stays central in the e-mails of unconcerned positioned people in particular and is at times labeled as ‘unfair’ and denunciating. For example, Tim himself replies after some e-mails expressing his discontent: ‘Therefore I perceive the publication of my address including my position [referring to the job-position in a European University] as an unfair means in the debate¹⁰³’. After some silence regarding the ‘origin’ of the address, Ana, one of the concerned supporters, explains that the address was attached in the same call for papers which Tim himself had sent over another mailing list. Nevertheless, even after this clarification the topic of the publication of the address stays central. Thus, interestingly, the political content of the critique (please stop using a racist term) becomes performatively distracted by the form. In this case, the way in which critique has been expressed becomes the centre of investigation, primarily for unconcerned located people, but not exclusively so. At times the ‘language’ (angriness or writing style) of the intervention is equated with disrespectful ways of communicating, at other times the practice of publishing the work address¹⁰⁴ of the person is attacked. Although this way of dealing with offenders has been used within radical left scenes, there is wide disagreement on whether to make use of this strategy. Publishing addresses to fight power structures and expressions thereof that are often marked by violent peaks such as rape or other physical attacks, has been a fruitful way to expose and disarm perpetrators by making them vulnerable. Nevertheless, Rabija distances herself from this practice and Anan explains in another e-mail¹⁰⁵ that Rabija only wanted to indicate the context the person was operating from. In this way it becomes clear that she had no intention of stigmatizing the person as an offender, but rather wanted to point out his social and therefore political positioning (*white*

¹⁰³ „So empfinde ich die Veröffentlichung der Adresse und meiner Position als unfaires Mittel der Auseinandersetzung“ (Appendix A, Mail 10).

¹⁰⁴ To clarify the practice of publishing addresses, it is important to have some knowledge of left-wing practices in German speaking countries. It is a very common practice in order to render perpetrators Nazis or rapists, visible. The practice is used on the one hand to warn the surroundings about those aggressors, and on the other hand it has the side-effect of exposing perpetrators. This can have the impact of making them feel less safe by making their deeds visible. While Nazis are obviously not part of the left-wing scene, the same practice has historically been used by feminists after sexualized violence within left-wing communities. Despite its motivation and usage it has been critiqued within and beyond the left-wing scene(s) for its extreme impact on the perpetrators.

¹⁰⁵ Ana refers to an empowerment seminar from which she learned the practice of publishing e-mails with threatening and /or aggressive content.

-or in my terms unconcerned, university context, European Union). Despite the motivation and the fact that the address had been published by himself on another mailing list, Tim and other people seem to be highly defensive towards the voiced critique. In the next section I show how these seemingly individual strategies of defense can be seen as ways to keep underlying, often collectively shared power structures, hidden.

3.1.3. ENCOUNTERING THE STRUCTURAL LEVEL OF RACISM

In this part of my analyses I want to interpret the prevailing of a power position, within an institution (the university) as an intellectual that has been historically shaped by Western ideologies, by relying on Spivak¹⁰⁶. As explained before she raises a strong critique against unsituated, ungraspable, or what she calls ‘transparent subject positions of Western intellectuals’ and their knowledge production, which occurs to be ‘ideology-free’. This is exactly what Ana reminds us about when she states in one of her e-mails:

‘I ask myself, why all those /whites/, that do research about ‘racism’ hardly ever perceive themselves as /white/ or do not come to the conclusion to start thinking and conducting research about /white/ superiority (triggers of racism) within their own /white/ community? What kind of pictures are in those researchers head, who seem to be obsessed with ‘the other’¹⁰⁷?’

Spivak and Ana unveil for us how institutional privileges linked to power, which are often held by the subject of the intellectual, need to be taken seriously. Especially in order to avoid the “disappearance of the knowing Subject” (Spivak 1988: 87), which carries the risk of silencing voices by its non-accountability of its own place of ideology and the epistemic violence that derives thereof. Let us make a short insertion here to briefly engage with Ana’s writing style, as it is striking in relation to the writing of the other participants. Writing everything in small letter is a practice that in the German speaking context can be linked to different artists. It has for example been used by the feminist and novel price winner Elfriede Jelinek in her novel *die Liebhaberinnen*¹⁰⁸ which was published in 1975. Now in the age of the internet it has become

¹⁰⁶ See footnote 57.

¹⁰⁷ “ich frage mich warum sich die ganzen /weißen/, die zu "rassismus" forschen fast nie selber als /weiß/ wahrnehmen oder auch nur ansatzweise darüber nachdenken zu /weißer/ vorherrschaft (auslöser von rassismus) oder ihrer eigenen /weißen/ community zu forschen? was stecken da für bilder in den köpfen von forsch_innen, die mit "den anderen" besessen zu sein scheinen?” (Appendix A, Mail 22).

¹⁰⁸ The book has been translated into English under the title: *women as lovers*.

more and more accepted to experiment with language in this way, especially in online spaces. Ana's motivation stays unclear and her writing style appears to be experimental. Other interesting elements are how she writes /white/ for example. Although I could not find any particular explanation or reference for this writing, I suggest this is another way to refer to the constructed nature of *whiteness*. The dashes stress the word *white* yet at the same time borders it radically from the other text. Summarizing this brief elaboration we can assume that the way of writing bears cultural and political meaning, which even if not clearly known is engaging the reader by making certain words stand out. I want to come back now to the occurring distractions e.g. by referring to the issue of address publication or to the tone of critique, within the discussion. These strategies are commented on by Lisa, a critically concerned located person, as follows:

“I find it utterly sad, that the topic with the address is abused to twist power structures. By that derailing from the funded and detailed critique, which have been voiced regarding ‘white’ strategies [derailing strategies] and the usage of racist terms”¹⁰⁹.

Lisa names those happenings derailing as they direct the attention away from the critique that was directed towards the usage of certain terms. She names them *white* and by that relates them consciously to a certain positioning. A bit later in the discussion more details about the location of Tim, who as noted above stated that he does find it *unfair means* to be exposed with his working address, are provided by other list users. Nevertheless after a few more e-mails another intervention takes place. Ana critically announces that Tim is not as innocent as he states, especially regarding his location in anti-Romaism research. She brings up the fact that he is working together with two other researchers that are already under critique within People of Colour communities. Mainly because of the question: “Who speaks in anti-Romaism research?”¹¹⁰ (Demirova 2013a). So Ana comes to the conclusion ‘that critique directed at Tim, his scientific work and as well as towards his conducted research are totally legitimate and necessary’ (Appendix A, Mail 22). She ends by saying that it is therefore good that Tim is on the list. Taking the way of relation into account here I find it important to note already that Ana relates positive towards Tim. She does not split herself from him by disengaging, rather she

¹⁰⁹ „[I]ch finds wirklich traurig, dass diese Adressen-Geschichte genutzt wird um Machtverhältnisse umzudrehen und von der berechtigten und sehr fundierten und detaillierten Kritik abzulenken, welche in Bezug auf weisse Strategien und rassistische Bezeichnungen aufgemacht wurde“ (Appendix A, Mail 37).

¹¹⁰ Ana refers to a blog-post by written by Filiz Demirova concerning the two researchers and some critique on their speaking-positions: <http://derparia.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/wer-spricht-in-der-antiziganismusforschung/>.

welcomes him on the list. Ana seems to see a potentiality in critique that is not saying: I am not you, but I am with you, even if you conduct this kind of research which I see critically¹¹¹. Coming back to Spivak I want to connect her analysis of the transparent subject of the West to the discussion on the list. Apparently the person towards whom the critique was directed is in a structurally privileged position (e.g. located *white* and working in the university), yet did not reveal all of those positioning's. Even after being repeatedly addressed to position himself, Tim does not openly acknowledge that already his position as a researcher implies a certain power. A power that can potentially be harmful to the people he is researching about. This can happen even despite his apparent intentions to expose the racism they face in the present, as a historically stigmatized and marginalized group. The question how that research is conducted and what kind of subjectivity underlies it could be of crucial importance here. This is as well what Ana investigates critically, when she asks where the unmarked center lies in such a research:

„the argument [of the researchers] is: ‚we are not conducting research about r(r)oma!12*‘ but who are actually the subjects of racism against roma/ antiromaism? r(r)oma stay, in this imagined research of whites, objects. While the /whites/ the racism exercising, their societies, their socialization and history stay unmarked. This kind of research keeps /white/ privileges, /white/ solidarity and therefore /white/ supremacy alive!¹¹³!“

What we can see here in Ana's quote is where the silences and the blanks lie within the discussion as well as in the research conducted about anti-Romaism. The *white* subjects are staying in the background and are often made invisible, for example by their role as researchers. The societies and people the researcher relates to are often providing the object of the research rather than being other subjects that can be heard. The *white* researcher stays unmarked in this scenario. Spivak's theorizations about the subalterns capability of being heard, is important here precisely, because she works with terms like 'transparent' and 'silenced'. In this case I would say that Tim, and other *white* researchers are the transparent subjects that conduct research or in Haraway's words 'see' from 'nowhere' (Haraway 1988: 586). Moreover Rabija speaks about the

¹¹¹ See also chapter 4.

¹¹² As elaborated in chapter 2.1 r(r)oma is another way of referring to the heterogeneous groups of Roma living in Europe. I suppose, that the asterix was put to include trans* and other (un)gendered positions.

¹¹³ „das argument ist ja "wir betreiben keine r(r)oma* forschung"; aber wer sind denn die subjekte von rassismus gegen roma/ antiromaismus? r(r)oma bleiben in dieser von weißen erfundenen forschung objekte; die /weißen/ rassismus ausübenden menschen, ihre gesellschaften, sozialisation und geschichten bleiben weiterhin unmarkiert. diese art von forschung hält /weiße/ privilegien, /weiße/ solidarität und somit /weiße/ vorherrschaft am leben!“ (Appendix A, Mail 22).

not hearing of Romnja and Sinti voices when she guesses that the racist terminology in the call might have gone unnoticed because solely *white* located¹¹⁴ people organized the conference. Then she states loud and clearly: WE HAVE VOICES!!!¹¹⁵ So the underlying power structures within the phrasing of the call and the location of the sender of the call are revealed step by step, the centre of epistemic violence (Spivak 1988: 87), to which everything relates to, becomes more and more visible. Summarizing the analysis above I want to point out that a structural level of knowledge production and the power that comes with it seems to have been silently underlying the discussion all along. Some participants can be seen as what Spivak calls “concealed subject”, similarly to Haraway’s god-trick, this subject pretends to have “no-geopolitical determinations”. As I have shown above, the apparently ideology- free production of academic knowledge reproduces at least reminders of racism (anti-Romaism), that as I have explained in chapter 2.1, are even linked to such atrocities as genocide. Making this structure of power–embedded within knowledge production–visible to a certain extent needed Ana and Rabija’s relentless guidance by their critical analysis. After this provided critical reading of the discussion, I will now proceed to the actual attempt of exclusion.

3.1.4. ‘UNCONCERNED’ LOCATED PEOPLE CALLING FOR EXCLUSION

After this very complex discussion part, where discussion participants critically analyze the responses and reveal an underlying ideology that hides itself, the discussion finally summits in a clear attempt of exclusion. Approaching this summit in this analysis, in which a wish for exclusion got explicitly mentioned, I want to look at how two unconcerned located people make an attempt to stop the discussion. It starts with Lola who sends an e-mail to address his dissatisfaction with the discussion on the mailing list. Ignoring the explanations around the address publication he writes:

¹¹⁴ As i introduced in footnote 16 on page 4, the term *white* is used as a signifier of the non-experience of racism. As the term, even when written in italics, has a historically grown strong association with a white complexion, I developed the idea in this thesis that ‘white located’ is a term that I prefer over *white*. While the term *white* is able to contain a critical reflection of the political constructedness of *whiteness*, *white* located adds the angle of ‘relationality’ –see for example the five constructed relational positioning’s for this discussion which, I explained earlier on page 63–, brings about relational positioning towards a form of discrimination or a topic.

¹¹⁵ WIR HABEN STIMMEN!!! (Appendix A, Mail 23).

‘If left wing people publish addresses of other left wing people over an e-mail list and threaten to publish answers and names, than something is completely off. And *we* should think about how *we* want to deal with such practices and threats. This is not a question of harmony wishes or netiquette. *A lot of people* – also on this list – have the same opinion but don’t dare to write anything because the thing that ‘we’ (now referring to the left wing scene) can apparently do best is denouncing, excluding and impose sanctions on others¹¹⁶’ (emphasize mine).

I want to argue here that Lola applied a very selective reading of the mails that have been sent in the discussion before. Besides not locating himself and claiming to speak for everyone, or for a lot of people, he just relates to unconcerned located people and their mails. The non-locating I would argue, can be read at several points in the phrasing. For example when Lola speaks about a ‘we’ and defines what the questions in the discussion are *not* (e.g. netiquette and harmony wishes). Subsequently he states to know what an undefined ‘we’ (as well described as a lot of people) think. Referring to an undefined mass ‘out there’ and on the list Lola stresses the weight of his opinion. Later the person breaks with the ‘we’ that includes the people who are engaging in this practices that according to him are “completely off” by stating: ‘Have fun with this, I am off’. Again there is no reference to the discussion itself, or any other sign that the person actually read what the initial intervention was about. The person disassociates publically with practices of the left-wing scene. Moreover he seems to blame people on the list for engaging in discussions around implicit exclusions (e.g. by the usage of certain terms), yet he himself expresses the feeling that he (and the unspecified we) is denounced, excluded and sanctioned. By that he puts him and his ‘we’ into the concerned position. It appears that he and a lot of others are the unheard, and the one’s that run the danger of being excluded and denounced. So briefly after this e-mail another unconcerned located person, let me call her Hannah sends an e-mail. She first thanks Lola for his mail, saying that she generally approves of discussions over the list but then, implying that she disagrees with the ongoing one she asks: “does it really have to go this way? (...) I can only agree with Lola, and additionally I want to ask that you please make a smaller mailing list in order not to send everything over the whole list. Please” (Appendix A, Mail 31). This intervention (including both mails), against the discussion over the mailing list has been done by two unconcerned located queers. A short Google- search revealed that they are as well

¹¹⁶ „(...) wenn Linke von anderen Linken über Mailinglisten Adressen veröffentlichen und androhen, Antworten und dazugehörige Namen ebenfalls an die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen -- dann läuft etwas gewaltig schief und man sollte sich Gedanken darüber machen, wie man mit solchen Praktiken und Androhungen umgeht. Das ist keine Frage von Harmoniebedürftigkeit oder Netiquette. Sehr sehr viele Menschen - auch auf dieser Liste - sehen das ähnlich, trauen sich aber nicht , etwas zu schreiben, weil eine Sache, die "wir" offensichtlich am besten können, das Denunzieren, Ausschließen und Sanktionieren anderer ist“ (Appendix A, Mail 28).

friends in real- life. So we can assume that Hannah and Lola have talked about sending those e-mails before. As stated earlier Lola refers exclusively to e-mails that have been sent by unconcerned located people. Hannah extends this line of reference by referring to Lola and subsequently to the people he referred to and then calls for the termination of the discussion from the list. This happening has been rightly named a silencing attempt towards the discussion. And Lisa states that it is as well an “act of *white* solidarity”. After this attempt on excluding the discussion that has evolved as a reaction to the usage of terms with racist connotations, and some shocked mails about this happening, the discussion finally ebbs away.

I find it important here to ask at this point what an exclusion of a discussion, in which a concerned person shows how the usage of certain terms affect her, means for the community. The way the discussion was going could suggest that people who are reminded of racism by certain terms should stay silent or, that if they express their concern, they will be told by unconcerned people when the discussion has to stop. Effectively Hannah and Lola did not have the power to prevent a person from starting a discussion about a certain topic. Whether people who are concerned by racism and by racist terms will speak up again is another question that interests me here. In view of the path the discussion took, and the strategies that were used from mainly unconcerned positioned/related participants presented here, I am sceptical. At least in this discussion just some of the people that had a different relation to the topic (e.g. not being directly affected by the discriminating term) actually engaged by listening to the directly concerned and affected.

3.1.5. FINAL CONCLUSION ON THE ANTI-ROMAISM DISCUSSION

Recapitulating the whole discussion, something more becomes evident in the analysis. The person making the intervention, who at the same time is the person who is personally concerned by the usage of racist terms, participates the most. Rabija explains, sends links and shows her personal pain by expressing her anger and dissatisfaction about the non-response, silencing attempts and derailing strategies. Ana, another person who experiences racism herself, makes the second highest number of interventions, mainly to explain to unconcerned people why they should listen and read in order to understand more about an oppression they do not personally

face but potentially cause. Some other people who are concerned by racism, but not by anti-Romaism, support Rabija in different forms too. In addition, support for Rabija's intervention comes from some critically unconcerned positioned people. However I would like to point out that most of them intervene just once. Just some contribute to the discussion more thoroughly by sharing links or explanations. Nevertheless, the imbalance between the person who is directly concerned and the time and energy she puts into the discussion is striking. This becomes evident if we compare her interventions to the amount of interventions, from other people. From the group of unconcerned people, there is a total number of nineteen e-mails. The whole discussion encompasses forty e-mails. In contrast, the people who are concerned contributed to the discussion with twenty two e-mails. Regarding the length of e-mails and the content, people concerned by racism have put much more effort into explaining than the critically unconcerned people. This is the case in spite of the fact that the position or opinion of those two groups correspond strongly with each other. It seems plausible that people who are directly affected by a form of oppression, here racism, have more knowledge as well as interest in intervening against the expression of that oppressive structure. This interest probably stems from the hope that by translating for their unconcerned peers, and by animating them to share that translated knowledge with each other, they can prevent of future attacks and ignorance. The dominating theme within the discussion, beginning with the first responding e-mail and which occurs over and over again, is *the form of critique* and this is important. By concentrating on the form, distraction from content is happening throughout the discussion. This becomes even more apparent when after stating the intention as well as the underlying 'fairness' in revealing power structures in order to work against their invisibility, some e-mails still refer to the exposure of address as a 'problem', suggesting that this is the topic they wanted to discuss in depth. In this manner the focus is repeatedly moved from the topic, namely a form of racism describable as anti-Romaism, towards a practice which apparently has good potential to be a means of distraction. The collective (within the unconcerned located writers) indignation about the sudden visibility of power is an important indicator that shows us one of the defence strategies that is often used by unconcerned located people. Summarizing, the practice of publishing sent or received e-mails to a wider public can be a political move in order to reveal dominant structures in which, in this case an individual, is located. The responses of unconcerned located people, of which two call for an end to the discussion, show us that this involuntary exposure of their

positioning within the echelons of power is not appreciated. On the contrary, there seems to be a collective wish to stay invisible in a certain positioning. The invisibility of power seems to be one important element in securing that very power. Defence mechanisms of individuals (and therefore on the individual level) have to be interpreted within this knowledge. Keeping power in place could work by making and keeping it invisible over and over again. The attempts of white located people to silence the discussion via different strategies such as derailing, not naming their position, or requesting the re-location of the discussion out of their sight, can be seen as attempt at keeping the power invisible. These strategies might point to a desire to not want to engage with one's own expressions of racism. The impact of the discussion is obviously not measurable, for example because certain people write/speak just once, which makes it impossible to follow the thinking processes of individuals, let alone of the community as a whole. Nevertheless I suggest the impact of the discussions in (queer) feminist communities may be measured by observing happenings (events, discussions, leaflets) in the scene. Measurements could be, for example the visibility of new groups that try to engage with Critical Race Theories such as 'critical whiteness' on an individual and structural level, and in that way make the topic part of their politics¹¹⁷. However, processes of awareness might not be as linear and 'progress based' as often assumed. Looking at broader discussions in the (queer)-feminist communities, this holds especially true for topics around inclusions and exclusions which are emerging and fading, often without creating one particular line of 'right' upon which most community members can agree. In this way discussions are repeated at different times and places, or people with certain identities who were formerly excluded might become included or vice versa. However, as we are always already related to a topic in a power-structure, a constant dis-engagement and un-relating has to take place in order to keep this illusion. Finally I will critically engage with my choice of calling the group that did/does not experience racism, unconcerned. For, indeed they are concerned by the very same racism, yet in a different way. This group is invested in keeping the pain of the 'others', and possibly their own pain with that pain at a distance. All strategies presented can be subsumed under creating distance to a topic that, it seems to me, is closely connected to all of the participants. Indeed the shared theirstory of the experiences of violence in a different positioning becomes visible. At the point, for example, when the constant attempt to

¹¹⁷ This shows, for example when different organizations repeatedly contacted Les Migras in order to get information on how to organize events that are more inclusive towards PoC and trans* people. Their suggestions, written in German, can be read here: <http://www.lesmigras.de/diskriminierungssensible-zusammenarbeit.html>.

un-relate from a topic fails. A good example is Lola's way of dealing with the topic, as it appears he needs to leave in order to *not see*. Generally I conclude that the relating within the anti-Romaism discussion is foremost a dis-relating from each other and from the topic, for example, by implicitly or explicitly stating: I am not you. You are not me. I know this already. You do not know this yet. In fact, the only person who changes her relatedness as a concerned person to an unconcerned person is Ana when, she relates to herself being on the same list with Tim in a positive manner. The question is, what could have been different in the discussion if there had been a change from one's locatedness in an isolated way into relatedness. More on this question can be found in chapter 4 *Theoretical insights* in which I re-trace the same questions and connect them to concepts of the artist Bracha L. Ettinger.

3.2. BDSM FORUM: A DISCUSSION ABOUT EXCLUDING A TRANS* FEMININITY

“Are we supposed to be part of this? Unfortunately, we as Inter* and Trans* persons have to ask ourselves this question often in feminist struggles - even today on March 8th” (trans*genial f_antifa 2014).

This is how a speech at the international women's day demonstration on the 8th of March, 2014 in Berlin begins. It is a speech that critically reflects on the idea that all people who identify under the umbrella term trans* can be subsumed under the asterix in *women**. I chose this quote to show the actuality of the topic and to place the feeling of not-belonging that is expressed in it at the beginning of this chapter. I am aware that it is a provocative move to start from the not-belonging, especially as (queer) feminist scenes often identify as being very inclusive exactly because they are supposedly non-discriminatory. I hope I can show in the following pages how far, and if, this holds true.

3.2.1. 'SAFER SPACE' DISCUSSIONS IN (QUEER) FEMINIST SCENES

First I provide some background information on (queer) feminist scenes and how they engage/engaged in creating so called 'safer spaces'. Feminists tried to offer alternatives to the existing main-stream spaces by creating 'safer spaces'. The idea behind creating such a space

was to empower certain identity-groups like women, lesbian and trans*. The basic assumption underlying this strategy is, that the wider society is generally ‘not safe’ for those groups. For example, certain kinds of bars are not visited by women, queers or People of Colour because they know (either from their own experience or from other people from the minority or oppressed group explicitly telling them) that these spaces are not ‘safe’ for them. Safe means here, the absence or, in comparison to society at large, small amounts of harassment. I define harassment as a very broad concept which subsumes any behaviour that makes people leave a space (temporarily or for longer) or avoid a space all together because they ‘feel-know’¹¹⁸ threatened. So ‘safety’ can be limited or violated by behaviours such as racist remarks, touching of hair, assumptions or questions that force or keep people in an identity of ‘foreignness’ or abnormality, physical violence, not being able to kiss someone or to express a particular gender. Other un-safe making and dis-empowering behaviour can be atmospheres of sexism which can be remarks, staring, and unwanted touches which support and maintain a sexist atmosphere. ‘Safer space’ is therefore a space where people of different minority or oppressed groups feel safe enough to stay and come back. Although I tried to define ‘safer space’ politics in the paragraph above, I stress that there are ongoing discussions about what safer- spaces are, how they should be created and maintained and most importantly for whom (often meaning which identity group) they are actually safe. This is why I want to bring forward part of the discussion that I will analyze more closely later. Mango-female¹¹⁹, one of the participants in the discussion, reflects on ‘safer space’ and what it means to her. Saying on the one hand that "freedom from harassment" is one of the first criteria for such a space, she adds on the other hand:

“But in itself, that is actually not enough to make me feel safe enough to play¹²⁰. For that, I also need that sense or feeling of acceptance of who I am and what I want - from myself as well as from the people around me. Freedom from judgment” (Appendix B, Response 59).

Relating her reflections on her personal definition of safer- space and how she experiences such a space back to the discussion that was evolving around gender-identity and exclusions related thereto, she connects her definition to a broader wish:

¹¹⁸ I use the term “feel-know” or “feel knowledge” (Ettinger 2009: 10) here as I want to stress that these people do not just ‘feel’ threatened but that in most cases this threat is real and can become true at any time. The term feel-knowing helps to make the connection between knowing and feeling more visible than it usually is.

¹¹⁹ As explained in chapter 1.3.2. I chose pseudonyms that include the gender-identity of the participants to the discussion, as I find it important for the reader to get an impression of how they are located within hierarchical structures arising from sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

¹²⁰ Play refers to any practice within the broad context of BDSM.

“I also have to take my responsibility in working towards that for others. And for me, considering the above, that doesn't mean that I should merely refrain from harassing others. It also means that I want to acknowledge others the way they are and with the kinky desires they have - even if they are not my own, even if the way they are is not to my own personal tastes. Because I remember how intensely elating that experience was for me” (Appendix B, Response 59).

The acknowledgement of differing experience seems to be one of the key issues when discussions around exclusion, inclusion and, at the root of all this, who belongs, occur. The ‘freedom of judgment’, which according to my interpretation of Mango-females words means the freedom to not be judged by others and the freedom to not judge others, relates very closely to the notion of co-existing within a space despite differences. Another participant to the discussion, I call her Grapefruit-butch, reflects on her own path with regard to accepting variety in the scene. She describes her changing attempts towards organizing the event and how she started to stop judging, who is part of the community and who is not:

“At that time I chose to organize for everyone, to invite everyone for whom it is important to be part of this community and that it is not my right to judge who fits in and who doesn't [...] and this regardless of how much work I put into it. Because it is more important to me that an event is created that is open, that allows differences and thus respects the self-definition and the personal responsibility of the participants¹²¹.”

Sharing her personal experience and how she decided to deal with the unchooseness of the scene and its members, Grapefruit-butch gives us an insight into how she views the (queer) feminist community. In order to see how exclusions around this issue have been voiced earlier (2011), I will refer now to a text that focuses on a particular trans* exclusion, the one of trans* women. Its title is: Same discussion as every year: Intervention against the (conscious or unconscious) exclusion of trans* women¹²² (w.i.r. 2011). Written from the radical left-wing trans* network called w.i.r., it is a seven pages long pamphlet that discusses the different kinds of exclusions trans* women face in so called women, lesbian, trans* spaces (often a form of ‘safer spaces’) and within the left-wing scene in general. To add to my elaboration above I

¹²¹ “Ich habe damals mich dafür entschieden, daß ich für alle organisieren möchte, und alle einladen möchte, denen es wichtig ist, an dieser Community teilzuhaben und das es mir nicht zusteht, darüber zu urteilen, wer da jetzt reinpasst und wer nicht, egal wieviel Arbeit ich reinstecke. Weil es mir wichtiger ist, ein Event zu schaffen, daß offen ist, Unterschiedlichkeiten zulässt, und eben auch die Selbstdefinition und Eigenverantwortung der Teilnehmenden respektiert“ (Appendix B, Response 24).

¹²² The German title is: Same discussion as every year: Intervention gegen die (bewusste oder unbewusste) Ausgrenzung von trans*Frauen.

provide a quote from w.i.r. with their definitions of exclusions that occur in so-called mainstream spaces, but also in political spaces:

„Exclusions happen every day, most of them hidden and not explicitly formulated but produced through wider societal conditions and their re-production as well within spaces of the scene [the radical left-wing scene]. If this scene is predominantly German, white, masculine, young and “healthy”, this is not due to the fact that “the others” are apolitical, but rather, for example, because sexist idiots are not expelled, their own whiteness not reflected and ramps on stairs are believed to be redundant because “people in wheelchairs” don’t come anyway. Even if women’s spaces are supposed to be open for trans* women, and although they are not explicitly uninvited, through the behaviour of other people it often becomes clear, that they are not welcomed” (w.i.r. 2011: 1).

Combining w.i.r.’s statement with my own experience, my underlying assumption in this thesis becomes, that social and political exclusions are happening every day (even within (queer) feminist scenes, which, as I stated earlier, attempt and claim, to be inclusive), but only some of them become/are rendered visible. Speaking about the particular experiences of trans*women w.i.r. writes critically: “trans* women, for example, are not acknowledged as girls from birth. Even in adulthood, they often have to fight for the recognition of their gender identity. With their lives as women they give up all the male privilege - if they have ever even had it” (w.i.r. 2011: 2). This is an important reminder, as people often assume that what makes trans* women’s experiences different from the experiences of cis women, is that they still have or have access to so-called ‘male privilege’. I argue in line with w.i.r, that this assumption, neglects the fact that trans* women do indeed have different experiences from women who were female-assigned at birth, as they had to fight for the recognition of ‘being women’ before being perceived as such. This is a difference that, if we negate it, makes trans* women appear more privileged, while the reality of the violence they experience before they are ever acknowledged as a person, tells a different story (see also chapter 2.2). Moreover this links back to the quote at the beginning of this chapter in which the term ‘women*’ was criticized, as well as to the material analyzed, because in both cases categories are discussed as insufficient of containing the complex realities certain identities face. This is especially true for people who do not fit into well-known categories like women and men. Explaining that there are indeed people who are outside the simplistic women/men (here referring to trans* men) scheme, Fig-transmasculinity reminds us of the fact that those categories are only suitable for a small part of the conference attendees:

„I find spaces for women and trans people, meaning spaces without cis men, good and important (just as I do for women’s spaces i.e. spaces without transgender and cis men. It is not my aim that everyone should always be allowed to go everywhere.) But the description „woman or transman“ is definitely only suitable for a fraction of the people that I met at the conference¹²³.“

Furthermore, Fig speaks about the different experience/ reactions from the scene towards trans* masculinities and trans* femininities. While Fig feels supported as a trans* masculinity in searching for ‘their own path beyond gender and to see how this can be lived outside of playparties’, Fig observed that this is different for trans* femininities. So Fig concludes: “I wish the same [support] for trans femininities or transgender that are ‘male-assigned at birth¹²⁴” (Appedix B, Response 51). Summarizing the text that engages with the multiple exclusions trans* women and trans* femininities often have to face within left-wing and (queer) feminist scenes, w.i.r. stresses the following points: trans*women are women, all women are different from one other, do not socially exclude people on the basis of assumptions you make about their identity, and, in addition, do not base such assumptions on their bodies. If you feel strongly about not having someone in your space, reflect on why and what exactly is the matter (w.i.r. 2011: 4). I assume they are referring to the possibility of so-called trans* hate that is often expressed by ascribing a male sex to trans* women because of bodily traits that have been traditionally linked to male bodies. Rightly they ask for a critical self-reflection on these and similar judgments. Finally, I will list some of w.i.r.’s political demands, which are that trans* women should never be excluded from women/lesbian only spaces and exclusions should be explicit rather than indirect and therefore implicit. They also call for more self-reflection within the scene in order to avoid implicit exclusions that take away important spaces (be they empowering or safer), especially for the marginalized group of trans* women. Keeping in mind this important intervention on exclusion of trans* women and the other valuable suggestions w.i.r. makes in mind, I will proceed to the actual discussion under focus. However, first I aim to complicate the matter even more by paying attention to identities that fall outside of the simplistic women/men scheme. As already stated in chapter 2, which engages with forms of trans* hate and trans*

¹²³ Ich finde Räume für Frauen und TransLeute, also ohne cis Männer gut und wichtig. (Ebenso wie Frauenräume, die dann ohne Transgender und ohne cis Männer wären - und deshalb auch ohne mich. Es geht mir gar nicht darum, dass immer alle überall rumlaufen sollen). Aber die Beschreibung "Frau oder Transmann" passt sicher nur für einen Bruchteil der Menschen, denen ich auf den Konferenzen begegnet bin (Appedix B, Response 51).

¹²⁴ Im Gegenteil ich hatte das Gefühl bestärkt zu werden meinen Weg jenseits der Geschlechter zu suchen und zu schauen, wie das auch jenseits einer Playparty lebbar ist. Genau das Gleiche wünsche ich mir für Transweiblichkeiten bzw. transgender, die „male assigned at birth“ sind (Appedix B, Response 51).

activism (2.2.1 *Definitions of terms used*), I feel the need to mention here again that there are new forms of collective identities emerging within (queer) feminist scenes. Groups like genderqueers, agenders, genderfluids and transgender people are becoming more visible forces fighting for their often non-genitalistic understanding of their identity fragments and lives. In the following pages, I intend to discuss in particular the troubles and discussions that have emerged from the existence and demands of these kinds of sex¹²⁵-identities.

3.2.2. “THE WOMEN/LESBIAN SCENE IS INVITED BUT, CIS-MEN ARE EXCLUDED”¹²⁶,

Now I want to exemplify how this text about trans* women’s exclusions mattered in spring 2014. The discussion under focus evolved within the online space of Fetlife, which is the biggest online BDSM community platform. The discussion includes over 60 contributions from 22 people and happened over a timespan of approximately one month. The participation rate ranges from one person who participated with 18 messages to people who just contributed once. The gendered self-identifications of people cover a broad spectrum. Extracted from their profiles on the website and their own self-definitions within the discussion, there were seven female-, six genderqueer-, three butch-, two femme-, one female to male-, two transgender (one being a trans* femininity and another one being a trans* masculinity) - and two unclear- identified people who wrote within the thread. For my analysis, I divide the discussion into different categories which are closely related. In the first part, I engage with the invitation policy and how the discussion around the exclusion started (3.2.1 and 3.2.2). After that, the chapter moves into a short engagement with recent changes and (attempted) transformations of ‘safer spaces’, as introduced above. What follows is a critical analysis of the implicit and explicitly constructed ‘we’ within the discussion under focus. This then leads into a brief summary of the politics of emotions that, I argue, are visible in the terms and phrases used by some of the participants to the

¹²⁵ Sex refers here to biological sex, the traditional opposite to gender, yet I want to draw attention to my own experience that a lot of genderqueer people also define their sexuality in rather fluid ways, for example, as pansexual. This means that they feel sexual attraction to a spectrum of identities rather than for one particular one (other genderqueers, transgenders, (trans)* women, (trans)* men). This is a logical consequence as definitions of sexuality are based on the assumptions of two identity entities (e.g. woman and woman) relating to each other. However, even if just one of the people in the relationship does not clearly identify within these fixed categories, defining a clear-cut sexuality seems either redundant or complicated.

¹²⁶ This is the exclusion which is explicitly expressed in the registration announcement of the Conference.

discussion (3.2.5). The start of the discussion is ‘the exclusion’ of a person from the conference, yet I analyze a broader topic that is, as I will show in my argument, underlying this particular case. Rather than assuming that this is a single happening, I will show how it stands for the experiences with exclusions as well as with negotiating spaces of a whole group of people. I am especially curious about how people translate their own experiences and bring it into the negotiation in order to further the discussion. I will show the outcomes, suggestions and solutions that have been found, as whether and how, the situatedness of the different participants played a role within the negotiation. As before, language and the usage of terms will play a central role during my investigation. I will now summarize briefly the happenings that brought about the discussion. A thread announced the BDSM conference that has been held for the last few years by and for the women, lesbian and trans* kink- community in a big German-speaking city. Shortly after the discussion thread with the announcement was online, a person enquires about the ‘door policy’ which states:

"We are happy to announce that registration for the WLTI (women, lesbian, trans, inter) bdsm conference 2014 is open! Everyone who feels connected to the women/lesbian scene is invited, but cis-men are excluded" (Appendix B, Thread Opening Post).

This seems to be rather clear-cut at first sight, yet apparently a non-invitation e-mail was sent out by the conference organizers to one individual who I name Pear-transfemininity¹²⁷. The e-mail, which is written in a very friendly tone, reads that the participation as well as the workshops that have been offered by Pear, are not welcomed. Explaining why she decided to ask questions in the thread regarding her exclusion, Pear-transfemininity writes:

“Sometimes the term “cis-men” is used synonymously with “male assigned at birth” and I was simply insecure. I never received an answer to my question about the door policy, but when I tried to register I received a refusal of both my workshop offer and my registration” (Appendix B, Response 33).

The initial question raised by Pear kicks off a broad discussion on the topic of door policies, safer- spaces, identities, bodies, privileges, different forms of oppression, differences, and emotions. While the first part of the discussion is mainly focused on the concrete exclusion and the discrepancy between the exclusion of Pear-transfemininity and the published door policy, the discussion eventually evolves into a more general one. The reactions of participants on the

¹²⁷ For more accessible reading I will use the name in this way. However the correct way of writing the name in order to match the self-identification of the person perfectly would be: “Pear-(trans*)femininity”.

exclusion laid open by Pear-transfemininity cover a wide range of opinions. Apple-genderqueer, for example, reacts by saying: “The exclusion that has been made transparent above shocked me greatly, as did its manner^{128!}” and they go to conclude:

“But I will transform this sentiment into the optimistic anticipation that this could be an opportunity to break open deeply-rooted things and that people will think twice about which kind of treatment they wish for themselves and consequently, how they wish to treat others...”¹²⁹

Other contributors defend the decision of the organizers by stating that it is their right to exclude people without defending or explaining themselves. The argument is that the door policy should not be discussed as it is the organizers’ decision who to include or exclude from an event. However, other participants refer back to the published door policy and to the fact that the excluded person falls concretely within the stated target group and therefore should be welcomed (Appendix B, Response 14). After the first posts, it becomes clear that the strong discontent, stems especially from the discrepancy between the door policy and the exclusion:

“And here lies the only point that I criticize: why does the organizing team contradict its own statement? Why is an individual, who is clearly belonging to ‘women lesbian trans* inter’ singled out and rejected^{130?}”

Generally speaking, the atmosphere of the discussion remained respectful and mostly strongly self-reflective. The different participants often thanked each other for their contributions as well as regularly acknowledging the conference organizers’ hard work. Thus in spite of the criticism of the exclusion, people seemed to try to stay accountable to each other, as well as to their differences. The attempt of the participants to understand each other’s opinions is a strong element I saw when reading and analyzing the writings. This could as well be due to the fact that most of them would encounter each other in person at the conference. That said, there are nevertheless moments where the discussion turns fiercer, especially when words like ‘transphobic’ and ‘sexist’ fall for the first time. After the post that included such terms, which

¹²⁸ Mich hat der oben transparent gemachte Ausschluss sowie die Art und Weise enorm negativ überrascht! (Appendix B, Response 13).

¹²⁹ Aber diese Empfindung wandle ich für mich um in die optimistische Erwartung, dass dieser Anlass etwas Festgefahrenes aufbrechen kann und Menschen ein zweites Mal darüber nachdenken, welchen Umgang sie sich selbst gegenüber wünschen und welchen sie, in der Schlussfolgerung, Anderen zukommen lassen möchten... (Appendix B, Response 13).

¹³⁰ Und hier kommen wir zu dem einzigen Punkt, den ich kritisiere: Warum widerspricht das Orga-Team seiner eigenen Aussage? Warum wird eine Einzelperson, die ganz klar zu "FrauenLesbenTrans*Inter" gehört (!), herausgegriffen und abgewiesen? (Appendix B, Response 13).

were read as accusations by some, the dynamics of the discussion changes briefly, yet the self-reflective tone brings it back to a constructive level. Finally, the result of the discussion was that the organizing team admitted that the reason given for the exclusion was wrong, as the person's self-identification was in fact within the invited target group. They indicate, however, that the exclusion will be maintained in view of a personal veto. I quote the organizing team here:

“There is no consent regarding the exclusion of Pear. The first e-mail that she published was written by just one person from the organizing team. After thorough discussions no consent could be reached, yet we decided to respect a veto based on personal reasons. We want to stress that the exclusion is not based on the self- definition by [Pear]¹³¹” (Appendix B, Response 63).

Providing the beginning, the general trajectory as well as the outcome of the discussion I will now proceed to the close-readings of other topics that are prevalent throughout the negotiation and the opinions raised within the discussion. Quite early on in the dispute, the topic broadens towards the general dissatisfaction with ‘safer space’ policies in (queer) feminist contexts. While some people argue for more inclusions, others call for more concrete separations. One of the most active persons throughout the discussion, let me call her Plum-femme voices her discontent with the already existing openness. She states that she would not choose to invite the same group as the organization team did, as this makes the conference not her space anymore. Plum would not invite people who have been male-assigned at birth and do not fully identify as women. However, although Plum-femme is dissatisfied with the door-policy, she nevertheless defends the fact that Pear¹³² should be allowed to attend. Referring to the description of the target group (which includes everyone except cis men, so long as they feel connected to the women/lesbian scene) and Pear's self-definition, Plum speaks up against the exclusion and for Pear-transfemininity's access to the conference. However later on in the discussion, Plum-femme presents a more ambivalent conclusion, for example when she refers to a situation in which she herself was excluded from a party. She reflects on this experience stating that if she is not welcome she does not force entry as she would not gain anything from upsetting other people in

¹³¹ „Es gibt keinen Konsens im Hinblick auf den Ausschluss von [Pear]. Die erste E-Mail, die sie hier veröffentlicht hat, wurde von nur einer Person des Orga-Teams verfasst. Nach ausführlichen Diskussionen konnte kein Konsens gefunden werden und dennoch haben wir entschieden, ein Veto aus persönlichen Gründen zu respektieren. Wir möchten ausdrücklich darauf hinweisen, dass der Ausladung nicht die von [Pear] formulierte Selbstdefinition zu Grunde liegt“ (Appendix B, Response 63).

¹³² I have started to refer to the participants only by their fruit-name to make the text more readable, as I assume the reader has already internalized the people's self-definitions by now.

the scene. Instead, she accepts her own exclusion and prefers to go to other parties. For me it seems that Plum-femme is implicitly suggesting that Pear could or should do the same. Thus, while on the one hand stating that the ‘right’ thing under these circumstances, meaning the published door policy, would be to include Pear, she positions herself on the other hand critically to this policy and its consequences.

3.2.3. THE POLITICS OF EMOTIONS

Referring to Sara Ahmed’s book “The Cultural Politics of Emotions” (2004), I will proceed with my analysis by thinking about how ‘liking’ someone or something is social and therefore political. Ahmed speaks about the ‘outside in’ model of emotions where it is assumed that emotions are something ‘we have’.

“The crowd becomes like the individual, the one who ‘has feelings’. Feelings become a form of social presence rather than self-presence. In my model of sociality of emotions, I suggest that emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place. So emotions are not simply something ‘I’ or ‘we’ have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the ‘I’ and the ‘we’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others” (Ahmed 2004: 10).

Ahmed brings a strong argument forward here. She places emotions not as imprints on individuals that can be possessed, but argues that emotions can be seen as shapers of a ‘we’. These emotions can therefore not just shape but be the shape, in the contact with others. In this part of the thesis, I will analyze how this holds true for the discussions around ‘safer spaces’.

HOW FEAR SHAPES THE DISCUSSION AROUND ‘SAFER SPACES’

The discussion continues with a statement, in which the argument of a participant to the discussion (Plum-femme) seems to undergo a sudden change. While her writings have previously mostly been marked by understanding and openness strong words like ‘forcefully’, ‘all of a sudden’, ‘worry some’ and ‘robbing someone of one’s space’ suggest a shift in mind-set. Speaking about the ‘breaking open’ of women’s spaces by other identities and her dissatisfaction, the used vocabulary suggests different things here. Let me analyze this closer.

One underlying element, I argue, is the assumption that women, lesbians, trans* men/trans* women spaces were a closed circle/entity and that at a certain point in time, people holding different identity fragments started coming in. Talking about a feeling of 'safety' that was disrupted abruptly, Plum argues that the feelings and concerns of the former inside (here the older target group) were ignored by what she calls an 'automatic evolvment' into trans* spaces, trans* meaning here especially trans* femininities (as they are not explicitly mentioned in Plum-femme's list) and non-binary people with a body that was male-assigned at birth. The second assumption in this argument is that people who were previously in a space have the right to decide shifts in inclusions and exclusions. Plum suggests strongly in another message that they (meaning the people that want to keep the 'traditional' women's space for themselves) 'have never been asked about their opinion' on opening up. This means that they apparently 'own' the space and changes should be discussed with them and whilst respecting their feelings and concerns, as Plum's words illustrates. The question here becomes, is it already a so-called privilege to 'have' a space and to defend it against whoever is defined as 'not (yet) belonging'? The emotion of fear remains dominant within the contributions of the discussion partners that argue for non-inclusiveness. Queer is equated with 'everyone' when it is stated that if a space is defined as 'queer', everyone can enter as it does not have a clear definition that can be observed and enforced. Melon-femme, for example, argues strongly against queer-spaces she writes:

“And for the record, I agree with @[Plum-femme] about safe spaces. I do NOT identify as queer, I do NOT wish to attend a conference which is open to everyone because that would NOT be a safe space for me and I would choose not to attend. There is a presumption that everyone is queer which makes me feel very alienated. There are plenty of pansexual and queer events for those who are so inclined” (Appendix B, Response 29).

Strongly negating feeling identified with the term 'queer' in any way, Melon-femme speaks about her alienation with the assumption that 'everyone is queer'. By suggesting that people who feel that way should go to events that are specifically for pansexual and queer people, she gives the impression of showing 'them' the door (Freelon 2014). Interestingly, Melon does not indicate here where the presumption everyone was queer came from. The reactions to these two arguments in the discussion concentrate on different points. Female-Peach argues, for example, that it is 'totally fine' not to identify as queer, but points out that the conference is already queer in her view as she witnessed “plenty of queer and gay sex there” (Appendix B, Response 36). This suggests that there is no so-called 'outside' that tries to 'enter' a space or a community,

rather what is deemed ‘alienating’ by some is already within. Excluding what is already part of the community seems to be a level of exclusion quite different from the separatist aim that were a powerful force in the formation of women, lesbian and trans* men¹³³ spaces in the first place. Another attempt to counter the argument is a form of ‘oppression translation’ (see as well chapter 3.3) which happens from a privileged point of view. Grapefruit-butch explains ‘how hard it is when she reflects together with her male colleagues, why they all feel that a man is more suitable for the team than for example the woman with a migrant background¹³⁴. She stresses that we have to question why we have this feeling that someone is suitable and someone else is not. Her solution is “to proceed by consciously choosing the woman with a migrant background” (Appendix B, Response 24). Translating this story to the question of fears and rejections towards certain participants at the conference, she proceeds: “And I wish that the participants of the conference would critically challenge their own rejections and fears in a similar way.¹³⁵” Explaining and naming the fears underlying the strong arguments defending women, lesbian and trans* men spaces occurs as well. In particular homo*hate¹³⁶ in the form of sexual objectification of lesbians is mentioned. The term ‘male lesbian’, which is used by Pear as one of her workshop titles, apparently stirs up memories of cis men using the term to approach lesbians. Plum-femme writes that anyone using this expression makes her ‘uncomfortable’, gives her ‘the creeps’ and makes her ‘angry’. Most likely those reactions are caused by the violence she has experienced when the term was used towards her. Although this is a valuable indicator of what kind of safety is necessary for women and lesbians at the conference, I still feel the need to point out the underlying assumption here that Pear is intrinsically linked to the category of cis men. Grapefruit-butch, referring again to the need to reflect on feelings of discomfort and their social constructedness writes:

¹³³ I start to call historical ‘women’s spaces’ in this way now to show how only trans* men were/are included whilst trans* women, including trans* femininities, are still fighting for acknowledgement and therefore inclusion. However I want to state critically that this is not a traditional ‘progress story’. Rather negotiations have and are taking place which shift borders of categories or start including or excluding certain kinds of identities.

¹³⁴ I feel the need to critically state here that the term „migrant background“, is highly contested. As explained earlier I use the term People of Colour or Person of Colour, as it relates to the experience of racism rather than to the ‘background’ of a person.

¹³⁵ „Und genauso so ein Hinterfragen der eigenen Ablehnung und Ängste würde ich mir von den TeilnehmerInnen und Organisatorinnen der [...] Konferenz wünschen” (Appendix B, Response 24).

¹³⁶ Again I change the common term homophobia into the more appropriate term of homo* hate. The asterix stands for the inclusion of the hate against the sexual orientations “bisexual” and “pansexual”.

“But if a self-identified woman/lesbian makes someone feel uncomfortable, not because of something they are doing or saying but just because they are read as a cis- man, and not a trans woman - which is more prone to happen if that transgender person isn't performing in a clearly feminine way - then I think it's up to the person who feels uncomfortable to reflect on that and question the conclusion that because she feels uncomfortable, a category of people should be excluded just so that she doesn't feel uncomfortable anymore” (Appendix B, Response 28).

Pointing to the trouble often referred to as uncomfortable feelings if someone is not ‘performing’ their gender in a clearly readable or definable way, Grapefruit-butch identifies that feeling as being one that needs to be reflected upon by the person having it. She supports her argument by also stating that, “There will be people that make you feel uncomfortable at [the] conference, there have to be at an event that size”. I interpret this sentence in the way that Grapefruit says: ‘safer space’ does not necessarily mean a feeling of ‘comfort’, because discomfort is not the same as ‘feel-knowing’ (Ettinger 2009: 10) unsafe. Rather than excluding a person according to the discomfort their gender-performance triggers in some people, Grapefruit re-directs the ‘problem’ of misreading back to where it came from. Moreover I suggest that she argues that people who identify as women or/and lesbians but are male-assigned at birth should not have the pressure of ‘performing’ femininity right. By that I argue Grapefruit points to the societal assumption that seems to repeat itself here in a (queer) feminist space that ‘we’ know what femininity is and what it is supposed to look like. People (especially people that are ascribed traditionally male body- traits) seem to get sanctioned if they don’t do their gender (here their femininity) ‘right’ (Butler 1988: 522). Or as Butler states in her article “*Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*”: “[...] indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished” (Butler 1988: 522). This way of determining who is ‘woman’ enough or ‘feminine’ enough to be perceived as a trans* woman or a trans* femininity is attacked by Pear who, in a statement rails strongly against being placed in the category of cis man on the basis of assumptions or projections about how she presents or lives her life:

“When I am excluded because of my “maleness”, then that only demonstrates that my opposite is taking something out on me that does not have anything to do with me. I am excluded substitutionally for cis- men, in spite of the fact that I am a transperson. And that is not acceptable. I am unwilling to be the target for undifferentiated androphobia” (Appendix B: Response 41).

I chose this quote because it shows how a trans* femininity narrates her feelings and in fact gets implicitly substituted for cis- men as it is assumed she is intrinsically linked to the violence that

are mostly, yet not exclusively, linked with this identity category. I argue that this elaboration on how violence is socially closely linked to certain identity categories and assumptions around these shows in which mine fields trans* femininities often negotiate their existence and consequently their inclusion. I do not intend to ponder on ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ here as Plum’s, as well as Pear’s experiences are valuable and true. Yet, on a political note, I am curious how some forms of feminism are linked with a category which is often understood as stable, namely the category “women”¹³⁷, and how this category is always constructed as non-violent, targeted, marked and victimized¹³⁸, consequently often leaving little or no space for other forms of marginalization. w.i.r. also states critically that a space without cis men is not necessarily a safe space, because women can also perpetuate oppressions (w.i.r. 2011: 2). What they are pointing to, I would argue, are the complex realities of power, in which subjects are always located. Studies about domestic violence in cis people’s and trans* people’s relationships suggest, for example, that violence is predominantly perpetrated by the cis person against the trans* person. This reflects certain social power dynamics wherein cis identities are in the dominant position, while trans* persons are in the marginalized position¹³⁹. While feminists often assume(d) that ‘women’ are a very, or even the most, marginalized group, critique of lesbians and Women of Colour have historically already shown how multiple marginalization’s impact different women differently.

HOW (NOT) TO APPROACH PRIVILEGES?

Later in the thread, the participants start to discuss privileges and how they tie into the notion of ‘safer spaces’. Peach-female announces critically that “the idea that such a space would be ‘safe’ for everyone because of the door policy is evidence of an ignorant approach regarding one’s own

¹³⁷ See also Butler’s investigation into the category of “women” as a basis for feminism in chapter 1. I “‘Women’ as the Subject of Feminism” (Butler 1999 2-8).

¹³⁸ See as well the numerous discussions of so called ‘radical feminists’ (mainly in the US- context) that argue against the inclusion of especially trans* women by stating that trans* women are actually men. They are often dismissed as TERF’s by other brands of feminists, which means- trans* exclusive radical feminists- and is at times used as a slur.

¹³⁹ This is for example shown in a recently published report: “2012 Report on Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV- Affected Communities in the U.S.” “The report found that transgender survivors were two (2.0) times as likely to face threats/intimidation within violent relationships, and nearly two (1.8) times more likely to experience harassment within violent relationships. “Transgender people face increased risk of violence because of their gender identity and transphobia within intimate partnerships” (transgenderlawcenter website: 2013).

privileges¹⁴⁰” And she adds that the conference was definitely not a safe space for everyone who was invited by stating: “as for safer spaces: being able to feel safe at such an event might have something to do with certain privileges, for example, being perceived as *white*, cis and non-disabled” (Appendix B, Response 36). Shifting the focus from the less privileged groups to markers of privilege like ‘*white*’, ‘cis’ and ‘non-disabled’, Peach’s words aim at exposing the implicit ‘we’ that created the ‘safer space’ for themselves. If this holds true for (queer) feminist scenes and its women, lesbian, trans* men, spaces this definitely paints a less diverse and inclusive picture than assumed. Yet the points made by Peach about privilege do not go uncontested. Melon-femme, for example, responds ironically:

“Thank you so much for reminding me of my privileges as a woman and a femme dyke, particularly on International Women’s Day. The irony of this is astounding. Do I really need to point out that 1 in 3 women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime? Or that women in Europe can expect to earn at least 25% less in her lifetime than her male colleagues? Or that homophobia is alive and kicking? No? Then stop lecturing me about privilege. This is not derailing the topic, this is saying that creating a hierarchy of oppressions helps no one and actually creates alienation” (Appendix B, Response 39).

Speaking about hierarchies of oppression and how this creates alienation, Melon-femme refers to her own less- privileged identity markers as a woman and a femme dyke. Pointing out the experiences of violence and discrimination most women experience and her own experiences of discrimination as a feminine lesbian, Melon-femme attempts to block the discussion (“lecture”) about privileges. Yet if her aim is not to create the alienating hierarchy of oppression, as she states, would she not need to acknowledge that forms of trans* hate, discrimination against differently abled bodies and People of Colour, are as existent as the oppressions she faces? One of the participants to the discussion uses the metaphor of a ‘growling guard dog’ which tries to protect a space from ‘invaders’ to describe her personal sentiments about the discussion around the exclusion at issue. This comparison with a ‘growling guard dog’ that tries to protect a space is a vivid metaphor for the defense mechanism that often seems to kick in when established spaces (like women, lesbian, trans* men- spaces) that have been hardly fought for are supposed to change their shape. As I have already shown before, and as evident again here in the term ‘invaders’, a stable and ‘pure’ inside is imagined and enforced. Coming back to privileges,

¹⁴⁰ „die vorstellung dass so ein raum per einladungspolitik ein für alle "sicherer raum" werden könnte zeugt von einer extrem ignoranten haltung eigenen privilegien gegenüber. die [...] konferenz war für viele, die zweifellos eingeladen waren, definitiv kein sicherer raum“ (Appendix B, Response 36).

speaking openly about privileges and therefor also about the subjects that possess them, namely *white*, cis and non-disabled people, Peach-female awakened ‘the guard dog’ in some, who feel that their less-privileged locations get neglected. Importantly I want to stress here that this can only happen if the basis of thinking location is one-dimensional. I argue strongly here that the multifaceted situatedness any subject is placed in has to include ambiguities, like for example, being privileged in one respect, and at the same time, being less- privileged or oppressed in others. A multifaceted approach –based on the notion of kaleidoscopic identity fragments and the knowledge that one privileged location does not erase another location of oppression– is clearly needed in order to understand that there may be virtually no subjects that are located solely on the oppressor or solely on the oppressed side.

EXCLUDING DICHOTOMIES? - FEMALE EXPERIENCE VS. TRANS* EXPERIENCE

Throughout the chapter, I have already provided the reader with different kinds of approaches when trans* experiences and female experiences were negotiated against each other. For example, when speaking about privileges women’s experience with discrimination was put forward in order to put a stop to the discussion on cis privileges among others. In this part of the chapter, I am curious if this dichotomy is prevalent throughout the discussion, and if so, how a dichotomy between female and trans* experience is created. First, I want to take a look at the people who speak for a, what I will call ‘dividing difference’, then I will provide examples of voices that speak for similarities and connecting points and the need for re-configuration of traditional categories such as ‘women’. One of the most vocal speakers against shared experiences of people that have been socialized as women and trans* femininities is Melon-femme. She states:

“I want to attend a conference where I can share experiences with people who have been socialized (sic!) as women or who are living in female bodies. I share common experiences with cis-gendered women, trans women, and trans guys on some level. I doubt very much that I have anything in common with a cis-gendered male who lives life on a day-to-day basis as a male even if that person self-identifies as a lesbian” (Appendix B, Response 39).

Naming all the categories of people with whom she shares common experiences (cis women, trans* women and, to some extent, trans guys), she is very clear where the cut-off point for her

is. What is very apparent is that Melon is not respecting the self-identification of Pear (if she is indeed referring to Pear here). For her, ‘living as’ an identity makes the difference to ‘feeling as’ an identity and she assumes that the only thing that connects the person she is speaking about to herself is the self-identification as a lesbian, which she seems to reject as a label rather than recognising it as an experience. Melon-femme talks strongly about experiences as ‘the factor’ here (remember the elaboration on experience as one factor in a larger picture from chapter 1.2.2), yet bodies (e.g. cis gendered male and being perceived as such), keep coming back, at least between the lines. Finally, Melon’s statement reveals that the factor is not just experience but also a certain kind of body that is assumed to, and most likely creates, certain kinds of experiences (‘who lives life on a day-to-day basis as a male’). However, although she can assume how people react or interact with a person according to their body or bodily traits, she assumes also what kind of experiences this living as being perceived as male creates for the person. I ask here: how can she know? Destabilizing my interpretation that the difference boils down to a certain body-type or bodily traits that are traditionally linked to maleness, Melon-femme adds:

“My opposition to cis-gendered males attending is nothing to do with how a person looks, it is about the lack of shared life experiences. Furthermore, if I wanted to go to a pansexual conference then I would do that but in my experience they are not safe spaces for me because without exception I have been ogled, harassed or non-consensually touched by cis-gendered men. The risk of this happening to me is significantly reduced in the more (for me) respectful and safer environment of women and trans only spaces” (Appendix B, Response 39).

Again this relates back to what I argued earlier, that certain kinds of experiences (e.g. harassment) are closely linked to a specific identity group, namely cis men for obvious reasons. Sharing her own experience of harassment, non-consensual touching and being stared at, Melon-femme speaks up for spaces that reduce the risk of such things happening by excluding the identity group mostly responsible for such violence. Yet what should not go uncontested here is that she forcefully places a trans* femininity (as no one in the discussion argued for the inclusion of cis men) into that category. In fact Pear speaks up for herself stating:

“I am not a cis-man. My understanding is, that a cis-man is a person who was “male-assigned at birth”, AND who feels properly described and comfortable with that, AND who identifies with the “male” role in society as well as in relationships. And I don’t - I feel neither well-described nor comfortable, and I do not identify with the “male” role, neither in society nor in private contexts. I have never felt like a “man”, nor as a child as a “boy”. The only thing that

applies to me is that I was “male-assigned at birth”. It seems most disrespectful to me that some people repeatedly try to ignore the fact that I belong to the spectrum of (trans-)femininities” (Appendix B, Response 41).

Speaking up strongly against the category of cis man and outing all her aspects of lived experiences, Pear fights for the acknowledgement of not being what she seems to be to some. This reminds me very much of lesbians, especially those on the feminine spectrum, who fight against the ‘invisibility’ of their sexuality both in the mainstream, but unfortunately also in feminist spaces. However, coming back to the topic of identity-categories: If a trans* femininity is being associated with, or even regarded as, a cis man by others, she is being brought into connection with the very category she does not identify with. Moreover, as shown in chapter 2.2, notably people on the trans* feminine spectrum experience multiple forms of violence that are located at the intersection of sexism, homo* hate and trans* hate. Melon-femme does not seem to consider that trans* femininities, despite of their male-assigned bodies, experience harassment too. This is particularly perverse as Pear may well experience violence at the hands of cis men herself. This is in my experience even sometimes true for feminine presenting cis men. This gives us the hint that ‘being trans*’, as in ‘being Roma’, is often not the issue when discrimination takes place. Rather it is often the ascribed identity fragment that needs no verification. Being put or placed in the identity category of cis men, which is generally in a position of power, shifts the position in this identity fragment from an oppressed one to the oppressing, while totally ignoring the marker ‘trans*’. The question here becomes, how do bodies play a role in the category of cis men and who gets to decide who is a cis men and what ‘traits’ or ‘behaviours’ make someone qualify for the category. Speaking about categories, Mango-female asks the other participants to the discussion if people are willing to “offer up” feeling of safety for some, in return for the attendance of someone who is not so easily place-able in a “handy familiar category”:

“Would you want to "offer up" the feeling of safety of these women for the attendance of someone like [Pear], who is apparently difficult to put in a handy familiar category? I really don't know. The fact is that there just aren't that many "male lesbians" in the scene, and unknown makes unloved” (Appendix B, Response 59).

Mango-female asks an interesting question here. If someone does not fit neatly into an identity category, how should we proceed? Apparently, and this happens throughout the discussion, people feel entitled to ‘choose’ categories for other people. At times Pear is placed in the cis men

box (see above) despite her clear personal aversion to that identity category and her constant fight for being recognized as who she is. Yet other people place her in the category of women while others, including herself, create a new category called trans*. Coming back to Mango-female and her statement that ‘unknown is unloved’ and her own struggle with ‘finding an answer’ we can say that the community seems to collectively struggle with ‘inconvenient’ identities. When these identities become more vocal and more visible by, for example, expressing their wish for inclusion, the community needs to engage with questions of in- and exclusion anew. Fig-transmasculinity, for example, argues: “I believe that women AND trans spaces are especially important for genderqueer people¹⁴¹.” Fig thus shows how people with a genderqueer identity can simultaneously transcend certain categories yet relate to them as well. I want to end this part of my elaboration with a quote, from Grape-female, that appealed to me as it shows how (queer) feminist politics often navigate a dual position between certain available categories and the desire to abolish them:

“Feminist-queer politics is an essentially dual position: on the one hand, we need to use the categories of gender in order to speak about our experiences, bodies, lives, and about the societies in which we exist. On the other, we understand that every gender category is partial and somewhat exclusionary. The attempt to perfect definitions, like who are cis-men, is hopeless, because there will always be someone who will be excluded from this definition, or included in it against their will. Instead, it seems more practical to me to get to the point, to understand what concretely bothers people, to understand what are the actual needs, and how can we as a community meet these needs - also and especially when there are different and contradicting needs” (Appendix B, Response 52).

Grape-female’s writing speaks again on the topic of categories and how they always have to fail at one point or another, because they either exclude people who should be included or include others that do not feel they belong. Grape speaks strongly about the needs of a community and points out beautifully how the needs within a (queer) feminist community are often different and even contradictory. I hope that I could work on, and with, these contradictions in my elaborations above to show how different experiences lead to differing conclusions and needs. I hope that by showing how the community negotiates differences in privileges, experiences and therefore needs, the strong factor of simultaneity became more apparent. Concluding further, one thing that becomes evident for me in this discussion is that the assumption of the shared experiences of ‘women’ needs to be re-examined. What kind of women are we speaking about? What kinds of

¹⁴¹ „Ich glaube Frauen UND Trans Räume sind gerade für genderqueere Menschen wichtig“ (Appendix B, Response 51).

bodies do they have? Do we include in our thinking people who experience racism, people who have to take hormones and what about differently abled bodies, non-normative sexualities etc.? In the next section I will show which strategies people use to negotiate their differing needs by making them explain- and understandable to each other.

3.3. BRIDGING TWO AND MORE EXCLUSIONS, ‘OPPRESSION TRANSLATION’ AS A STRATEGY

In this chapter I, will summarize the similarities and differences of the two case studies presented, namely a discussion about anti-Romaism and another about a trans* exclusion. I found a common, and therefore collective, strategy of what I call ‘oppression translation’ which is used by community members to bridge different forms of oppression and make them understandable to others. This chapter summarizes and presents aspects of this strategy and how it is used within the two negotiations presented. As I have shown, what becomes clear in both discussions is that the participants to the discussions start from differing positioning and knowledge. Generally speaking, certain reactions and critique towards exclusions seem to be more easily understandable for concerned people (e.g. PoC and non-binary trans* people) than for other groups (e.g. less concerned or unconcerned people). It seems to take more effort and time for people who are not directly concerned or not too closely related to a certain kind of exclusion, to be able to translate someone else’s experience with social exclusion into their own. This argument, which concerns the translation of differing experiences of oppression, accompanies me through the next part of this chapter, where I look at the practice of ‘oppression translation’. This concept is inspired by the idea of “radical work of translation” that has been developed by Eleonora Roldán Mendivil. She is an activist and academic in the German speaking context¹⁴². Oppression translation is the work of translating one experience of oppression (be it individual or structural) into another. This is usually done in order to make it perceivable and understandable for people who do not and never have experienced a specific kind of oppression. How this is strategically used by individuals and groups within (queer)

¹⁴² More information on her activism and work can be found on her blog: <http://cosasquenoserompen.noblogs.org/post/author/eleonora/>.

feminist scenes of the German speaking context will be shown in some examples that are extracted from the analyzed material. The question in this part of my analysis is: how are different discussions around exclusions entangled with each other by the participants of the discussion? Similarly to at the beginning of this chapter, I will start with an argument from w.i.r., an activist collective which I introduced earlier. Referring to the exclusions of trans* women¹⁴³ they state:

“An argument which is often used [to justify the exclusions of trans* women in e.g. women’s spaces] is the one of different experiences according to gender attributions in someone’s early years. I can only know how much similarity exists between mine and another person’s experience, if I talk to that person. People can often hardly believe it, but trans*women have experiences as women, often since their childhood. In addition, there are also other categories, in which people make differing experiences, even with regard to gender. People of Colour experience sexism that is in some ways different from the sexism *white* people experience. Nevertheless we hope, that no one would ever come to the conclusion to exclude all People of Colour because of that¹⁴⁴” (my emphasize).

Speaking about trans* women’s exclusions within (queer) feminist and left-wing scenes, w.i.r. uses the example of PoC here. Referring to the fact that different women have different experiences, they try to illustrate why it is not appropriate to exclude people from spaces just because they happen to have different or partly differing experiences. Yet at the same time they question the general assumptions of pre-existing differences, for example, by stating that trans* women, despite the widespread idea that ‘they’ are male-socialized, often have experiences as girls and women. The example of PoC is used here in order to stress that differing experiences (the experience of racism in this case) cannot justify exclusions from spaces that can potentially provide a ‘safer space’ for trans* women too. Referring to PoC in their argument, helps w.i.r. to exemplify their point about trans* women. w.i.r. seems to use this strategy in order to make the need for inclusion translate-able, most probably for people who would otherwise justify particular exclusions. Connecting this to the second chapter, where I discussed the theirstories of racism and trans* hate, as well as activist movements against these forms of oppressions, we can

¹⁴³ I find it important to add here, that w.i.r. uses the term trans* women in a rather broad sense. I suppose therefore that most trans* femininities are meant to be included, when they use the term trans* women.

¹⁴⁴ „Ein gern genanntes Argument sind unterschiedliche Erfahrungen aufgrund von geschlechtlichen Zuschreibungen in jüngeren Jahren. Wieviele Erfahrungen sich ähneln, erkenne ich erst, wenn ich mit den entsprechenden Menschen rede. Mensch mag es kaum glauben, aber auch trans*Frauen haben Erfahrungen als Frauen, manchmal sogar schon seit ihrer Kindheit. Zudem gibt es noch andere Kategorien, die unterschiedliche Erfahrungen, auch in Bezug auf Geschlecht, hervorbringen. PoC (People of Colour) erleben teilweise andere Sexismen als Weiße. Trotzdem würde hoffentlich niemand auf die Idee kommen PoC pauschal auszuschließen“ (w.i.r 2011: 5).

state that anti-racism struggles have a longer and more continuous theirstory than anti-trans* hate struggles. Therefore I conclude that the point is made in this particular way in order to push forward social justice for trans* women. w.i.r. does that by using the knowledge and awareness that is assumed to already be in place against exclusions that happen on the basis of racism.

However, I want to critically state here, that this example is based on the assumption that the readers of w.i.r.'s statement have this specific awareness of racism and exclusions that are linked to it. Regarding the discussion around racist connotated terms earlier in this chapter, I am, however, skeptical with regard to how far (queer) feminist communities have indeed developed a collective understanding of the oppressive structures of different kinds of racism. I will now proceed with a quote from the anti-Romaism discussion which interestingly uses the same argument but vice versa:

“That rrom_n_ja¹⁴⁵ change their tone in a discussion, because white researchers theorize their life through and through, is totally understandable to me. If a call for papers from a cis-man for a trans* topic were to be sent over this list, in which transphobic terms were used, then some people (I hope) would also get angry. And I hope, that nobody would then ask for the criticism to be voiced in a ‘nicer tone’”¹⁴⁶.

The writer, Sepide, refers here to an imagined scenario, namely a call for papers which includes trans* hateful terms. In the scenario, this call has been sent by a cis- man. The underlying idea here is that certain positioned people have less knowledge or awareness about oppression, especially if they do not affect them directly. This is why Sepide compares two less concerned positions, namely cis- man and *white*- man with each other. This suggests that some people are more prone to (re-)produce discrimination because of their locatedness. As I have shown earlier in my analysis, this holds partly true in both discussions, yet not exclusively so. The argument I am making here is that both statements try to translate one oppression into another. An underlying wish which quite clearly gets expressed here is for mutual understanding and respect. The authors of both statements seem to have some knowledge about the oppression of differently located people, in the first case PoC, in the second case trans* people. They try to draw on that

¹⁴⁵ Rrom_n_ja seems to be a special writing style that combines the feminine plural romnja with the ‘dynamic underline’ that is used creatively within (queer) feminist scenes to displace the gendered ending and by doing so create space for non-binary identified people.

¹⁴⁶ „Das rrom_n_ja dann die tonlage ein wenig erhöhen, weil weiße akademiker_innen ihr leben durchtheoretisieren ist für mich sehr verständlich. Würde auf dieser liste ein call von einem cis-mann zu irgendeinem trans*thema geschickt werden, der transphobe begriffe enthält, würden doch (hoffentlich) auch einige leute wütend reagieren. und ich hoffe, dass dann kein mensch nach einem "angenehmeren ton" der kritik verlangen würde“ (Appendix A: Mail 16).

knowledge, which often comes about by experiences or interpersonal exchange¹⁴⁷, and align it with another discrimination. I argue that they do this in order to make another, non-experienced oppression visible, and more, understandable to others. In both of the above quoted examples, ‘hope’ is expressed by making an implicit wish that those other groups not be excluded.

Another quote I want to analyze briefly is one that has been written in a more provocative tone, yet as I argue, tries to do something similar. The quote, I argue, attempts to expose the absurdity of non-concerned people that speak about ‘others’ and their experiences. The strong discontent with a paternalistic superiority that can be expressed by such a ‘speaking for’ is expressed by Rabija when she writes:

“WHO asked you for your OPINION, why don’t you ask us, why don’t you let us speak for ourselves? [Tim], do you want to also speak about what it’s like to be in the menopause??? You should write a book about this and how the ‘female’ body changes, then you should invite a lot of cis- men in order to speak about how you could help those older ‘women’... What gives you the right to speak about us^{148?}”

I will not focus on the tone of the argument here, as I am particularly interested in the content and the comparison that is made. In order to let people understand how it feels to be ‘spoken’ and ‘researched’ about by a group that has no living- experiences regarding a certain topic or problem, the writer refers to women in the menopause. Assuming that a lot of people on the list are female- bodied and therefore potentially¹⁴⁹ reaching menopause in their life, this is an interesting choice. Moreover, this argumentation might speak to feminists in particular, as the objectification of women and femininities within German-speaking societies is a subject most feminists are very aware of. Knowing that more people on the list are aware of how it feels to be spoken about as ‘women’, while less people are aware of how it is to be spoken about as a racialized minority (here Romnja), makes this argument an important translation of two different but not always mutually exclusive experiences¹⁵⁰. It seems that Rabija wants to make her own

¹⁴⁷ I will argue later in chapter 4, how interpersonal exchange plays a crucial role within the negotiations of differences at hand, as well as in the possibilities of translating them.

¹⁴⁸ „WER hat dich um deine MEINUNG gefragt, fragt uns doch , warum lasst ihr uns nicht für uns reden, [Tim] willst du auch darüber sprechen wies ist in die meno-pauso zu kommen??? schreib doch ein buch darüber wie sich der "weibliche" köper verändertert dabei, lade doch viele cis männer dazu sein, udn sprecht darüber wie man diesen älternden"frauen" helfen kann... was gibt euch das recht über uns zu reden??“ (Appendix A: Mail 23).

¹⁴⁹ I say potentially here, as not every female body reaches the menopause, since, for example, not all female bodies have reproductive organs for different kinds of reasons.

¹⁵⁰ Not mutually exclusive, because I assume that there are people on the list who experience objectifications in view of their “female” body as well as the objectification that comes with racialization or in this case with belonging to a minority that is researched and spoken about.

experience understandable to a broader audience. By making this move of ‘translation’ she opens up the possibility for more people to understand her position, as well as to understand the collective experience of Roma communities as the objects rather than subjects of research.

A similar translation is made in the other discussion by Grapefruit-butcht, when she compares the feelings expressed by people who spoke for an exclusion of Pear with the so-called glass-ceiling:

“But back to the thought of why this way of doing things (meaning the form of exclusion) is so shocking to me. Maybe it is because it reminds me so much of what I experience time and again in my workplace – as a woman, which I am not, but as what I am assigned: Sure we would like to have more women here. Why don’t you do something? And when you do something (they respond): no, this (woman) is somehow not quite right/ not sophisticated enough/ foolish/ too academic / whatever, and we prefer to promote, quite by coincidence, the man, because he somehow fits better. This is the so-called glass- ceiling¹⁵¹.”

First of all it needs to be clarified that this quote is embedded in Grapefruit-butcht’s longer argument which they make about the ‘truth claims’ that people made regarding their feelings of un-safety. In order to show how this experience could be related to a broader societal context in which certain kind of gender expressions are more appreciated or normalized than others, she uses the example of the glass- ceiling, a well-known feminist issue. The comparison is made between the discrimination women often face in the labour market and the socio-cultural forces (unconscious upvaluation of men and masculinities and devaluation of women and femininities) behind it. In this way, Grapefruit-butcht aims to illustrate the problem that our experience of ‘appropriate’ and ‘less appropriate’, in this case with regard to gender-expressions, cannot be taken for a self-explaining truth. This leads back to the elaboration on experience which I presented in chapter 1.2.2 on the basis of John W. Scott’s theory, in which she stresses the importance of explaining one’s experience rather than presenting it as the truth that needs no further explanation. Moreover, what Grapefruit-butcht does here is similar to the last example, because both authors make use of what I call ‘traditional’ feminist knowledge, which is closely connected to experiences of sexism. Apparently, both participants to the discussion address the

¹⁵¹ „Aber zurück zu dem Gedanken, warum mich dieses Vorgehen so erschrickt. Vielleicht, weil es mich so sehr an das, was ich im Beruf - als Frau, die ich nicht bin, aber als die ich gelesen werde – immer wieder erfahre: Klar würden wir uns über mehr Frauen hier freuen. Mach mal was. Und wenn man dann was macht: nee, das ist jetzt irgendwie doch nicht das richtige/ausreichend/blöd/zu akademisch/was auch immer, und wir befördern doch lieber zufälligerweise den Mann weil der passt irgendwie dann doch besser. Glass-Ceiling wird das genannt“ (Appendix B, Response 24).

feminists present on the mailing list and in the forum discussion, and hope that they can make their disagreement with the happened exclusion understandable.

Let me summarize and recapitulate the content of chapter 3 again. In this chapter I first presented a discussion regarding the topic-complex ‘race’ that centralized a discussion on anti-Romaism¹⁵² and the usage of specific terms. First an elaboration about differently located subjects, including differing theirstories and their relating to the specific topic was discussed. This was followed by a chapter part that engaged with the collective strategies that are used by one particularly located group—that are not directly affected by racism and therefore have been categorized as unconcerned—within the discussion. However later in the chapter this idea of being truly unconcerned was revised as it became clear how any locating (even the *white* one) relates to racism as an issue, as well as to a material living reality. After that an analysis on the basis of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak theory of structural violence that is linked to, what she calls the “center of epistemic violence” was presented. I then finally engaged with the concrete call for exclusion and how it came about in the last part of the e-mail discussion. Finally after offering the reader a short conclusion at the end of the first chapter part before the next issue listed, the discussion that had evolved in a forum around the exclusion of a transgender person from a conference was introduced. The second part of chapter 3 has been introduced with discussion around ‘safer spaces’ that, as I could show, are prevalent within the (queer) feminist scenes. I presented in detail how this particular negotiation around ‘trans*’ inclusion is connected to broader discussions around ‘safer spaces’ within the (queer) feminist communities. After this contextualization of the discussion I zoomed in to the particular discussion and discussed how the members of this particular community experience the changes of door policies. Moreover I looked thoroughly at the construction of the ‘we’ that is sometimes in- and other times explicit in the negotiation. After reflecting on the ‘politics of emotions’ that some discussion participants tried to bring to the attention of other’s and that relate strongly to Ahmed’s notions of emotions and and Scott’s idea that experiences have to be explained. When a pre-defined ‘we’ tries to defend a space (in Ahmed’s case a nation state) the emotion of fear plays an important role. As we saw this emotion is as well often prevalent in discussions around more inclusive spaces and

¹⁵² Anti-Romaism is a specific form of racism that is directed towards the marginalized groups of Roma and Sinti that are living in Europe. I write both terms big to foster an awareness for this new term, which emerged recently out of Roma activist circles.

needs to be explained within its context of both experienced sexism and trans* hate. I ended chapter 3.2. with two critical parts, one that engages with the question: *How (not) to approach privileges?* and the second one with the title: *Excluding dichotomies: Female experience vs. trans* experience* that finally asked the question, how ‘female’ experiences are often assumed to be in opposition to trans* experience. In the third and final part of chapter 3, I hope I could show how the practice of ‘oppression translation’ is used throughout the (queer)-feminist community in the German speaking context by extrapolating and presenting the translations that occurred within both analyzed discussions. As stated above by this practice of translation two differing exclusions are made entangled by pointing out their underlying similarities with each other. Moreover I want to argue that by aligning them with each other the writers start to create an alliance between two or more marginalized groups. This alliance is created by the strategic entangling of differing experiences (be they real or imagined) within negotiations around exclusions. As we have seen this becomes an applied strategy especially when there is ‘hope’ that a supposedly unconcerned or less concerned groups might be able to enter a process of understanding towards the particular form of discrimination that is at stake. This strategy is worked with by actively acknowledging and embracing differences. Rather than denying that there are differing experiences the people who use the strategy of ‘oppression translation’ show how an other’s experience does not have to be denied but has the potential to be understood by translating it into one’s own experienced or known oppression(s). Finally, and this bridges into the upcoming chapter, with theoretical insights that are inspired by some of Bracha L. Ettinger’s concepts, I argue that a co-response-ability (Ettinger 2009: 9) becomes visible in this strategy. But let these brief elaboration be explained some more.

4. THEORETICAL INSIGHTS – INSPIRED BY BRACHA L. ETTINGER

I want to shuffle some theoretical insights that engage with concepts of the artist Bracha L. Ettinger between my analysis and the concluding chapter. This is a critical intervention from my side in an attempt to contribute a different approach to the topic of social exclusion that is at stake in both presented discussions. Ettinger’s writing helped me to engage with and imagine an alternative way of subjectivity which I want to present here in the form of a theoretical intermezzo. That, I argue, offers another perspective on the presented discussions on social

exclusion. Ettinger's theories around subjectivity add the notion of a relational web as a foundation of pre-linguistic subjectivity to the Lacanian symbolic order (Smith 2012: 1). I argue that this approach changes the understanding of subjectivity that, lies at the roots of any research that deals with in- and exclusion. Accordingly I hope new insights into the discussions under focus can be gained, particularly because negotiations of in- and exclusions are touching intensely upon questions around 'self' and 'other'. This part of the chapter engages therefore with the basic philosophical assumption about subjectivity, for example by addressing the primacy of intersubjective relationality in subject formations and its role in this research.

“if you work for freedom, one of the ways you could work for freedom is to change your mind and to move away from the space of binaries and simplistic either/ors, both/ands and to be able to look at the picture that offers us complexity” (bell hooks 2013).

This reminder by bell hooks on how to work for freedom was a guideline in the background throughout this thesis. I hope that I opened up spaces for ambiguities, differences as well as for emerging questions with my investigation. Hooks quote ties also into a problem encountered during the thesis writing process, for at different moments, especially in the analysis part I encountered a philosophical problem or rather some categorical borders. Any category which I tried to use for my thesis was too narrow or too clear-cut at a certain point. For example, speaking about which kind of identities perpetuate racism; it became clear rather soon that not everyone who, affected by racism, has a political awareness about how this influences their social positioning. At the very same time in the category of *white* I could find people who were rather reflective on their privileged status. Ergo, I had to conclude that identity does not simply make experience. Or, that an identity might give certain potentialities of an experience, yet that those potentialities are not necessarily lived through by every single person that could belong to that identity. Concluding from this I am tempted to admit that the borders of highly political concepts such as: in- and outside, exclusion and inclusion are sometimes shiftable- and permeable. Throughout my work, I tried to stay aware of the simplistic conceptualizations which a binary informed Western philosophy¹⁵³ has bestowed upon me. For this aim I found Bracha L.

¹⁵³ For a thorough exploration of the historically grown binary- bound Western philosophy see Genevieve Lloyd and her book “The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy” (1984).

Ettinger and her creative texts a source of inspiration. Her experimental art, psychoanalysis and writing, especially the latter is an interesting philosophical and creative contribution to this research, as her philosophical writing puts a focus on relationality. In this brief theoretical insight I use her concept of a web or a matrix that connects I's and non-I's (Ettinger 2009: 3; Ettinger 2006a)—which I use as an experiment interchangeably with the concepts of self's and other's— to investigate political problems that erupt around supposed dichotomies in which my thesis is located in, for example, in- and outside, we and they, included and excluded. Yet I have to warn the reader that my investigation of the applicability of philosophical concepts to a political issue is a rather experimental one and the author whose concepts I borrow would probably not agree on the translation¹⁵⁴ I am applying. As she states clearly in one of her essays: “[...] the matrixial sphere¹⁵⁵ offers a political perspective which can't be appropriated by any official political agenda” (Ettinger 2009: 20). Regarding this clear statement my elaboration is bound to be experimental and creative from the very beginning. So, rather than using her concepts directly by translating them uncritically into politics, I will borrow them in order to create something different, a perspective that differs so to speak.

SUBJECTIVITIES OR THE “PRIMACY OF RELATIONALITY”

“In a mysterious way, the subject keeps emerging, assuming its own resistance to the outside and to the inside. Since the I functions by borderlinking and borderspacing, its affective and effective zone is in constant negotiation, on an in-between level which is neither that of the collective nor that of the individual nor that of inter-relations” (Ettinger 2009: 13).

As shown in the analysis of chapter 3 political and social exclusion often happen through processes of ‘othering’. By creating a ‘we’ with certain borders and resulting from that a ‘they’ that is beyond that border, a group of ‘others’ is created. Numerous feminist thinkers have engaged with this processes evolving around ‘self’ and ‘other’. Judith Butler, for example, argues, that the ‘norm’ is dependent on its outside which it violently keeps in place, because it

¹⁵⁴ By translation I do not mean a traditional linguistic one, but rather the issue of translating a political problem into a philosophical language of concepts.

¹⁵⁵ The concept of the matrixial sphere or the matrixial is explained below.

creates itself through that very outside (Butler 1997: 83-105). The mere existence of the category of ‘self’ is thereof dependent on a creation and maintenance of the ‘other’. So we could say that ‘othering’ happens in a process that on a subjective level is a forceful disconnection between the ‘other’ and the ‘self’. But according to Ettinger’s conceptualization the other is always already within. Referring to the subjects earliest formations within the womb, where it is neither fully self nor fully other, Ettinger speaks about ‘co-emergence’ (Ettinger 2006a: 114) or of a ‘process of becoming together’ (Ettinger 2006b: 72). This implies for her, that we are sharing from the very beginning and more importantly we keep sharing, despite the Western subjects intentions of independence and total splitting. As a consequence from Ettinger’s conceptualization of ‘the other within’ I will assume that ‘others’ are always within the circles that a ‘we¹⁵⁶’ tries to define. To explain this idea further I will present how Ettinger understands subjectivity, an understanding with which I already worked with partly in this thesis. As stated briefly above Ettinger offers an alternative relationality between self and other by adding a pre-linguistic sphere that can exist next to ‘traditional’ theories of subject formations like the one’s offered by Freud or Lacan¹⁵⁷ (Smith 2013: 1). She has called this sphere the matrix or the matrixial (Smith 2013: 2). By adding this sphere she provides a feminist intervention to these theories that work with a split *self* that defines itself by *not being the other*. As Smith states: “The symbolic order thus teaches us to see ourselves in a negative relation to the other: I am who I am, because I am not you” (Smith 2012: 2). We could witness this form of relation as I argued on page 77 in the anti-Romaism discussion. Ettinger’s matrixial gives us the means to discuss aspects of subjectivity that are ungraspable by language. The early encounter of a subject with the m(other) according to Smith “opens up our ability to repeat this experience and connect to others in the same nonphallic way” (Smith 2012: 6-7). She argues further that this ability remains with the subject even after entering the social sphere. “It are these encounters – the encounter with the people we know and the people we do not know – that construct our sense of self” (Smith 2013: 6-7). Despite the existence of those encounters, according to Ettinger, we cannot yet put them into language. When thinking about the emergence of relating over difference during the

¹⁵⁶ See as well chapter 1.2.3 *The (queer) feminist community or who is ‘we’?*

¹⁵⁷ As Mariëlle Smith summarizes briefly and pointed: In Freudian psychoanalysis, in which she includes Sigmund Freud’s work and Jacques Lacan’s structuralist account of that work, “the subject – the “I “or the self – comes into being through what Freud has called the Oedipal process and what Lacan has called the mirror stage. During this period, the child realizes that there is a distinction between itself and the (m)other. Through the acquisition of language and social acculturation, the child learns to recognize itself as a unitary subject separated from others” (Smith 2012: 3).

analysis– for example between subjects or between subjects and topics– thinking about the inability of language to contain certain encounters is important. Interestingly two of my co-researchers pointed out to me that the sphere of relating intimately to other community members is the one that fosters change. Both argued convincingly that their experiences of understanding an ‘other’ emerged within the sphere of personal relation that is traditionally ascribed as ‘private’. There, they encountered the other person despite or beyond the level of verbal or written discussion. Connecting this to my personal experiences of sharing topics of personal concern first on political levels (like in a discussion) and then on a more personal level (like in an experience sharing setting) I do agree. The experience based spheres—which are as feminists keep arguing as political as other political spheres—were often those, where a less appropriative relating was most possible. I wonder if some of these encounters can be described as nonphallic as they are fostering the ‘co-response-ability’ (Ettinger 2009: 10) of a ‘self’ to an ‘other’. This relates back to the earlier presented difference between the two discussions that have been presented in this research. While the more anonymous mailing- list discussion was mainly dominated by phallic- relations of splitting (see p77), the discussion-participants in the forum seemed to be more interested in maintaining and building relational ties (see p84). Borrowing Ettinger’s words we could say that the more anonymous a sphere is, the less ‘communicating’ (Ettinger 2009: 19) is likely to happen. Because political discussions often circle around questions of ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ the relating in them is most likely phallic. The response of our discussion partner can only be, “yes you are right” or “no, you are wrong”. On the basis of the self I can translate those possibilities to “I am like you” or “I am not like you”. Within Ettinger’s framework of encounters the parameter and the possibilities of relating become different. The answers can become: “I am with you, although I am not you” (see Ana on p70), yet neither am I “I”, as for to know what “I” is, I would need to be able to clearly distinguish between me ‘the self’ and you ‘the other’. I am to you and I respond to you, are emerging possibilities that foster the idea that we are never truly just a split ‘self’ that forms an entity. For example, related to the discussion this could mean not just individually admitting that e.g. I am *white* but rather move to a general admitting that there is a relation from a *white* positioned subject to racism. That, as I have shown before, indeed everybody is concerned in one way or another by the power-structure of racism. This links back again to Ettinger’s idea that the other is never fully other. Rather we are linked to our others in ways that we do not always know on the subjective level of being.

Concluding from this, as long as the participants of the discussion stay in their understanding of a split-self that can either fully disengage with its relation to a topic and/or a discussion or that can acknowledge privilege by simply stating: I am *white* located, I argue that a co-responsibility, in the sense of Ettinger, has not yet taken place. Moreover, as apparent in the elaborations before, Ettinger's idea of a primacy in relationality played an important role as a methodological tool. With this tool I explored for example the relationality from differently positioned subjects towards a topic (e.g. in chapter 3 the relation of differently located subjects to the topic of anti-Romaism). From this point of the presented theoretical insights, I want to proceed towards the final conclusion.

5. CONCLUSION

My research undertook the task of observing the ways in which differences –and exclusions that are based on them– are negotiated within (queer) feminist communities. The project aimed at combining two discussions that happened recently around exclusions in the German speaking context. An e-mail discussion about anti-Romaism and a discussion that took place on a BDSM forum concerning the exclusion of a trans* person from an offline event have been analyzed to pursue this aim. The thesis investigated articulations within written online- negotiations that happened in (queer) feminist online-spaces. As I showed at different points in the analysis and on the basis of other research, online and offline spaces are closely intertwined. I could illustrate with this project how (queer) feminist communities negotiate discriminations in the form of social exclusions that are related to anti-Romaism and trans* hate. The process of a Community Based Research combined with a Feminist Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis showed how these negotiations are embedded within the power structures that are prevalent within the communities under focus and the German speaking societies at large. I could show how the locatedness of subject's and, linked to that, the relationality of a subject's location to a particular topic, plays a major role in the ways social exclusions within already marginalized groups, in this case (queer) feminist communities, are addressed and engaged with.

Remaining close to the community I am associated with has been beneficial and challenging simultaneously. As the communities' interests and problems were central to my questions, I hope

the outcome of this thesis can support the continuing discussions on questions around belonging, power structures and new emerging identity collectives and their claims for inclusion in these communities. It is important for me to mention at this point that thoughts and conclusions from this thesis have already partly found their way back into (queer) feminist communities, for example, by giving a workshop¹⁵⁸ at the beginning of June at a queer-feminist festival called Antifée¹⁵⁹ in Göttingen. The workshop engaged in an experience-based way with the topic of trans* exclusion. This is connected to two of the aims of Community Based Research. One is to “identify and document a social problem, issue or concern” and the second, that is relevant for the time after this thesis, is to “identify and take steps toward self- and social transformations” (Lykes/ Crosby 2014: 150-151). Moreover, on a smaller scale, ideas and conclusions derived from the analysis have been already exchanged with other community members. In the conceptualization of future workshops, the task will be to provide examples of past exclusions, bring new questions to the community and its members, and to work more in depth on this recurring, and as community members often state, ‘emotionally intense’, topic.

To deconstruct the idea that some knowledge—, usually academic knowledge,— is more valuable than other,— usually non-academic e.g. activist, knowledge,— the research included knowledge from differing sources. By using this strategy I was able to re-intertwine activist and academic knowledge by relying on sources from both spheres: In conclusion, I can say that the research thereby enriched, especially by the critical voices from the activist realm. At the same time, this research- strategy revealed how uncontainable the plurality of knowledge is within such a project. In addition, I could show during the analysis how language can indeed function as a reminder of power structures and how writing styles, self-determination, and the creation of new terms are used as tools to counter and displace those reminders. These, I want to argue, are creative ways of engagement with language and with the power structures that are expressed through it.

I have made another important conclusion which connects to the suggestions of feminists like Alaine Cerwonka, bell hooks, Bracha L. Ettinger and Andrea Smith that new understandings of subjectivity are central to the topic of exclusions as well as their negotiations. A reading under a

¹⁵⁸ The title of the workshop was: *Trans* in queer-feminist & left- wing communities? An experience based workshop about different needs and solidarity*. The workshop was well attended and community members stressed the importance of discussing the topic.

¹⁵⁹ More information on the festival and the workshop can be found on this website: http://www.antifée.de/antifée/?page_id=1746#workshops.

philosophical frame that accounts for non-phallic relations (encounters) between subjects showed that next to the possible conclusion that the discussions ping-ponged between the questions who is right and who is wrong, both discussions also offered possibilities of other readings: namely the reading of non-phallic relations that did not disengage with the 'other', but rather saw a relational web that offered encounters enabling a negotiation and bridging of (assumed) differing experiences between community members. For a research in the future I aim to apply this perspective even more thoroughly in order to investigate the topic of social exclusion.

One collectively used strategy in discussions on exclusions by which community members tried to explore new forms of relating and being together, is that of 'oppression translation'. As I showed this is a collectively used strategy within the communities under focus. This approach relates differing social positionings to each other and brings about potentialities of understanding and connection that foster a relating over differences (e.g. differences in identity fragments). Connecting this with the theoretical insights of chapter 4, I conclude that this strategy co-creates new imaginaries of relating, mainly because rather than working with the idea of sameness (e.g. equality), this strategy works with the starting point of difference or in Ettinger's words "non-sameness in jointness" (Ettinger 2006: 123). As I argued before, the basis for 'oppression translation' is an assumption of differences which can be bridged by translating the impact that an individual, or rather a collective of individuals, experiences into another form of oppression. This potentiality of creating new imaginaries, I would argue, has not yet been fully explored by the community. Although the strategy can be seen as an attempt to build and foster more relational ways of thinking about oppressions, it is not used explicitly under this focus. As suggested earlier stressing the complex relationalities of subjects to the theirstory of certain oppressions by trying to locate oneself in the nets of power structures could help to make those very structures, more visible (to ourselves and others).

Lastly, regarding the complexity of both topics, trans* hate and anti-Romaism, what would be fruitful for further research would be to look into both topics in more depth in order to elaborate their specificities, as it has been difficult at times to do justice to the plurality that is prevalent in the forms of discrimination, and also in the activism that formed against them. One topic that was touched upon, but needs further exploration, is the connection of the discussion and the exclusions to class. Although this research did touch upon this issue briefly when it intersected with either of the explored topics (e.g. the co-relation of hate crimes and the precarious living

and working conditions of trans* women doing sex work), further research on this specific intersection is needed. Finally, on a more philosophical level, further research could explore how interpersonal exchange plays a crucial role within negotiations of differences and in the strategies used to translate these differences to each other.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Mailing List

02. April 2013- 09. April 2013

Mail 1 **Subject line:** *Call for Papers Konferenz "Antiziganism - what's in a word?"*
(Tim)

Liebe Listenleser_innen,

Day 1

ich möchte Euch auf den Call for Papers der Konferenz "Antiziganism - what's in a word?", die vom 23.-25. Oktober 2013 in Uppsala stattfinden wird, hinweisen. Der Call for Papers findet sich hier: <http://www.valentin.uu.se/antiziganismconference/>
Unter anderem gibt es die folgenden Sessions, die für die Geschlechter- und Queerstudien von besonderem Interesse sind:

* ANTIGYPSYISM/ANTIZIGANISM/ROMAPHOBIA FROM THE INTERSECTIONALITY STUDIES POINT OF VIEW

* GENDER/SEX AND SEXUALITY INANTIGYPSYISM

* INTERSECTIONS OF "ANTIGYPSYISM/ANTIZIGANISM/ROMAPHOBIA"

Die Deadline für das Einreichen von Vorschlägen für Papers ist der 31. Mai 2013.

Viele Grüße

[Tim Maier]

Mail 2 **Subject line:** *RE: Call for Papers Konferenz "Antiziganism - what's in a word?"*
(Rabija)

Day 1

Ich finde die formolierung des calles als bodenlose unverschämtheit!!! Es ist hier rüber schon so oft verwiesen worden dass es antirromanismuss heisst !!!!!!!!!!!!! solln wir auch mal nen call machen konferenz anti n -word confrenz.. und dabei das N-wort ausschreiben (natürlich weil man muss es benutzen, um aufzuzeigen worum es geht) ich kann mir nicht erklären, warum das in anscheinend so wenige köpfe rein will... das ist eine re-produktion von rassismen, ihr verletzt menschen damit, juckt das eigentlich jemanden ?? ein paar infos gefällig ein paar links zur weiterbildung, mensch ihr seid doch groß googelt doch ma und das war was ich noch gelesen habe

[Name, Title, Institute, Working address, Phone Number, E-Mail, Link to the website]

french department ?? ahnung wies da zugeht ? ahnung wies ist hinter stachelzaun abgeschoben zu werden, ahnung was die french reagierung abzieht..also ihr weißen gut menschen da drausen, dies ja nur gut und lieb und nicht rassistisch meinen, hört auf damit!!! wir sind keine gypsies, keine zigeuner !!!!! wir sind Rroma und Sinti by the way definitions macht--was selbstbezeichnug selbstbestimmung angeht Sry das ich so agro reagier but enough is enough .. Auch wenns ach so gut gemeint is zur info für alle,

sollten aggressive, mails an mich persönlich kommen oder über irgendwelche verteiler behalte ich mir vor die zu veröffentlichen!!!
Lg [Rabija]

Mail 3 **Subject line:** *und für die smarties unter euch*
(Rabija)

Day 1

für welche die glauben alles besser zu wissen, hier der link, erstmal lesen, zuhören, nachdenken, sich seiner privilegien bewusst machen und erst dann den mund aufmachen...
http://derparia.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/paria1_2013_web_s.pdf

Mail 4 **Subject line:** *und nochwas !!!*
(Rabija)

Day 1

wo ich schon so in fahrt bin, liebe weiße deutsche-mit eurer nazi vergangenheit-- so siehts aus es ist keine variante anstelle von rroma und sinti das "z-Wort" zu benutzen Rroma und Sinti wurden übrigens auch verfolgt in kz gesperrt und vergast, und wie wurden wir identifiziert --besser sag ich mal MAKIERT der buchstabe "Z" wurde auf die haut tätowiert, also dürfte doch das "z-wort" als abkürzung oder um uns zu benennen nicht die richtige variante sein so jetzt hab ich genug aufklärungsarbeit für euch heute geleistet!

-[Rabija]

Day 2 No Mails about the topic

Mail 5 **Subject line:** *Netiquette und CfP Antiziganismuskonferenz*
(Kim)

Day 3

Liebe Listenmenschen,

mir gefällt die Reaktion auf die Weiterleitung des Calls nicht.

Hier auf dieser Liste sind viele Menschen und die meisten kennen sich vermutlich auch nicht. Kommunikation per email ist nicht immer leicht und kann schnell auch missverstanden werden. Deshalb sollte sich an Regeln gehalten werden. Zu diesen Regeln gehört ein respektvoller Umgang miteinander, der dann auch einen Austausch über verschiedene Ansichten miteinander ermöglicht bzw. ermöglichen kann.

Die Mail, um die es geht, wurde von einer Person weitergeleitet. Wenn es also Probleme, Unstimmigkeiten, Missmut, Wut in Bezug auf Begrifflichkeiten gibt, dann sollte sich in diesem Fall an die Konferenzorganisator_innen gewandt werden.

Nicht produktiv jedoch ist die Bloßstellung einer einzelnen Person, die, wie in diesem Fall, etwas weitergeleitet hat. Und mit Bloßstellung ist in diesem Fall das Veröffentlichen der Arbeitsadresse gemeint.

Einer grundsätzlichen und respektvollen Diskussion über die Verwendung und Bedeutung von Begriffen möchte ich nicht im Wege stehen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,
[kim]

Mail 6 **Subject line:** *RE: Netiquette und Cfp Antiziganismuskonferenz*
(Ana)

hallo [kim] et al:

Day 3

erstens, da sich die kritisierende person, [rabija], sehr deutlich in ihren e-mails positioniert hat und dies im kontext sehr wichtig ist, fände ich es schön wenn deine position nicht unmarkiert bleibt und du uns aufklärst aus welcher lebens-/unterdrückungs-/unterdrücker_innen-erfahrung du schreibst.

denn: wir sind nicht alle gleich und unsere stimmen haben verschieden gewicht und müssen auch aus verschiedenen perspektiven und lebensrealitäten erfahren und analysiert werden.

ich stimme dir soweit zu, dass eine weiterleitung nie 'autor_innenschaft' des inhaltes bedeutet, bzw. die weiterleitende person nicht unbedingt voll und ganz hinter jedem geschriebenen wort steht.

obwohl [tim maier] (du unterschreibst ja hier öffentlich) den bezug zu gender/queer studies interessierten (/weißen/?) herstellt problematisiert er nicht, das was so offensichtlich an der ganzen konferenz (unter vielen anderen aspekten) problematisch ist: dass eine fast durchgängig /weiße/ klassenprivilegierte mittel- und ober-schicht von nicht-r(r)oma über rassismus gegen r(r)oma forschung betreibt und damit ganz konkret auch ihre brötchen verdienen und ihre klassen- und rassenprivilegien genau damit weiter aufrecht erhalten.

ohne den begriff 'anti[...]' auch nur vorsichtig zu hinterfragen in dieser weiterleitung übt auch eine weiterleitende person macht und gewalt über rassialisierte r(r)oma listenmitglieder und nicht-listenmitglieder aus.

egal ob es die absicht von individuen ist rassistsiches wissen weiter zu tragen oder nicht, passiert dies in genau solchen momenten - und hätte [Rabija] nicht laut aufgeschrieben wäre dieser 'call for papers' wahrscheinlich unbeachtet und unkritisiert wahrgenommen worden - ich, als nicht-r(r)omja positionierte frau* of color bin auf jeden fall sehr dankbar für [rabija's] intervention und ihre wütenden worte.

[tim maier] kann sich ja jederzeit in die diskussion einklinken – ohne dass er sich positioniert hat finde ich es jedoch auch legitim auf google.com zurückzugreifen, menschen die irgendwie öffentlich (z.b. im akademischem kontext) auftauchen zu suchen und auch deren eh absolut öffentlichen kontaktdaten zu posten um zu beschreiben woher genau die eigene wut kommt... denn diese geschichten sind ja nicht

neu... kolonialismus, aneignung, nicht anerkennen der eigenen privilegien...

ich erlebe es als problematisch, dass hier ein mensch uns als liste an ganz viel schmerz teilhaben lassen hat und auch noch möglichkeiten und ideen der weiterbildung geteilt hat und die erste antwort/ reaktion darauf eine "sei mal nicht so aggressiv" ist.

klar, women* of color können auch mal aggro sein, wie alle anderen menschen auch. jedoch haftet an uns das image der "angry brown woman" besonders hartnäckig - vor allem wenn wir in "linken safer spaces" machtpositionen in frage stellen und antworten nach den selbst in der scene gelebten unterdrückungserfahrungen suchen.

wo sind die ganzen "race-critical" /weißen/ feminist_innen auf dem verteiler die [kim] (und viell. auch [tim] und anderen?) erklären warum solche statements/weiterleitungen ohne kritisches nachhaken problematisch sind? wer auf dem verteiler versteht und kann erklären warum der hier diskutierte begriff samt konferenz problematisch sind? wer auf dem verteiler ist noch froh [rabija's] worte gelesen zu haben?

so far... danke [rabija] i again, fürs draufzeigen und nicht locker lassen.

keep on moving.
[ana]

Mail 7 **Subject line:** *anschließend an die diskussion*
(Mira)

hei

Day 3

ich möchte (als weiße lesbe) nicht viel raum in dieser diskussion einnehmen. nur soviel: ich bin beeindruckt von dem mut und der wut und möchte mich für das wachrütteln bedanken. ich stelle mir das unheimlich anstrengend und verletzend vor (stets?) die rolle der kritiker_in einnehmen zu müssen/wollen/sollen.

[Mira]

Mail 8 **Subject line:** *Netiquette und CfP Antiziganismuskonferenz*
(Ina and
Jan)
Day 3

Liebe [Rabija], liebe [Ana], liebe alle,

zuallererst danke an [rabija] für die intervention und danke an [ana] für die unterstützung und erklärung!

lieber [kim], deine intervention finden wir kleinlich, emotional respektlos und sie lenkt politisch vom thema ab. es geht um strukturellen und sprachlichen rassismus gegen roma, der in dem cfp und der konferenz drinsteckt, an der der weiterleiter beteiligt ist. das (!) ist kein "respektvoller Umgang" und hat auch nichts mit verschiedenen ansichten zu tun. zum anspruch an netiquette und unterschiedliche verletzbarkeiten auf

listen hat ele schon geschrieben. überhaupt haben [rabija] und ele schon echt viel inhaltliches gesagt, und geholfen rassistische bildungslücken zu schließen...

danke dafür,
solidarisch und in der hoffnung auf mehr kritikfähigkeit auf dieser liste,

[Ina] und [Jan]

Mail 9
(Rabija) **Subject line:** *Netiquette und CfP*

Day 4

Liebe alle, [ana], [ina]-[jan] und [mira]

erstmal danke für den ermutigenden support @[kim], weißte was das krassste ist, nun erklär ich schon in meiner mail das es nicht ant(z..) heißt du setzt es eiskalt wieder in den betreff, als ob ich an ne wand rede, das widerum empfinde ich als absolut respektlos!! früher mal war dieses wort ein widerstands wort heute jedoch nach dem es tziganolgen gibt die natürlich weiß sind, und wir also roma und sinti ein studienfach wurden, ist es das nicht mehr!!! und noch mal für alle_*/Antiromanismus/*_ist die bezeichnung, und wenn man sich reinzieht das in dem call auch noch "sexuality in antigypsyism" steht kann ich gar nicht so viel fressen wie ich kotzen will, was soll da besprochen werden ???

hier ein weiterer link zum kuscheligen einschlafen... ok mein sarkasmuss kennt keine grenzen, aber schaut doch mal was unsre lebensrealität ist.. und dann können wir auch über nettikete sprechen

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/79824083@N02/8609833055/in/set-72157629609007042/>

lg [rabija]

Mail 10
(Tim) **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*

Day 4

Liebe Listenleser_innen,

mit der Kritik an der Konferenz kann ich etwas anfangen. Danke für die Denkanstöße. Mein Umfeld und ich sind in einem Diskussionsprozess zu dem Thema.

Ich möchte hier nur noch einen Kommentar zur Form der Kritik abgeben: Die Veröffentlichung meiner Arbeitsadresse kann ich nicht nachvollziehen und finde sie daneben. Es ist keineswegs so, dass über meinen Namen meine Arbeitsadresse googlebar wäre. Ich weiß nicht, wie Du, [Rabija], zu den Daten gekommen bist. Die Kritik, die sich an meine Arbeitsadresse anschließt, aus "French Studies", der Beschäftigung mit der französischen Sprache und Literatur an einer [griechischen] Universität, eine Nähe meiner Person zu antiromaistischen Politiken der französischen Regierungen abzuleiten, ist grotesk. So empfinde ich die Veröffentlichung der Adresse und meiner Position als unfaires Mittel der Auseinandersetzung.

Da meine Arbeitgeberin mit der Veröffentlichung bekannt ist, ist mir eine Selbstpositionierung, die meines Erachtens meine Positionierung in Bezug auf Geschlecht, Sexualität und Klasse einzuschließen hätte, nicht mehr möglich. Ich möchte der Forderung dennoch insoweit entgegenkommen, mich als /weiß/ zu positionieren.

Als bisherige Redner_innen auf der Konferenz, um die es in meiner ersten Mail ging, sind im übrigen keineswegs ausschließlich Nicht-Rom_n_ja eingeladen.

Viele Grüße
[Tim]

Mail 10 **Subject Line:** Fwd: Fw: Aw: Netiquette und CfP
(Ana)
... anscheinend können einige diese e-mail nicht öffnen.
Day 4
daher nochmal weitergeleitet!

solidarisch,
[ana]

Attached: **Mail 9**

Mail 12 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Rabija)
Liebe weisse menschen
Day 4
Es wäre sehr schön von euch sich ein wenig mehr zu beteiligen .. Liegt die aufklärungsarbeit bzw so wie ich es nenn die drecksarbeit immer bei uns pocs woc's euch den weissen alles zu erklären und ihr leht euch in euern stühlen zurück un lasst uns gegn sprachlichen strukturellen universitären rassismus kämpfen??? Hättet ihr gern noch popcorn un ne mate dazu??

Mail 13 **Subject Line:** *Fwd: Fwd: Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Ana)
... anscheinend haben auch diese mail nicht alle erhalten/ konnten sie
Day 4 nicht alle öffnen.

grüße.
[Ana]

Attached: **Mail 12**

Mail 14 **Subject Line:** *anschließend an die diskussion*

Day 4 Liebe [Rabija], Liebe [Ana], Liebe [Ina], Liebe [Jan], Liebe alle,

vielen Dank für die Intervention und die Unterstützung. Danke für eure Kraft zu dieser Aufklärung und dieser Diskussion. Ich werde diesen Hinweis aufnehmen und an meiner Eigenaufklärung weiter arbeiten. Ich möchte, dass wir, die weißen Angesprochenen, diesen Kritiken respektvoll zu hören und uns selbstständig sensibilisieren, damit wir zukünftig weniger rassistisch verletzend sein können und wirklich kommunizieren können.

Viele Grüße
[Bianca]

Mail 15 **Subject Line:** *anschließend an die discussion*

Day 4 liebe [rabija] und alle anderen,

ich nehme die kritik total ernst. mir war das bisher neu, aber ich bin auch überhaupt nicht up-to-date in antirromanismusdiskursen - deshalb danke an dich, [rabija]!

viele grüße,
[sara]

Mail 16 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Sepide)

liebe liste,

Day 4

ersteinmal :danke an dich [rabija] fürs teilen deiner gedanken und der kritik an dem call.

Ich verstehe die harmonie-bedürftigkeit einiger menschen hier, aber leider gibt es einige unter uns, die dank intersektional wirkender mehrfachdiskriminierungen nicht unbedingt immer die geduld haben, anderen menschen ihr drecksverhalten in einem "angenehmen ton" (was ist das eigentlich?) zu erklären.

Das rrom_n_ja dann die tonlage ein wenig erhöhen, weil weiße akademiker_innen ihr leben durchtheoretisieren ist für mich sehr verständlich. Würde auf dieser liste ein call von einem cis-mann zu irgendeinem trans*thema geschickt werden, der transphobe begriffe enthält, würden doch (hoffentlich) auch einige leute wütend reagieren. und ich hoffe, dass dann kein mensch nach einem "angenehmeren ton" der kritik verlangen würde.

Eine anmerkung noch an [tim]: "Als bisherige Redner_innen auf der Konferenz, um

die es in meiner ersten Mail ging, sind im übrigen keineswegs ausschließlich Nicht-Rom_n_ja eingeladen."

ich weiß nicht, was du damit bezwecken willst, aber aus meiner Sicht ist das keine Goldmedaille wert und sagt nichts über die Konferenz an sich aus. Vielleicht sind das auch total kritische und tolle Rom_n_ja, aber vielleicht auch nicht- die Islam-Konferenz hat auch Necla Kelek und Seyran Ates eingeladen. Das macht aber die Konferenz nicht weniger problematisch.

bestes

[sepide]

p.s.: eine Sache ganz unabhängig von dieser Diskussion: Selbst-Geißelungen von Weißen, die in ihrem Schuldgefühl stecken bleiben finde ich ziemlich bedenklich, egal in welchem Kontext. Action speaks louder than words.

Mail 17 **Subject Line:** *Anschliessend an die Diskussion*

(Aaron)

Day 4

Liebe Alle,

ich, ein weisser Student habe die Diskussion um den CfP etwas verspätet verfolgt und melde mich deshalb erst jetzt zu Wort.

Erstmal danke, [Rabija], dass du in der Form auf diese Themen hinweist und auch für deine absolut berechnete Wut darüber. Es ist erschreckend wie immer wieder rassistische Bezeichnungen, Diskurse und voyeuristische Forschungen aufrecht erhalten und wiederholt werden mit der Begründung dass sie irgendwie wissenschaftlich, oder nicht so gemeint seien.

[Rabija] hat mehrfach aufgezeigt und erklärt, weshalb diskriminierende Bezeichnungen für Roma und Sinti nicht genutzt werden sollen. In den Mails ist richtig viel Aufklärungsarbeit über diese Liste gekommen – und eigentlich sollte es doch reichen, dass jemand sagt, dass die Bezeichnung verletzend ist. Stattdessen noch wegen dem (berechtigt) wütenden Tonfall kritisiert zu werden... autsch!

Ich schliesse mich ihrer Bitte an, diese Bezeichnungen auch in Zukunft aus dieser Liste, Betreffen und CfP raus zu halten. Wem die historischen Zusammenhänge bisher noch nicht klar waren, hat ja nun durch diese letzten Beiträge sowohl historische als auch persönliche Zusammenhänge bekommen. Also bitte durchatmen, umdenken, umschreiben.

Lieben Gruss

[aaron]

Mail 18 **Subject Line:** *Anschliessend an die Diskussion*
(Rabija)

Liebe alle,

Day 4

erstmal vielen dank für die unterstützung !!! es ist doch schön zu sehn das es den einen oder anderen hier sehr wohl juckt, was so für sprachlicher rassismus hier über die liste geht, für heute abend habe ich genug von [tim], von [kim], von roma feindlichem gedankengut , morgen aber werde ich bezug nehmen auf meine unverschämtheit deine [tim's], mail adresse zu posten und auch warum ich so GROTESKE links ziehe... und noch ein nachwort, liebe weißen menschen hier, bringt euch ein, habt nicht so viel angst , wir poc`s +(ich) hack nich jedem den kopf ab, keine sorge ach und [tim] wenn du bitte weitergeben könntest wie viel roma redner_innen eingeladen sind --von wie vielen redner_innen an sich ?
eine quoten rrom_n_ja ?? oder gar 2 ???
denn wenn du ein blumentopf gewinnen willst mit deiner aussage, müssen schon paar zahlen/fakten kommen

euch allen einen sehr schönen abend, viel kraft und starke nerven, sich immer und immer wieder gegen rassismus, gegen unterdrückung und unfairnes zur wehr zu setzen !!

lg [rabija]

Mail 19 **Subject Line:** *Fwd: Aw: Re: Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Ana)

Day 4

... again nochmal weitergeleitet weil anscheinend ein paar leute die mails nicht bekommen?! viell. kann jemensch dem mal aufm grund gehen?!

gute nacht.
[ana]

Attached: **Mail 18**

Mail 20 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Enya)

Day 5

liebe liste,

ich habe das gefühl, dass die maßstäbe hier etwas durcheinandergeraten.

hat sich eigentlich irgendwer von euch mit den inhalten (!) der konferenz auseinandergesetzt, oder gar den personen die da sprechen?

denn es handelt sich ganz offensichtlich NICHT um eine rassistische islamkonferenz, bei deren referent_innen und publikum ich auch keine probleme hätte, namen und adressen zu veröffentlichen.

es mag sich um mehr oder weniger unreflektierte, größtenteils /weiße/ wissenschaftler_innen handeln - aber sie erkennen antiromanismus als problem an. klar kann auch guter wille zu schlimmen ergebnissen führen, aber das sind keine neofaschist_innen, keine anti-romanist_innen, die stehen nicht auf der anderen seite der barrikade. das sind leute, von denen ich erstmal davon ausgehen würde, dass sie bereit sind auf kritik einzugehen.

insofern ist es absolut sinnvoll zu intervenieren und die debatte um benennungen anzufachen (egal in welchem "tonfall"), aber mehr eben auch nicht.

dass [rabija] in ihrer wut [tim's] adresse veröffentlicht, ist nun geschehen, aber wenn die wut verrauscht, sollte doch klar werden, dass nicht [tim] persönlich das problem ist, weswegen wir alle ihn mit klingelstreichen bis zum wahnsinn treiben sollten (oder welche andere funktion soll das veröffentlichen von adressen/telefonnummern haben?), sondern die /weißen/(?) akademischen strukturen, in denen er sich bewegt - und in die er offensichtlich intervenieren will, zumindest sagt er das.

das daraus auch in der diskussion wiederholt eine persönliche "schuld" wird, wie ja auch in den von [sepide] kritisierten selbstgeisselungen, mag vielleicht eine oberflächliche machtverschiebung auf einer popeligen emailiste sein, doch ändert sich dadurch überhaupt nichts an den strukturen - im gegenteil werden die besserweißen in der vorschiebung der sich selbstgeißelnden positionierung ebenfalls wieder rassistisch agieren - da sie nichts an rassistischen strukturen ändern (wollen). Es bleibt ein gegenseitiges schulterklopfen, dass die anderen viel rassistischer sind - mit politik hat das nichts zu tun.

[enya]

Mail 21 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und Cfp Anti[...]ismus*

(Rabija)

hallo [enya],

Day 5

bevore ich irgendwas sage, wüsste ich sehr gerne aus welcher selbstpositionierung heraus du sprichst/schreibst

lg [rabija]

Mail 22 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und Cfp Anti[...]ismus*

Day 6

zu dem vorwurf mit dem adresse veröffentlichen:

ich habe diesen cfp über mehrere verteiler erhalten, bei einem war auch der name + adresse etc. von [tim] als absender und ansprechperson (?) mit weitergeleitet (siehe e-mail unten).

dazu möchte ich hinzufügen, dass [tim] selber bei folgendem nebenseminar mit-

verantwortlicher/ koordinator ist: "Gender/sex and sexuality in antigypsyism" (Chair: [M. E.] / [A. F.] / [Tim Maier]).

hier wird er mit [M. E.] und [A. F.] (beide nicht-r(r)oma), 'forscher_innen' die in verschiedenen kontexten (mind. innerhalb of color communities) unter starker kritik stehen, arbeiten.

eine intervention/ background zu beiden hier:

<http://derparia.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/wer-spricht-in-der-antiziganismusforschung/>

also sind politische kritiken direkt an ihn, seine wissenschaftlichen arbeit und forschung absolut legitim und notwendig.

also: gut, dass du auf der liste bist [tim].

ich frage mich warum sich die ganzen /weißen/, die zu "rassismus" forschen fast nie selber als /weiß/ wahrnehmen oder auch nur ansatzweise darüber nachdenken zu /weißer/ vorherrschaft (auslöser von rassismus) oder ihrer eigenen /weißen/ community zu forschen?

was stecken da für bilder in den köpfen von forscher_innen, die mit "den anderen" besessen zu sein scheinen?

das argument ist ja "wir betreiben keine r(r)oma* forschung"; aber wer sind denn die subjekte von rassismus gegen roma/ antiromaismus? r(r)oma bleiben in dieser von weißen erfundenen forschung objekte; die /weißen/ rassismus ausübenden menschen, ihre gesellschaften, sozialisation und geschichten bleiben weiterhin unmarkiert.

diese art von forschung hält /weiße/ privilegien, /weiße/ solidarität und somit /weiße/ vorherrschaft am leben!

grüße.

[ana]

Mail 23 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und Cfp Anti[...]ismus*
(Rabija)

Day 6

mein herz schlägt gleich viel schneller, und das blut pumpt durch meine adern... meine kiefer verbeissen sich so wütend werde ich hier..!!!

wer auch immer hier spricht, sagt gefälligst erstmal eure position aus der ihr sprecht. UND WENN JEMAND ANGIBT.. also angeben "ohh kuckt ma was tolles ich mit auf die beine stell" und seine adresse und alles selbst in posts mit rein steckt, was soll den dann der scheiß ich würde jem,anden bloss stellen, du bist doch mega stolz auf deine sogenannte intervention, soll ich dir dankbar sein ?? soll die rroma comiunaty dir dankbar sein, das dus so gut meinst mit uns ??? WER hat dich um deine MEINUNG

gefragt, fragt uns doch , warum lasst ihr uns nicht für uns reden, [Tim] willst du auch darüber sprechen wies ist in die meno-pauso zu kommen??? schreib doch ein buch darüber wie sich der "weibliche" köper verändert dabei, lade doch viele cis männer dazu sein, und sprecht darüber wie man diesen älternden "frauen" helfen kann... was gibt euch das recht über uns zu reden?? ahhh nur wissenschaftliche forschung?? dann erforscht euch doch selbst , forsch doch dazu wie solche rassistischen arschl***cher werden konntet, warum ihr permanent von hässlichen trieben gepeitscht werdet, ANDERE zu stigmatisieren mit euren analysen. du sagst du machst nur french studies JA????? wenn ich französisch studieren würde, das land, die sprache etc. wüsste ich nicht auch über die ecklige politik gegen RRoma bescheid, warum benutzt ihr in euren CALL dann solche Rassistischen ausdrücke?? habt doch lange an der konferenz gearbeitet wa ??

liegt vielleicht daran das keine RRoma oder Siti dabei waren, sondern eure "antiziganismus" gruppe die das organisiert aus nur nicht rromas besteht, kann das sein ??

WIR HABEN STIMMEN !!! und nein [ENYA] die stehn auf dera nderen seite der barikaden, denn keiner hat sie gefragt usn zu retten, wenn sie uns UNTERSTÜZEN nicht retten, wollen, sollten sie uns fragen was WIR wollen, nicht was sie glauben für dei armen rroma das richtige wäre.

es ist eine kolialhaltung, eine mesias haltung, ein scheiß weiße vorherrschafts haltung...

und jetzt ring frei , für alle die mails bezüglich meines TONS [rabija]

Mail 24 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Ana)

Day 6

... und einige menschen die auch hier auf der liste sind, sind auch auf anderen listen; also kann es gut sein, dass [rabija] diese öffentliche weiterleitung samt adresse auch so erhalten hat.

nur nochmal ausgeschrieben falls weiterhin vorwürfe an angeblicher "klingelstreich"-taktik (zitat [enya]) erhoben werden sollten.

/weiße/ auf die "gute" seite der 'antira'-barrikaden zu stellen (vs. Die "wirklich bösen, und wirklich rassistischen nazis") ist unglaublich!

/weiß/ bleibt /weiß/ - egal wie reflektiert, könnt ihr höchstens allies (verbündete) aber never never antirassist_innen werden!

warum? lest selbst:

#White Feminists: It's Time to Put Up Or Shut Up on Race

<http://radicallyqueer.wordpress.com/2011/12/02/white-feminists-its-time-to-put-up-or-shut-up-on-race/>

#The White Anti-Racist Is an Oxymoron: An Open Letter to “White Anti-Racists” By Tamara K. Nopper <http://racetractor.org/nopper.html>

[tim], und leute wie ben sind genau teil des problems. können jedoch auch teil der lösung werden! deswegen führen wir ja gerade diese debatten auch mit /weißen/ und ich hoffe zumindest, dass ihr in euren /weißen/ spaces diese debatten fortführt und es nicht bei ein paar e-mail kommentaren belasst!

grüße.
[ana]

Mail 25 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*

(Aaron)

Day 6

hallo [ana],

danke fuer die links!

[aaron]

Mail 26 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*

(Enya)

Day 6

hallo [rabija],

deine wut in ehren, aber mir ist immer noch nicht klar, aus welchem grund du die adresse in deiner email geschrieben und hervorgehoben hast- hast du irgendwelche hintergrundinfos, dass [tim maier] die rolle des frz staates in der verfolgung von roma und sinti nicht problematisiert oder gar gut findet? ich sehe nur, dass er french studies studiert. alles andere ist mutmassung, und meiner erachtens eine wenig plausible.

"sagt gefälligst erstmal eure position aus der ihr sprecht" - nein [rabija], ich sage nicht "gefälligst" meine position, da ich es leid bin von der akademisierten genderstudies elite zur positionierung gezwungen zu werden - das macht meine umwelt mit mir tagtäglich ohne dass ich es will - mit allen seinen unangenehmen nachfolgen.

@[ana]:

"also sind politische kritiken direkt an ihn, seine wissenschaftlichen arbeit und forschung absolut legitim und notwendig."

exakt, aber seine adresse und telefonnummer gehört nicht unbedingt zu den kernbereichen seiner wissenschaftlichen arbeit und forschung.wenn die kritik dahin geht, ihn als /weißen/ wissenschaftler, der nicht mit roma redet, zu markieren/ihn zu kritisieren, sehe ich nicht, was seine adresse dabei helfen sollte - ausser eben genau diesen "feind"-effekt auszulösen - den ich kritisiert habe. da geht es dann nur noch um personen und nicht um strukturen oder inhalte.

"/weiß/ bleibt /weiß/ - egal wie reflektiert, könnt ihr höchstens allies (verbündete) aber never never antirassist_innen werden!"

exakt, aber auch allies kämpfen auf derselben seite der barrikade - manchmal auch nicht, aber dafür reden wir mit allies. mehr habe ich nicht geschrieben.

enya

Mail 27 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*
(Rabija)

Day 6

ich ahbs jetzt zig mal gesagt, er hat selbst damit angegeben und seine adresse inclusive allem in die post rein gemacht, also opfer den armenw eissen [tim] jetzt nicht so ein, 2tens wenn jemand sich als organisator pech gehabt 3 wenn du glaubst dich nicht positionieren zu müssen, gut machs nicht dann werde

ich dich als weiss einstufen vertig ! ichs eh gar nicht ein hier mit leuten zu komunizieren die es nicht für nötig halten ihre positionen/damit verbunden privelegien anzugeben.

und nein aliens sind unterstützer keine retter und wenn du [ana's] link mal lesen würdest wüsstest du auch das diese beschissene gruppe nur aus nicht rooma besteht und uns retten will, nicht unterstützen--ohne sie wäre unser kampf der rroma ja fast nicht möglich...und ich ahb das mit dem french studies erklärt ich wiederhol mich nicht dauernd lese erstmal die posts

[rabija]

Mail 28 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Lola) Meine Lieben,

Day 6

wenn Linke von anderen Linken über Mailinglisten Adressen veröffentlichen und androhen, Antworten und dazugehörige Namen ebenfalls an die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen -- dann läuft etwas gewaltig schief und man sollte sich Gedanken darüber machen, wie man mit solchen Praktiken und Androhungen umgeht. Das ist keine Frage von Harmoniebedürftigkeit oder Netiquette. Sehr sehr viele Menschen - auch auf dieser Liste - sehen das ähnlich, trauen sich aber nicht , etwas zu schreiben, weil eine Sache, die "wir" offensichtlich am besten können, das Denunzieren, Ausschließen und Sanktionieren anderer ist.

Viel Spaß dabei, ich spiel nicht mit.

Herzliche Grüße,

[Lola]

Mail 29 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*

(Rabija) Liebe [Lola],

Day 6 Ach da bin ich aber froh das DU dich traust die weiße solidarität aufrecht zu erhalten !!! Fragt doch bitte Noah Sow an und den braunen mob, was es damit auf sicht hat, zu sagen das etwagige antworten veröffentlicht werden... oder nein das sollen wir auch noch erklären ? nur damit wir nicht als bössartige, fiese hinterhältige poc`s dastehn, gut das die weisse masse was gefunden hat, was an der ganzen discussion GEFÄHRLICH ist das ist nicht der rassismus nein auf keinen fall !!!

[rabija]

Mail 30 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Ana) hallo alle:

Day 6 nach ein paar echt coolen statements wird für mich diese ganze diskussion nun immer schwieriger. daher eine etwas längere mail von mir...

[enya], du schreibst: "ich sage nicht "gefälligst" meine position, da ich es leid bin von der akademisierten genderstudies elite zur positionierung gezwungen zu werden - das macht meine umwelt mit mir tagtäglich ohne dass ich es will - mit allen seinen unangenehmen nachfolgen."

... ich verstehe dass ein "positionierungs-zwang" für menschen mit struktureller diskriminierungserfahrung schmerzvoll sein kann. Wir sollten uns jedoch angucken wo wir uns hier gerade bewegen: wir sind auf einer mehrheitlich /weißen/ liste - eine romni spricht einen rassitischen begriff und eine sehr problematische hier propagierte veranstaltung an. innerhalb /weiß/ vorherrschaftlicher räume bleiben /weiße/ unmarkiert. das hat system und soll zu ihrer unsichtbar-machung und somit zu ihrem machterhalt beitragen. daher ist sehr wichtig zu wissen aus welchen positionen menschen in bestimmten räumen sprechen - gerade wenn diskussionen virtuell, also online ablaufen.

ich verstehe [rabija's] frust sehr, immer rum-spekulieren zu müssen ob das jetzt nun ein_e weiße_r ist oder nicht... daher ihre, für mich in diesem kontext, berechtigte forderung der ich mich anschließe.

ich kenne deine positionierung im kontext von rassismus nicht und hoffe, wenn du dich als person of color, schwarz, migrantisch... positionierst, dass nicht zu viel schmerz durch diese forderung bei dir ausgelöst wird. ich verstehe auf solch einem verteiler, als mensch mit rassismus-erfahrung, diese nicht auf zwang allen preisgeben zu wollen. alternativ kannst du z.b. auch nur [rabija] per privater e-mail schreiben aus welcher erfahrung und realität du sprichst?! vielleicht ist dis eine möglichkeit...

[enya], du schreibst weiter: "wenn die kritik dahin geht, ihn als /weißen/ wissenschaftler, der nicht mit rroma redet, zu markieren/ihn zu kritisieren, sehe ich nicht, was seine adresse dabei helfen sollte - ausser eben genau diesen "feind"-effekt

auszulösen - den ich kritisiert habe. da geht es dann nur noch um personen und nicht um strukturen oder inhalte."

und personen und ihre positionen (z.b. in berufen oder in der akademie) sind doch teil dieser strukturen oder? again: diese weiterleitung war ja öffentlich. er hat es selber unterschrieben. [rabija] hat nur kopiert.

für mich ist [tim] nicht "der feind" und soll hier auch nicht als solcher dargestellt werden. ich erlebe das auch nicht so - aber das ist subjektiv. er muss jetzt aber die folgen seiner eigenen entscheidungen/seines eigenen handelns tragen. niemensch hat ihn gezwungen zu rassismus gegen r(r)oma/ antiromaismus zu forschen. Kritik muss unbedingt ausgehalten werden können, sonst versinken wir in autoritarismus bzw. die, die an der macht sind bleiben einfach an der macht. und in diesem kontext würde dies bedeuten, dass /weiße/ weiterhin ohne widerstand aus r(r)oma communities, ihre forschung über die communities oder auch über den rassismus gegen die communities, betreiben könnten.

ich bin sehr froh, dass unser widerstand als of color communities gegen /weiße/ vereinnahmende und ausbeuterische vorherrschaft wächst!

ich rechne aber nicht damit dass /weiße/ 'linke' ohne vehementen widerstand ihre eigene machtposition innerlab der szene auch nur in frage stellen! wir sehen ja gerade was passiert... auch wenn diese kämpfe innerhalb der 'szene' seit jahrzehnten von frauen*/queers* of color geführt werden.

dann wollte ich noch kurz folgendes von dir [enya] kommentieren:

"aber auch allies kämpfen auf derselben seite der barrikade - manchmal auch nicht, aber dafür reden wir mit allies. mehr habe ich nicht geschrieben."

ich stimem dir zu, dass allies durchaus auch direkt neben und mit uns poc kämpfen können, selbst im kontext von /white/ supremacy. dies ist aber ein langer langer weg, den ich bis dato mit keiner /weißen/ person erlebt habe - also, dass ich mich was /white/ supremacy angeht mit /weißen/ "sicher" gefühlt habe... bis dato schaffen /weiße/ in meiner realität immer eine gewaltvolle und unsichere atmosphäre für mich...

[lola], du schreibst: "wenn Linke von anderen Linken über Mailinglisten Adressen veröffentlichen und androhen, Antworten und dazugehörige Namen ebenfalls an die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen -- dann läuft etwas gewaltig schief und man sollte sich Gedanken darüber machen, wie man mit solchen Praktiken und Androhungen umgeht. Das ist keine Frage von Harmoniebedürftigkeit oder Netiquette."

... wie bereits einige male formuliert wurde [tim's] kontaktdaten über andere verteiler frei und öffentlich weitergeleitet. er steht auch als kontaktperson für diese konferenz

auf dem call-out.

die praxis "Antworten und dazugehörige Namen ebenfalls an die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen" ist eine sehr gängige bei anti-hegemonialen (z.b. anti-sexistischen) interventionen die schriftlich verlaufen. Dies öffnet eine möglichkeit für die kritisierende person einen etwas "saferen" space aufzumachen. kritisierende von machtpositionen sind ja meist (wie hier auch) in keine-macht, also ohnmachts positionen. Bei jedem leser_innenbrief oder protestbrief an dozierende den ich verfasste, setzte ich diesen satz zum schluss. das habe ich in empowerment-workshops gelernt.

dann schreibst du [lola]: "Sehr sehr viele Menschen - auch auf dieser Liste - sehen das ähnlich, trauen sich aber nicht , etwas zu schreiben, weil eine Sache, die "wir" offensichtlich am besten können, das Denunzieren, Ausschließen und Sanktionieren anderer ist. Viel Spaß dabei, ich spiel nicht mit."

wenn ich an "Denunzieren, Ausschließen und Sanktionieren" denke, denke ich an die realität von people und vor allem von frauen*/queers* of color in 'links-autonomen' räumen.

eure räume sind /weiß/! eure räume sind rassistisch! ihr seit diejenigen die uns exotisieren, mit uns sex haben wollt um mal "was anderes" auszuprobieren"!

nicht anders rum. wir sprechen hier von struktureller und institutionalisierter macht (z.b. auch in "kritischen" institutionen wie den 'gender studies').

und dann das argument frauen* of color würden hier jetzt /weiße/ einschüchtern und eine angsthochmosphäre schaffen - das ich nicht lache...

wir sind hier immernoch "nur" auf der [e-mail] liste - und again: ihr /weißen/ (egal ob queer*, lesbisch, schwul, trans*, questioning...) habt tausend male und immer die möglichkeit z.b. kritische r(r)oma stimmen zu missachten, diese zu verdrehen oder zu missbrauchen. und das tut ihr als gruppe ja auch immer... yes: ich stecke gerade alle /weißen/ in einen topf bis mich einzelne vom gegenteil überzeugen!

wir sprechen nicht weil wir n paar bücher zu rassismus gelesen haben (das haben wir teils auch, einige dieser bücher haben wir sogar selber geschrieben) - sondern aus gelebter erfahrung!

ich finde es unerträglich dass du nun [rabija] zur gewaltausübenden angreiferin machst und [tim] zum opfer. typisch: /weiße/ solidarität ist stärker als selbst-reflektion! und um /weiße/ solidarität zu leben muss mensch nicht /weiß/ sein...

und zum ganzen thema "verbundene unterdrückungserfahrungen" eine wunderbare spoken word performance von Stacy Ann Chin (auf englisch):

‘All Oppression is Connected’

<https://cosasquenosrompen.noblogs.org/post/2012/12/19/stay-ann-chin-all-oppression-is-connected/>

soweit...

[ana]

Mail 31 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Hannah) danke [lola] für deine mail.

Day 6 und grundsätzlich find ichs ja gut, wenn hier diskutiert wird aber muss dass wirklich so laufen? ich kann mich da nur [lola] anschließen und ausserdem möchte ich darum bitten, dass ihr dann mal eine kleinere emailable zusammenfasst und nicht alles über den ganzen verteiler schickt. bitte.

grüße

[hannah]

Mail 32 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Ina) Liebe [Lola], liebe [Enya], lieber [Tim Maier] & Liste,

Day 6 warum lenkt ihr ständig mit dieser blöden Adressangabe vom Thema ab?

Niemand hat die Arbeitsadresse von [Tim Maier] gegooglet oder andersweitig rausgefunden. [Tim Maier] hat SELBST seine Arbeitsadresse gepostet - auf einer anderen Liste mit dem hier eigentlich inhaltlich diskutierten CfP - siehe Ende der Mail.

Wenn [Tim] seine Arbeitsadresse auf Listen und in Verbindung mit dem Call nicht genannt haben möchte, dann sollte [Tim Maier] sich beim Verfassen und Verschicken der Mails darauf konzentrieren.

Ey Leute reißt euch mal ein bisschen zusammen - es ging und geht hier um Hinweise von Rroma und PoC auf sprachlichen und strukturellen Rassismus! Diesen hat offensichtlich vor [Rabija's] Intervention keine_r der Leser_innen registriert, da ja niemand auf den CfP von [Tim Maier] intervenierend reagiert hat.

Und auch [Tim Maier] hätte sich in seiner Ankündigung/Weiterleitung des CfP ja bereits kritisch zu den gewählten Begriffen (organisatorischer und personeller Struktur, Inhalten) positionieren können - hat er aber nicht. D.h. für mich, der Weiterleitende ist sowohl mit Inhalt, als auch mit Form einverstanden. Warum sollte er sonst den Call weiterleiten?

[Rabija] und [Ana] haben (für uns weiße) ausführlich den Kontext dieser sprachlichen Rassismen des CfPs, den Kontext dieser Konferenz, den Kontext der mit [Tim Maier]

gemeinsam arbeitenden Forscher_innen dargelegt, sowie einige Grundlagen und Zusammenhänge erläutert. Vielen Danke dafür!

Bitte - lest die vorherigen Mails - langsam und gründlich. Die Intervenierenden haben sich hier und im Vorfeld mit dem Thema bereits viel Arbeit gemacht. Etwas mehr Respekt für und Konzentration auf die erläuterten Inhalte finde ich angemessen.

Und ich wünsche sehr, dass der Teil der Debatte, der immer wieder versucht [Tim Maier] als ein Opfer herauszuarbeiten und behauptet [Rabija] hätte irgendwas (...) gemacht, endlich ein Ende hat! Warum, wurde oft und detailliert gesagt.

Und sich in einem rassistischen System als weiß zu positionieren, hat ganz sicher keine negativen Konsequenzen.

Solidarische Grüße ... [Ina]

Mail 33 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Rabija) lieber [hannah],
passt dir nicht was poc`s zu sagen haben wa ?
Day 6 oder warum solln wir jetzt hier gehn?
[rabija]

Mail 34 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Ana) hallo [hannah] et al:

Day 6 genau weil du (ohne positionierung oder inhaltliche stellungnahme) so nett [lola] dankst möchte ich nochmal drauf hinweisen:

/white/ supremacy... /weiße/ vorherrschaft ist ein /weißes/ problem! auch von queere*/trans*/ feministischen (...) /weißen/!

und auch wenn du zweimal drum bittest: es geht genau darum diese aushandlungen nicht im stillen kämmerchen auszutragen. wenn du kein bock auf die diskussion hast oder kein bock hast kritische stimmen zu /white/ supremacy (in jeglichem tonfall...) zu lesen (is ja noch nicht mal hören!) dann lösche deine e-mails doch einfach?! what's the problem?

vielleicht ist es für einige neu aber bestimmte kritiken müssen nun mal ausgehalten werden... und nein, wir können sie nicht "nur" unter poc klären weil wir nun mal aus bestimmten gründen auf dieser liste sind: weil wir uns, wie ihr alle (?) auch in anti-patriarchalen kämpfen (als möglicher sammelbegriff?) wiederfinden. nur kämpfen z.b. queers*/frauen* of color never nur an einer front - sonder gleich an mehreren. die leute von euch die z.b. im rolli sitzen und/ oder klassistische diskriminierungserfahrungen machen sind ja auch nicht "nur" (pro-)feministisch...

again - viell. erstmal nachlesen?

#Hito Steyerl, Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (Hg.) Spricht die Subalterne deutsch?
Migration und postkoloniale Kritik
<http://www.unrast-verlag.de/neuerscheinungen/spricht-die-subalterne-deutsch-41-detail>

#Chandra T. Mohanty, Anne Russo, Lourdes M. Torres Third World women and the politics of feminism
http://books.google.de/books/about/Third_World_Women_and_the_Politics_of_Fe.html?id=UQ6Fh-s_OVEC&redir_esc=y

angenervt.
[ana]

Mail 35 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(no name) wow, [hannah], das finde ich gerade echt krass - und ich habs schon fast befürchtet, dass das irgendwann kommt - dass hier echt forderungen auftauchen, die debatte soll nicht über die ganze liste gehen.

Day 6

Ich meine, hier verwenden von rassismus betroffene menschen jede menge zeit und mühe darauf, und machen sich sagenhaft viel arbeit, zu intervenieren, und weiß positionierten menschen wie mir (und dir?) rassismus zu erklären, mit langen erklärungen und links und hinweisen, - und deine reaktion ist, zu fordern, damit nicht alle zu 'belästigen'? wie zynisch ist das denn?!

kostenlose bildungsarbeit zu rassismus, für die betroffene hier ihre freizeit verwenden, und dann gibts leute, die sagen, hört mal auf damit, die menschen, die hier mehrheitlich von rassismus profitieren, sollen mal nicht damit genervt werden, dass sie das tun?!

an all die intervenierenden menschen: danke für all die infos und denkanstöße.

Mail 36 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Rabija) ach und lieber [hannah],

Day 6

hier ist jetzt mal nicht so einfach ne women of color einfach wegen "unwohlsein" und aus der bedrohlichen angst die weisse durch sie haben auszuschliessen hmmm auch mal ne neue erfahrung für dich /euch wie gesat ihr wollts nicht hörn, ihr wollt krampfhaft an euer macht festhalten, an euren privelegien, an eurem angelichen recht zu roma zu forschen, uns zu exotisiern, und wundert euch wenn wir uns mal lauter mal agressiver weheren ja ? euer ernst ?? 2 woc und die weisse masse schlottert vor angst - -hahahhahahh
als ob wir macht hätten...
die angst vorm schwarzen-mann-frau syndrom ja ?? [rabija]

Mail 37 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Aaron) Hallo Alle,

Day 6 ich finds wirklich traurig, dass diese Adressen-Geschichte genutzt wird um Machtverhältnisse umzudrehen und von der berechtigten und sehr fundierten und detaillierten Kritik abzulenken, welche in Bezug auf weisse Strategien und rassistische Bezeichnungen aufgemacht wurde.

Warum können "wir Weissen" nicht einfach zuhören, akzeptieren was gesagt wird und dafür dankbar sein, wenn die Punkte wieder und wieder wiederholt und mit Links versehen und nochmal dargelegt werden? Und was soll der Vorschlag, die kritischen Stimmen auf eine separate Liste zu verschieben?

Das verstehe ich nun wirklich nicht...

Danke an [Rabija] und [Ana] fürs (wiederholte) Aussprechen, Wachrütteln, Informieren.

Lieben Gruss
[aaron]

Mail 38 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*

(T.) Hallo,

Day 6 Vielleicht sollte sich die Konferenz statt mit dem geplanten Thema mit 'white' supremacy, ethnologischen und kolonialen Kontinuitäten und Reproduktionen auseinandersetzen und sich politisch kritisch zu der Konferenz positionieren. Es ist ja okay, wenn die Kritik angenommen wird, bringt aber nichts, wenn keine Konsequenzen daraus folgen.

Ich denke solche Diskussionen sind absolut notwendig, auch in linken Räumen, zu der ich auch diese Liste zählen würde. Die 'weißen' der linken Strukturen, zu denen ich mich auch zähle, müssen sich hinsetzen und unsere Hausaufgaben machen, ansonsten ist der Anspruch emanzipatorische Arbeit und Kämpfe zu machen absolut lächerlich.

Ich finde es in bestimmten Kontexten wichtig sich zu positionieren, allerdings finde ich Identitäts-politik in dem Sinne, dass vor allem was gesagt wird Positionierungen stattfinden müssen, problematisch. Ich denke Positionierungen sind absolut notwendig um Privilegien sichtbar und somit angreifbar zu machen, aber diese Politik kann nach meiner Erfahrung auch schnell zu Essentialismen und der Verfestigung von konstruierten, statischen Kategorien führen.

[t]

Mail 39 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Rabija) @ [aaron]
WORD !!

Day 7 vielen dank,für die benennung dieser krassen weissen unverschämtheit und der versuch des silencing von [hannah] und patsy,as i said nicht ich oder [ana] oder andere poc`s sind das problem sondern RACISM ist das problem und weisse die davon profitieren und nur ihrer weissen-queer-bubbel-blase bleiben wollen wo sie versuchen jede kritik an ihrer weissen vorherrschaft auszumerzen, zu denuszierne, und auszuschliessen,anstelle sich selbst damit zu beschäftigen wie-- awesome-- man ist, könnte man sich ja auch mal all die infos reinziehn die wir-- mit unter aus persönlicher lebensrealität-- geteilt haben und das mal wertschätzen ..oder man belibt halt in seinem weissen-künstler-pseudo anti-rassistischen gedanken hängen und sich über andere zu stellen danke für alle die menschen die sich ernsthaft mit meiner/unserer kritik auseinandersetzen, undn bereit sind, sich selbst und die positionen in denen sie sind zu hinterfragen
[rabija]

Mail 40 **Subject Line:** *Adressenveröffentlichungen und dergleichen.*

(Maria) wow... ich bin auch ganz schön geschockt was da so alles kommt...eigentlich ja auch nicht... aber ich hätte nicht gedacht, dass es tatsächlich aufgeschrieben wird. unter dem motto: "man wird doch wohl noch sagen dürfen.." und dann noch von spalterei-fantasien anfangen... das kenn ich aus anderen kontexten ziemlich gut.

Day7

macht mich wütend.. aber gerade tut es mir vor allem leid... weil ich einen kleinen einblick in den rassitischen alltag bekomme, den ich ja vor allem mitproduziere und so selten dermaßen deutlich aufgezeigt bekomme.

auch wenn es sich wahrscheinlich ziemlich beschissen anfühlt kann ich nur sagen-mich erreicht die wut und bewegt mich. - trotz der trägheit der weißen masse.. vielen dank für die links und überhaupt- die geduld.

liebst: [maria]

Mail 41 **Subject Line:** *Netiquette und CfP Anti[...]ismus*

(Imka and Maria) Hallo @all,
hier schreiben zwei weiße listen-leser_innen.

Day7

Erstmal danke an den interventionseinsatz von [rabija] und die support-und erklärarbeit von [ana] – die verweise auf die wordpress seite von der paria zeitschrift fanden wir sehr hilfreich zum nachdenken über antiromanismus als untersuchungsgegenstand von weißen akademiker_innen.

Wir finden die immer wieder in linken zusammenhängen aufzufindenden aufrufe zum

gegenseitigen 'respektvollen und rücksichtsvollen miteinander' trotz unterschiedlicher Ausgangsbedingungen, Macht(schreib)positionen und Lebenskontexten voll daneben. Genauso wie gegenseitige weiße Zustimmungsbekundungen, die sich zu ihren 'Interventionen' beglückwünschen. Bevor hier wieder ein 'lasst uns lieb zueinander sein, denn wir haben ja den gleichen Feind' (ok das war jetzt überspitzt) Beitrag über die Liste geschickt wird, denkt doch bitte mal über den Inhalt der Kritik nach, anstatt sich vielleicht blöd angemacht zu fühlen

(@ all white people).

Bei anti-rassistischer Kritik geht es nicht darum sich total duff zu fühlen, sondern das eigene weiße Verhalten mal genauer unter die Lupe zu nehmen. Das kann (und sollte) sich vielleicht auch nicht so gut anfühlen. Let's reflect, do our homework, get over our white ego und

Es grüßen, [imka] und [maria]

(Sorry falls jetzt viele Wiederholungen dabei waren.)

Appendix B - BDSM Forum

Name of the thread: *Registration open till 25th of February*

Thread Opening Post	<p>We are happy to announce that registration for the WLTI (women, lesbian, trans, INTER) bdsm conference 2014 is open! Everyone who feels connected to the women/lesbian scene is invited, but cis-men are excluded.</p>
(Conference)	<p>Regular Registration is possible till 25th of February - till then the fee for the conference must be in our account. To get the account info just write to : [xx@conference.org]</p> <p>Till 25th of february the fees are as follows: 80 Euro sponsored fee 120 Euro regular fee 150 Euro for all who sponsor others (our thanks again!)</p> <p>All participants of the conference are required to do 3 hours of workshifts for the conference. These workshifts are necessary to ensure that the conference can take place. If you absolutely can't or don't want to do a workshift we'll need someone else to do your workshift in addition to their own. That's why we will give you this possibility only for an additional payment (for those of you who already paid)/higher conference fee of 180 euros; that means that in this case it's not possible to get a ticket for the sponsored or regular fee.</p> <p>Also, if you would like to do more workshifts then the usual 3 hours - in case this will be needed at the conference - we'd pay you back 10 euros per every hour you do additionally to your workshifts - but please transfer the full fee before the conference to us, we'll give you the money for additional workshifts afterwards. Please let us know per mail at [xx@conference.org] if you would be interested to do additional workshifts so we can get back to you :)</p> <p>looking forward to seeing you at the [...] Conference!</p>
Response 1	<p>hallo,</p>
(pear-femininity)	<p>ich habe eine frage zu eurer tuerpolitik. bei der ankuendigung der [...] konferenz 2014 steht:</p> <p>"We are happy to announce that registration for the WLTI (women, lesbian, trans, inter) bdsm conference 2014 is open! Everyone who feels connected to the women/lesbian scene is invited, but cis-men are excluded."</p>

meine frage ist: wie definiert ihr "cis-men"? meint ihr damit menschen, die bei geburt als maennlich/junge einsortiert wurden, und sich damit richtig bechrieben und wohl fuehlen und sich mit der maennlichen rolle in der gesellschaft und in beziehungen identifizieren?

vielen dank im voraus und beste gruesse

Response 2

Hallo Alle*,

mich interessiert das auch sehr!

(genderqueer-apple)

Wer bestimmt, wer cis ist? Wie wird damit umgegangen, wenn bei der Registration für die Konferenz / auf der Konferenz Menschen eine Person als cis einlesen, die aber trans* fühlt, egal wie ihre Performance ist?

Sollte dies der Fall sein, müssen betreffende Personen sich davor fürchten, dass andere die Definitionsmacht über ihre Identität an sich reißen und ihnen schlechtestenfalls das Gefühl geben, nicht willkommen zu sein?

Soll es alles schon gegeben haben, deshalb mein klar formulierter Wunsch:

Ich wünsche mir eine Konferenz, bei der alle Menschen herzlich willkommen geheißen, als sie selbst angenommen und mit Respekt behandelt werden.

Wer zur Konferenz kommt, tut das nicht zufällig, sondern fühlt sich aus gutem Grund zugehörig, denke ich.

Ich freue mich auf eine solche Atmosphäre!

Response 3

No consent to quote.

Response 4

hallo allerseits,

(pear-transfemininity)

heute erhielt ich von der orga eine antwort auf meine anfrage und gleichzeitige anmelde-email mit meinem anbot 2 workshops auf der [...]konferenz zu halten. die antwort es orgatetams liest sich wie folgt:

*Hallo,

vielen Dank für Dein workshop-Angebot zur [...]konferenz 2014. Leider richtet sich die [...]konferenz nur an einen bestimmten Personenkreis, so wie in den letzten Jahren und auch dieses Jahr.

Auch wenn die eigene Einschätzung sich durchaus dieser speziellen Community nahe sieht, heißt das leider noch nicht, dass das der anderen Seite auch so geht. Deshalb können wir weder Deinen Workshop noch Deine Teilnahme an der [...]konferenz 2014 berücksichtigen.

Wir hoffen, dass Du bei den zahlreichen anderen Veranstaltungen um Ostern herum etwas passendes für Dich findest und verbleiben mit osterlichen Grüßen,

das Orga-Team der [...]konferenz 2014*

darauf antwortete ich:

*hallo orga-team,

danke fuer eure antwort. ich finde eure begruendung leider inakzeptabel und schlage daher vor, dass wir uns zeitnah auf ein moderiertes gespraech treffen. vielleicht lassen sich dann ja die dinge klaeren, die die von euch genannte "andere seite" meint.

liebe gruesse*

Response 5 **No consent to quote.**

Response 6-10 **Not topic related.**

Response 11 Hallo Orga-Team der [...]konferenz 2014,

(pear-transfemininity)

leider habe ich bislang keine Antwort von Euch erhalten. Da ich diese Sache - eure Email und diesen Ausschluss - nicht auf sich beruhen lassen werde, nehme ich jetzt auf eure Email etwas ausführlicher Bezug. Vielleicht ermöglicht das ja den Einstieg in eine Diskussion.

Zunächst erst mal finde ich eure Antwort aus der Anonymität heraus "das Orga-Team der [...]konferenz 2014" feige, und die Formulierung "andere Seite" scheint mir sehr pauschal vereinnahmend zu sein. Ich kann nicht glauben, dass alle, die zur [...]konferenz 2014 gehen werden, die Aussage mittragen, die Ihr mir in eurer Email geschrieben habt. Die Kombination dieser zwei ersten Punkte wirkt auf mich, als wolltet Ihr mich quasi "auf eine andere Seite" stellen. Das ist mir als Ansatz zu schwarz-weiß, denn es reduziert die Vielfalt des Genderspektrums auf zwei Punkte. Ich finde es anmaßend von Euch, dass ihr entscheidet, wo ich zu verorten bin. Habt ihr

mich mal gefragt wie ich mich verorte und warum?

Ich bin kein cis-Mann. Nach meinem Verständnis ist ein cis-Mann ein Mensch, der bei Geburt als „männlich“ einsortiert wurde, UND sich damit richtig beschrieben und wohl fühlt, UND sich mit der „männlichen“ Rolle in der Gesellschaft sowie in Beziehungen etc. identifiziert. Und das tue ich nicht - ich fühle mich damit weder richtig beschrieben noch wohl, und ich identifiziere ich mich nicht mit der „männlichen“ Rolle, weder in der Gesellschaft noch in privaten Zusammenhängen. Ich habe mich noch nie als „Mann“ gefühlt, und als Kind auch nicht als „Junge“. Das einzige, was auf mich zutrifft ist, dass ich bei Geburt als „männlich“ einsortiert wurde. Ich finde es übergriffig, dass einige Menschen konsequent zu verleugnen versuchen, dass ich dem Spektrum der (Trans*-)Weiblichkeiten zuzuordnen bin.

Seit über 10 Jahren bin ich in LGBTQ-Kontexten unterwegs und aktiv, halte auf TranSTAGUNGEN IN BERLIN, MÜNCHEN, HAMBURG UND BERN WORKSHOPS ZU THEMEN WIE „SCHWULE FRAUEN, LESBISCHE MÄNNER“, SOWIE ÜBER NORMATIVITÄT INNERHALB DER LGBTQ-COMMUNITIES, UND „TRANS ohne Transition“. Diese Workshops sind meistens rappellvoll, weil großes Interesse an den Lebensentwürfen und -möglichkeiten abseits des Mainstreams besteht. Und das betrifft nicht nur den heteronormativen Mainstream, sondern auch normative Anforderungen innerhalb der LGBTQ-Szenen. Meine persönliche Erfahrung ist, dass Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gruppe immer wieder nach Augenschein beurteilt wird, auch in LGBTQ-Kontexten. Aber ist Gender sichtbar? Kann Gender an biologi(sti)schen Merkmalen festgemacht werden? Nein. Aber genau das versucht das Orga-Team der [...]konferenz 2014 nach meinem Empfinden zu suggerieren, wenn es schreibt: „Leider richtet sich die [...]konferenz nur an einen bestimmten Personenkreis, so wie in den letzten Jahren und auch dieses Jahr.“ Was sind denn die Kriterien, nach denen hier über Zugehörigkeit und Ausschluss entschieden wird? Mir ist durchaus bewusst, dass es leicht ist, „Männlichkeit“ auf mich zu projizieren. Und ich werde gelegentlich für einen cis-Mann gehalten, oder für heterosexuell. Aber all diese Zuschreibungen von außen sind genau das: Projektionen. Und diese gehen so weit an mir vorbei, dass ich mich weder gesehen noch gemeint fühle. Ich bin nicht bereit solche falschen Zuschreibungen als Grundlage für einen Ausschluss zu akzeptieren.

Wenn ich aufgrund meiner „Männlichkeit“ ausgeschlossen werde, zeigt mir dass nur, dass mein Gegenüber an mir etwas abarbeitet, was nichts mit mir zu tun hat. Ich werde, obwohl ich Transgender bin, stellvertretend für cis-Männer ausgeschlossen. Auch das ist nicht hinnehmbar. Ich bin nicht gewillt die Zielscheibe für undifferenzierte Androphobie zu sein.

Es gibt hier auf FetLife genügend Beispiele, dass Ausschlussdebatten oftmals mit unsachlicher Meinungsmache einher gehen. Ich mache dazu mal ein

Gedankenexperiment: Sagen wir 5 Menschen machen aggressiv die Meinung. Dann schließen sich ihnen vielleicht 10 an, weil es irgendwie teilweise ihrer Denke entspricht. Weitere 20 lassen sich einreden, dass es ihrer Denke entspräche. Ungefähr 30 sagen nichts dazu, weil sie keine Lust auf das Thema oder auf eine weitere unsachliche Diskussion haben. Vielleicht 50 laufen aus Angst des Ausgeschlossenwerdens mit. Und vielleicht 100 bekommen von all dem gar nichts mit, weil sie die Diskussionen auf der Mailingliste oder im Forum nicht verfolgen. Ihnen gegenüber stehen diejenigen, die das Rückgrat haben, der aggressiven Meinungsmache zu widersprechen. Aber eine „andere Seite“ gibt es sicherlich nicht, genau so wenig wie einen Konsens, auch wenn mir das Orga-Team der K[...]konferenz 2014 genau das mit ihrer Email zu vermitteln versuchte.

Was ist denn mit denen, die widersprechen? Sie laufen Gefahr ebenfalls aggressiv ausgegrenzt zu werden. Aus persönlichen Rückmeldungen zu meinem Ausschluss weiß ich, dass einige Menschen den Ausschluss absolut nicht befürworten, aber nicht zwischen die Fronten geraten wollen. Die ganze Debatte um die Einladungspolitik ist also schon lange von der Angst überschattet, den eigenen Anschluss an die Lesben-SM-Community zu verlieren. Ich finde das höchst kritikwürdig, wenn eine Szene so funktioniert, und werde die vom Orga-Team der [...]konferenz 2014 kommunizierte Aussage umso mehr nicht hinnehmen. Diese Diskussion ist notwendig und berechtigt: Vor 20 Jahren wurden TRANSFRAUEN IN DEUTSCHLAND NOCH VON TÜRSTEHERINNEN UND GÄSTINNEN DIE TREPPE VOR DEM EINGANG HERUNTER GEWORFEN, WENN SIE AUF EINE LESBENPARTY GEHEN WOLLTEN. HEUTE IST DAS ZUM GLÜCK NICHT MEHR DER FALL, UND DAZU WAR EIN UMDENKEN NOTWENDIG. UND DIESES UMDENKEN WIRD LANGSAM ABER SICHER WEITER GEHEN, UND DAS SPEKTRUM DESSEN, WAS ALS (TRANS)Weiblichkeit ganz selbstverständlich ist, langsam aber sicher erweitern. Auch wenn das einige nicht wahrhaben wollen.

Liebe Grüße, [pear]

Response 12

(Female-lemon
and xx)

Wir haben ein paar Fragen zur diesjährigen Einladungspolitik der [...]konferenz (die sich sehr undifferenziert auf die der letzten Jahre beruft): Wie unterscheiden sich Transmänner von Cismännern, mit Ausnahme des Geburtsgeschlechtes? Warum darf sich ein Transmann der Lebenszene zugehörig fühlen und ein mensch, der bei Geburt als Mann einsortiert wurde, sich aber nie so gefühlt hat, nicht? Warum wird Männlichkeit als solche bei Butches und Transmännern erotisiert, während sie bei Cismännern als abstoßend gilt? Und noch wichtiger: Wer zieht hier die Grenze? Wer maß es sich an, das gefühlte Geschlecht von außen zu bestimmen? Hat es sich noch nicht rumgesprochen, dass das gefühlte Geschlecht nicht immer sichtbar ist? Wie unterscheidet man einen Transmann von einem Cismann, ohne ihm in die Unterhose geschaut zu haben? Und ist es nicht eigentlich total sexistisch und politisch inkorrekt Ausgrenzungs- und Eingrenzungskriterien auf Grund von

biologischen Äußerlichkeiten vorzunehmen? Und zu guter Letzt: ist es nicht unsagbar respektlos den Transmännern gegenüber zu sagen, "Ihr dürft in Frauenräume, denn ihr seid ja keine "richtigen" Männer"?

Wir sind gespannt und interessiert an euren Antworten.

,[xx] und [lemon]

Response 13

Ich kann all dem von [pear] sowie [xx] und [female-lemon] Gesagten nur zustimmen und wünsche mir wirklich sehr, dass Andere sich angeregt fühlen, über die gestellten Fragen und aufgezeigten Verhältnissen nachzudenken.

(genderqueer-apple)

Mich hat der oben transparent gemachte Ausschluss sowie die Art und Weise enorm negativ überrascht! Als ich mich für die Konferenz angemeldet hatte, war das eine Entscheidung für eine ganz andere Art von Veranstaltung gewesen. Nämlich für eine mit offener, respektvoller, achtsamer zwischenmenschlicher Atmosphäre.

Diese Entscheidung des Orgateams hat mich enttäuscht.

Aber diese Empfindung wandele ich für mich um in die optimistische Erwartung, dass dieser Anlass etwas Festgefahrenes aufbrechen kann und Menschen ein zweites Mal darüber nachdenken, welchen Umgang sie sich selbst gegenüber wünschen und welchen sie, in der Schlussfolgerung, Anderen zukommen lassen möchten...

Response 14

Ich wundere mich immer wieder darüber, dass manche personen die zulassungspolitik von veranstaltungen in frage stellen und tatsächlich glauben, dass sie ein recht drauf haben, mit den organisatoren/innen zu diskutieren. Leute, es gab eine entscheidung, dass die anwesenheit nicht erwünscht ist.

(FtM-banana)

Wer entscheidet, wer zur konferenz kommen kann/darf oder nicht? Die organisator/innen. Sie haben ein recht drauf, jemanden auszuschliessen. Sie müssen nicht offen legen, warum. Sie müssen vorallem nicht ein "moderiertes" gespräch mit einer oder mehrere personen machen, um über die zulassungspolitik zu diskutieren.

Es gab bei der diesjährigen [...]konferenz einen kompletten wechsel des orgateams und die aktuelle gruppe hat immer wieder dazu aufgerufen, mitzumachen. Hier, und nur hier wäre es jeden/jeder offen, mitzumischen und mit zu gestalten. Wer jetzt kommt und sagt, man möge doch noch über die zulassungspolitik diskutieren, hat es - auf gut deutsch - verpennt. Es gab viele diskussionen, wie die zulassungspolitik sein sollte und manche sind wieder ausgetreten - aber auch das ist kein grund, jetzt die entscheidung der orga-

gruppe in frage zu stellen.

Die scene ist vielfältig, es gibt veranstaltungen für verschiedene zielgruppen, manche überdecken sich, andere nicht. Ich gehe nicht zu den organisatoren von schwulen playparties ("männer only" wie es auf der einladung steht) und fange an mit ihnen zu diskutieren, ob ich rein darf oder nicht. Wenn ich wirklich nicht gewollt bin, will ich auch gar nicht hin, sondern überlege mir entweder, wo ich sonst hingehen kann - oder ich fange selber an, eine veranstaltung zu machen, wo ich eben entscheiden kann, wer mitmachen darf oder nicht.

Warum soll die [...]konferenz offen für alle sein - was ja tatsächlich eine der forderungen ist (jeder kann sich queer definieren und wäre damit dabei)? Das war nie gewollt, dass es eine offene veranstaltung ist - und dadurch wird sich zwangsläufig jemand ausgeschlossen fühlen.

Die [...]konferenz ist eine möglichkeit, sich selber zu feiern und über mehrere tage workshops und playparties zu besuchen. Es hat noch nie den anspruch gehabt, politische anforderungen gerecht zu werden.

Ich hoffe sehr, dass die orga-gruppe sich nicht von dieser diskussion aufhalten lassen und auch keine energie drauf verschwendet - dafür gibt es nämlich eine menge andere sachen, die sie planen, organisieren und tun müssen!

Response 15 **No consent to quote.**

Response 16 **No consent to quote.**

Response 17 **No consent to quote.**

Response 18 @[banana], in Übereinstimmung mit [not quoted]

(genderqueer-apple)

Eigentlich sprechen wir dieselbe Sprache, nur missverstehen wir uns in einem Detail. Ich finde ebenso, dass es total legitim ist, Parties für ein bestimmtes Klientel zu machen. Und dass dies zu respektieren ist. Niemand verlangt von der [konferenz]Orga etwa eine Dschungelkostümparty für Rentner_innen anzubieten, wenn ihr Angebot ganz klar eine BDSM-Konferenz für FrauenLesbenTrans*Inter ist.

Und nehmen wir mal an, die [...]konferenz wäre cis-Frauen vorbehalten, so dürften alle nicht-cis-Frauen nicht rein. Punkt. Und das wäre doch okay!

NUN IST die Konferenz aber nicht für cis-Frauen ausgeschrieben, sondern

wortwörtlich deklariert als offen für "women, lesbian, trans*, inter".

Stellt euch doch mal vor, vor euch steht eine Tür mit der Aufschrift "Bitte eintreten, wenn du ein Mensch bist". Du denkst "na klasse, auf geht's" und schreitest auf die Tür zu. Doch dann schüttet jemand einen Farbeimer über dir aus, schön dass alle drumrum es sehen können, und dir wird gesagt: "Ätsch! Alle, die Menschen sind, dürfen rein, aber du, Mensch, du nicht".

Wie würde euch das gefallen?

Zurück zum Anmeldeprozedere der [...]konferenz: Es steht auch nirgendwo geschrieben, dass man erst einen persönlichen Bewerbungs- und Auswahlprozess durchlaufen muss, bei dem man individuell akzeptiert oder abgewiesen wird. Nein, der Aufruf ist, sich anzumelden, indem man das Geld überweist (wenn man zur Zielgruppe gehört).

Und hier kommen wir zu dem einzigen Punkt, den ich kritisiere:

Warum widerspricht das Orga-Team seiner eigenen Aussage?

Warum wird eine Einzelperson, die ganz klar zu "FrauenLesbenTrans*Inter" gehört (!), herausgegriffen und abgewiesen?

Wieso durfte ICH einfach mein Geld bezahlen (nach vorheriger "Hallo, ich würde gern dabei sein"-Mail), ohne dass jemand MICH gescreent hat? Ich könnte sonst wer sein, aber abgewiesen wurde ICH nicht.

Ihr etwa?

Ich finde:

Organisator_innen von einer Veranstaltung können alle Entscheidungen treffen, die sie möchten. Das ist ihr verdientes Recht für die Arbeit, die sie investieren!

Ich wünsche mir nur, dass sie

1. ihre getroffenen Entscheidungen und Politiken transparent machen

2. sich dann konsistent im Einklang mit diesen verhalten,

und

3. nicht willkürlich mal mit der einen Person so und der anderen Person so verfahren

Im Übrigen habe ich einen Riesenrespekt für das Engagement der Orgas und hege keinen Groll gegen sie als Personen. Es ist sicherlich ein

nervenaufreibender Balanceakt zwischen den Fronten. Mein Anliegen ist nicht, Krawall zu machen oder zu beschuldigen.

Ich wünsche mir einzig, dass Freundlichkeit und Respekt allen zuteil wird. Der Orga UND den potenziellen Teilnehmenden. ALLEN davon, auf die GLEICHE Weise...

Response 19

(genderqueer-ananas)

@[apple] das hast du gut ausgedrückt. sowas in der Art wollte ich auch sagen, aber da mich dieses Thema viel zu sehr aufregt und mich impulsiv macht, hab ich mich erstmal zurückhalten wollen. niemand hört zu wenn man sich gegenseitig anschreit.

ich finde übrigens auch die Arbeit des Orga Teams sehr beeindruckend und unersetzlich. und es ist sicherlich nicht immer leicht.

aber ich denke auch, das es gut ist, diese Diskussion zu führen und einige Dinge zu hinterfragen. vielleicht gibt es dann am Ende mehr verständnis untereinander.

Response 20

(plum-femme)

No consent to quote.

Response 21

(grapefruit-butch)

Ein +1 für das was [apple] geschrieben hat, ich will es nicht wiederholen und könnte es auch gar nicht so gut ausdrücken.

Bei der Ablehnung von [pear] ist es mir kalt den Rücken runtergelaufen: eine "andere Seite", eine "spezielle Community" die das anders sieht? Da möchte ich bitte nicht dazugerechnet werden.

[grapefruit]

Response 22

(plum-femme)

No consent to quote.

Response 23

(genderqueer-ananas)

@[plum] ja, so sieht's aus. ganz am Anfang hier steht die Antwort die [pear] vom orga team bekommen hat. da wird es genau so gesagt.

Response 24

@[plum]: ich habe mich auf die Ablehnung, die [pear] von der Orga bekommen hat, bezogen. Ich verstehe Deine Nachfrage nicht ganz, schreibst Du nicht etwas Ähnliches?

(grapefruit-butch)

@[banana]: Ich finde auch, dass man als Veranstalter grundsätzlich das Recht hat, zu bestimmen, wer eingeladen ist.

Aber: mit der [...]konferenz übernimmt man eine große Veranstaltung die sich in den letzten Jahren - ich bin seit 10 dabei - an Frauen Lesben Trans* und alle, die sich der FrauenLesbenCommunity zugehörig gefühlt haben, richtet - über die konkrete Formulierung wird jedes Jahr gerungen.

Grundsätzlich haben die, die die Arbeit machen das Recht, das anders zu machen. Wenn das aber nicht offen geschieht, sondern eine einzelnen Person wieder ausgeladen wird weil jemand beschließt, das diese Person jetzt doch irgendwie nicht ausreichend dieser Community zugehörig ist, dann finde ich das gruselig. Und ich frage mich, warum das geschieht. Und warum mich das so erschrickt.

Es gibt auf der [...]konferenz immer wieder Leute, die ich nicht mag, die mir Angst machen, oder deren Verhalten ich inadäquat und unangenehm finde. Darunter sind Transfrauen, die mir mit Verhalten, das ich als männlich-sozialisiert-unangenehm-dominant erlebe, auf die Nerven gehen, genauso wie Cis-Frauen, die ich aus unterschiedlichen Gründen als übergriffig und unangenehm empfinde.

Als ich mitorganisiert habe [listed years] habe ich mich auch gefragt, wie es mir damit geht, dass ich für diese Personen mitorganisiere.

Ich habe damals mich dafür entschieden, daß ich für alle organisieren möchte, und alle einladen möchte, denen es wichtig ist, an dieser Community teilzuhaben und das es mir nicht zusteht, darüber zu urteilen, wer da jetzt reinpasst und wer nicht, egal wieviel Arbeit ich reinstecke. Weil es mir wichtiger ist, ein Event zu schaffen, daß offen ist, Unterschiedlichkeiten zulässt, und eben auch die Selbstdefinition und Eigenverantwortung der Teilnehmenden respektiert.

Aber zurück zu dem Gedanken, warum mich dieses Vorgehen so erschrickt. Vielleicht, weil es mich so sehr an das, was ich im Beruf - als Frau, die ich nicht bin, aber als die ich gelesen werde – immer wieder erfahre: Klar würden wir uns über mehr Frauen hier freuen. Mach mal was. Und wenn man dann was macht: nee, das ist jetzt irgendwie doch nicht das richtige/ausreichend/blöd/zu akademisch/was auch immer, und wir befördern doch lieber zufälligerweise den Mann weil der passt irgendwie dann doch besser. Glass-Ceiling wird das genannt. Und andererseits zu erleben, wieviel

Mühe es macht, mir wie meinen männlichen Kollegen, das zu reflektieren und über den eigenen Schatten zu springen und zu sagen: das wir den deutschen Mann als passender empfinden, müssen wir kritisch hinterfragen, und auch, wenn wir alle das Gefühl haben, dass sie irgendwie nicht ganz so gut "reinpasst", uns bewußt für die Frau mit Migrationshintergrund entscheiden. Und genauso so ein Hinterfragen der eigenen Ablehnung und Ängste würde ich mir von den TeilnehmerInnen und Organisatorinnen der [...]konferenz wünschen.

Und: die andere mögliche Sorge die ich sehe, die vor der Gefahr, das wir von heterosexuellen Cis-Männern überschwemmt werden, die gerne blonden langhaarigen Lesben beim Sex zusehen wollen, die besteht imho jetzt auch nicht so akut, so schlau sind die dann schon, zu verstehen, dass das nicht die Veranstaltung dafür ist.

[grapefruit]

Response 25-27 No consent to quote.

(plum-femme)

Response 28

(grapefruit-butch)

@[plum], ich meinte Deinen Satz "At the same time I don't understand either what the organisers mean by "the other side". Who is that other side? And what is it that this people on this so called other side are thought to think? " so verstanden daß Du auch kritisierst, dass es diese "andere Seite" so nebulös bleibt.

And I guess that was my whole point: There will be people that make you feel uncomfortable at easter conference, there have to be at an event that size.

But if a self-identified woman/lesbian makes someone feel uncomfortable not because of something they are doing or saying but just because they are read as a cis-man, and not a trans woman - which is more prone to happen if that transgender person isn't performing in a clearly feminine way - then I think it's on the person that feels uncomfortable to reflect on that and question the conclusion that because she feels uncomfortable, a category of people should be excluded just so that she doesn't feel uncomfortable anymore.

And it is a special event; there is room for many different play parties with different target groups in Berlin, but there is only one [...]conference.

Response 29 My German is not good enough to express my thoughts in German so please forgive me writing in English.

(melon-femme) The conference organisers at the top of this thread state that the conference is open to "WLTI (women, lesbian, trans, inter)...Everyone who feels connected to the women/lesbian scene is invited, but cis-men are excluded."

If an individual identifies as a woman, lesbian, trans or intersex then that person is invited. It seems to me that [pear] does not self-identify as any of those categories and therefore is not invited. If [pear] self-identified as a woman, lesbian, trans or intersex then there would be no need to challenge the door policy (irrespective of the cis-gender element). So it seems that the only reason for raising this issue is to try to persuade the organisers to change the door policy. That is not OK in my view.

And for the record, I agree with @[plum] about safe spaces. I do NOT identify as queer, I do NOT wish to attend a conference which is open to everyone because that would NOT be a safe space for me and I would choose not to attend. There is a presumption that everyone is queer which makes me feel very alienated. There are plenty of pansexual and queer events for those who are so inclined. There is no obligation on the organisers to open the conference to everyone.

[Melon]

Response 30 But [pear] identifies as transgendered & lesbian. That should count enough. Just because one doesn't look like expected, they shouldn't be banned from this event.

(genderqueer-ananas)

Response 31 That is my point exactly. If that is the case, why was the door policy questioned three weeks ago, before the workshop issue arose?

(melon-femme)

Response 32 No consent to quote.

(plum-femme)

Response 33**(pear-femininity)**

@ [unquoted]: Vielen Dank, dass Du die Texte gepostet hast, und jetzt nachvollziehbar wird, worüber wir eigentlich reden.

Ich schließe mich meinen Vorrednerinnen in vielen Punkten an, insbesondere [apple]. Zwei Punkte möchte ich dabei unterstreichen: Ich sehe auch, dass die Organisation einer solchen Veranstaltung sehr viel Arbeit ist, und dass das Orga-Team Enormes leistet. Dafür haben sie auch meine Anerkennung. Und ich stimme auch der Aussage zu, dass die Organisator_innen einer Party über die Einlasspolitik entscheiden. Um beim Beispiel von [apple] zu bleiben: Zu einer Veranstaltung, die als exklusiv nur für cis-Frauen beschrieben wäre, würde ich nicht versuchen mich anzumelden.

Da die [...]konferenz 2014 als für: „...Lesben, Transpersonen ... und zwar unabhängig von Körper oder Kleidung...“ beschrieben ist, fühle ich mich auf zweierlei Weise gemeint. Das mag erst mal verwirrend sein. In der Fachzeitschrift Liminalis gibt es einen wissenschaftlichen Artikel, der die Existenz von GirlFags (schwulen frauen) sehr gut beschreibt und GuyDykes (lesbischen Männern) zumindest am Rande ebenfalls erwähnt. Bereits lange vor diesem Artikel wurden beide, wenn auch anders bezeichnet, in verschiedenen Kulturen und Epochen beschrieben. Heutzutage sind beide Gruppen jedoch derart unbekannt oder unsichtbar, dass es sehr schwer ist, Verständnis zu schaffen. Und genau darum geht es mir neben meinem Wunsch, mich in den Kreisen bewegen zu können, zu denen ich mich zugehörig fühle - um Verständnis. An einer Polarisierung hier in der Diskussion oder gar Störung der [...]konferenz habe ich kein Interesse. Den Artikel findet Ihr (leider nur auf Englisch) unter folgendem Link: http://www.liminalis.de/artikel/Liminalis2007_meyer...

@ [plum]: You asked what pronoun I prefer. When someone uses “he” I can accept that as a reference to the “guy” in GuyDyke. And I am happy when someone uses “she” in order to refer to the fact than I am a transperson or to refer to the dyke in GuyDyke. What really makes my day, however, is when someone accidentally says “she” without thinking. That’s when I feel like I have been seen. Something else: You mentioned the term “male lesbian” and I understand your trouble with cis-men who think it’s a funny joke they could use in order to connect with you.

@ [melon]: You asked why the door policy was questioned. I asked the question at the beginning of this thread because I was not sure if I understood the door policy right. Sometimes the term “cis-men” is used synonymously with “male assigned at birth” and I simply was insecure. I never received an answer to my question about the door policy, but when I tried to register I received a refusal of my workshop offer and registration.

Response 34 I feel I need to clarify one thing I was trying to say: I'm not saying that the [conference] should be open to everybody, including Cis-Men or the general queer community.

(grapefruit-butch) But I strongly feel that it should be open to everybody who considers themselves being part of the target group and respect their self-identification/definition.

"WLTI (women, lesbian, trans, inter) bdsm conference 2014 is open!

Everyone who feels connected to the women/lesbian scene is invited, but cis-men are excluded."

Response 35 No consent to quote.

(plum-femme)

Response 36 @[apple]:

(female-peach) "Und nehmen wir mal an, die [...]konferenz wäre cis-Frauen vorbehalten, so dürften alle nicht-cis-Frauen nicht rein. Punkt. Und das wäre doch okay!"

ich würde nicht sagen dass das ok wäre. das wäre cissexistisch und transmisogyn und ein rückschritt um 20 jahre.

und ich schließ mich @[grapefruit] an: es gibt tatsächlich ein paar play parties in [city], aber es gibt nur eine [...] konferenz. und ja, auf einem event dieser größe werden immer menschen sein, in deren gegenwart ich mich aus unterschiedlichsten gründen unwohl fühle. die vorstellung dass so ein raum per einladungspolitik ein für alle "sicherer raum" werden könnte zeugt von einer extrem ignoranten haltung eigenen privilegien gegenüber. die [...]konferenz war für viele, die zweifellos eingeladen waren, definitiv kein sicherer raum.

@[grapefruit], du schreibst: "Und genauso so ein Hinterfragen der eigenen Ablehnung und Ängste würde ich mir von den TeilnehmerInnen und Organisatorinnen der [...]konferenz wünschen." yes. das würde ich mir auch wünschen.

@[melon]:

nobody in this thread argued in favor of opening the conference for everyone. putting this into the mouth of people who demand that the orga should follow

their own invitation policy is derailing.

as for safer spaces, being able to feel safe at such an event might have something to do with certain privileges, for example being perceived as white, cis and non-disabled.

it's totally fine if you don't identify as queer - but the [...] conference already is. at least i whitnessed plenty of queer and gay sex there.

Response 37 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 38 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 39

(melon-femme)

Thank you so much for reminding me of my privileges as a woman and a femme dyke, particularly on International Women's Day. The irony of this is astounding. Do I really need to point out that 1 in 3 women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime? Or that women in Europe can expect to earn at least 25% less in her lifetime than her male colleagues? Or that homophobia is alive and kicking? No? Then stop lecturing me about privilege. This is not derailing the topic, this is saying that creating a hierarchy of oppressions helps no one and actually creates alienation.

I am not alone in wanting to attend women and trans only spaces and I know that many people do not wish to put themselves in the firing line by making such a declaration. I suspect that some people will dislike my perspective which is fine, I'm a grown up, I can handle that. It does not change the fact that I want to attend a conference where I can share experiences with people who have been socialised as women or who are living in female bodies. I share common experiences with cis-gendered women, trans women, and trans guys on some level. I doubt very much that I have anything in common with a cis-gendered male who lives life on a day-to-day basis as a male even if that person self-identifies as a lesbian. My opposition to cis-gendered males attending is nothing to do with how a person looks, it is about the lack of shared life experiences. Furthermore, if I wanted to go to a pansexual conference then I would do that but in my experience they are not safe spaces for me because without exception I have been ogled, harassed or non-

consensually touched by cis-gendered men. The risk of this happening to me is significantly reduced in the more (for me) respectful and safer environment of women and trans only spaces.

My original point was that if someone has to query the door policy then they probably are NOT invited. [pear] is not demanding that the organisers respect the door policy, [pear] seems to be demanding that the door policy be changed so as to cover a different definition of cis-gender because actually [pear] is NOT invited. If cis-gendered men are welcome then this IS opening up the space significantly.

The fact that queer or gay sex has taken place at the conference is irrelevant and should not impact on the door policy. It simply means that the women or trans people involved had queer or gay sex. The term 'queer' does not appear in the door policy.

Finally, the issue of transmen's gender identity being disrespected because they are invited to the conference is complete nonsense. As @[plum] says, transguys were included in discussions about their continued involvement in what had been established as a women's space. No one forces a transguy to attend the conference against his will. Transguys attend because they continue to feel a connection to the women's community in which they almost always participated pre-transition.

Response 40

Maybe someone volunteers to translate [pear's] post into English for [melon] and others who are non native-German-Readers? Might help mutual understanding.

(grapefruit-butch)

Response 41

@ [melon]: I think that you are putting "cis-man" and "male assigned at birth" into the same box. In order to clarify the point I made further up, I translated the corresponding part of my earlier posting:

(pear-femininity)

I am not a cis-man. My understanding is, that a cis-man is a person, who was "male assigned at birth", AND who feels properly described and comfortable with that, AND who identifies with the "male" role in society as well as in relationships. And I don't - I feel neither well described nor comfortable, and I do not identify with the "male" role, neither in society nor in private contexts. I have never felt like a "man", nor as a child as a "boy". The only thing that applies to me is that I was "male assigned at birth". It deems me most disrespectful, that some people repeatedly try to disown the fact that I have to be attributed to the spectrum of (trans-) femininities.

For more than 10 years I have been out and about as well as actively involved in LGBTQ-contexts, I give workshops at trans-conferences in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg and Bern, concerning subjects like “GirlFags and Guydykes”, and about normativity in LGBTQ-communities, as well as about “trans without transition”. These workshops are usually packed with people, because there is a great interest in the outlines and possibilities of life apart from mainstream. This is not only true regarding the hetero-normative mainstream, but also for normative requirements within LGBTQ-scenes. My personal experience is that belongingness to a group is usually judged by appearance, also within LGBTQ-contexts. But is gender visible? Can gender be attributed to biolog(ist)ic characteristics? No. But, as far as I am concerned, that is exactly what the organisers of the [...]konferenz 2014 are trying to suggest, when they write: “Unfortunately, the [...]konferenz is intended only for a specific group of people, like in the previous years also this year.” What are the criteria, which are used to decide over belonging or exclusion? I am well aware that it is easy to project “maleness” onto me. And sometimes I am mistaken for a cis-man or for heterosexual. But all these external attributions are just that: Projections. And they miss me by so much, that I feel neither addressed nor seen. I am not willing to accept such false attributions as a basis for exclusion.

When I am excluded because of my “maleness”, then that demonstrates only that my vis-à-vis is taking something out on me, that does not have anything to do with me. I am excluded substitutionally for cis-men, in spite of the fact that I am a transperson. And that is not acceptable. I am unwilling to be the target for undifferentiated androphobia.

Response 42 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 43 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 44 [plum], you're totally right, it would be - but what is the connection of your statement to the [...]Conference and [pear's] request? I've checked the websites, at least since 2006 the conference is open to some sort of trans (MEN/WOMEN, LATER) which feel they have a connection to the women/lesbian SM-Community, and thus nobody is forcing anything except maybe some people the assignment of "cis-man" to [pear]. I know that not everybody is happy with that and that indeed there are many who would rather

have/go to a women-only place. That's totally fine, but please read the target group in the invitation.

Response 45 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 46 **No consent to quote.**

(cherry-butcht)

Response 47 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 48 [plum], thanks for your constructive post clarifying all this.

I think it's an important point that there seem to be some that feel that it's not a safe, "women" space anymore when they see [pear] and feel that there is a "man" at the party, and to discuss what can be done about that.

And I wonder what else besides excluding [pear] could be done to tackle this problem, and make everybody feel safe again. E.g. I'm in favor of play rules for play parties, and openly talking about do's and don'ts.

As for the door politics of two certain play parties at the [BDSM space], I know too little about that. But I felt that [another playparties] attempt to narrow the definition showed how difficult it is to handle the "problem" that way, because a couple of people didn't feel invited anymore that I feel you were not aiming at with the exclusion, me being one of them.

(which I decided to partly ignore because I felt that was not your intention and then talking to A. at the door about it, who was rather surprised that I didn't count myself in the category of "living my everyday life as a woman".)

Anyway, I'm happy too that this discussion becomes constructive, and for everybody's delight on a Monday morning I'll ad a link to a wonderful photo project:

Response 49 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 50 **No consent to quote.**

(plume-femme)

Response 51

(genderqueer-
fig)

ich bin eine trans Männlichkeit (und zwar ohne lesbische Geschichte) und war bereits zweimal auf der Konferenz. Ich finde die aktuelle Debatte ziemlich gut, weil ich sie als freundlich und konstruktiv empfinde. Ich habe mich auf den beiden Konferenzen auf denen ich war sehr wohl gefühlt. Ich habe den Raum aber auch als Frauen UND Trans[sternchen] Raum wahrgenommen, nicht als reinen Frauenraum. Ich finde Räume für Frauen und TransLeute, also ohne cis Männer gut und wichtig. (Ebenso wie Frauenräume, die dann ohne Transgender und ohne cis Männer wären - und deshalb auch ohne mich. Es geht mir gar nicht darum, dass immer alle überall rumlaufen sollen). Aber die Beschreibung "Frau oder Transmann" passt sicher nur für einen Bruchteil der Menschen, denen ich auf den Konferenzen begegnet bin.

Ich glaube Frauen UND Trans Räume sind gerade für genderqueere Menschen wichtig. Ich hatte auf den Konferenzen im Kontakt (bis auf wenige Ausnahmen) nicht das Gefühl, dass jemand meine Nichtweiblichkeit/Männlichkeit infrage stellt, weil ich in Teilen meines Lebens einer Definition als Frau nicht aktiv widerspreche und z.B. teilweise als Frau arbeite, oder keinen Packer trage, mir keinen Bart klebe oder gerne die Beine übereinanderschlage oder, oder, oder ...

Im Gegenteil ich hatte das Gefühl bestärkt zu werden meinen Weg jenseits der Geschlechter zu suchen und zu schauen, wie das auch jenseits einer Playparty lebbar ist. Genau das Gleiche wünsche ich mir für Transweiblichkeiten bzw. transgender, die „male assigned at birth“ sind.

(Sorry, it was quite difficult for me to write this, so its german only - but i would be happy if someone translates)

Response 52

Feminist-queer politics is an essentially dual position: on the one hand, we need to use the categories of gender in order to speak about our experiences,

(female-grape

bodies, lives, and about the societies in which we exist. On the other, we understand that every gender category is partial and somewhat exclusionary. The attempt to perfect definitions, like who are cis-men, is hopeless, because there will always be someone who will be excluded from this definition, or included in it against their will. Instead, it seems more practical to me to get to the point, to understand what concretely bothers people, to understand what are the actual needs, and how can we as a community meet these needs - also and especially when there are different and contradicting needs. Like in every dual and complex situation in life, I find that the solution is simply not to be dogmatic. We can simply accept that all definitions will be problematic, so sometimes we will have to make an Ausnahme: to welcome a person who does not completely fit the criteria, or to exclude a person who does. It's also good to establish channels and mechanisms to deal with these situations.

I don't think that "safe space" is a holy term, because our feelings of safety are constructed socially and politically. Certain social groups are marked as "dangerous" because of their color, ethnicity, being otherwise marginalized. So sometimes it is good to reconsider what makes us feel unsafe, and why. To be critical of our experiences, even when our experiences are very authentic. At the same time, we all make choices as to how far we can and want to go in challenging our comfort zones.

I personally choose (out of solidarity) not to partake in events that exclude trans people and at the same time I prefer not to share play- or sex space with cis-gendered men (it doesn't feel like "sharing" to me). I expect a feminist person to understand the need for women and trans spaces without cis-men present (and without people assigned male sex at birth and passing as cis-men, for that matter). To understand it not only as an emotional or psychological need, but as a political need in this world, where most women still don't enjoy access to sex and sexuality (not to mention kink) as terrains that are not dangerous, degrading and exploitative for them. This does not exclude the existence of other needs, and there should certainly be a place to discuss them and to push the boundaries of gender normativity in the community. Preferably not in a way that is out of touch with women's and lesbian realities, and that does not accept transphobia. Sometimes it is a challenge, not to fall into the trap of dividing between feminism and queer and trans* struggles, but I find it to be a critically important one.

Response 53

@ [plum] and [grape]

(transgender-

Thank you for your constructive and also touching posts. What I think and feel exactly in better words, than I could find.

quince)

Response 54 @ [banana]: Du schriebst: „Es gab bei der diesjährigen [...]konferenz einen kompletten wechsell des orga-teams und die aktuelle gruppe hat immer wieder dazu aufgerufen, mitzumachen. Hier, und nur hier wäre es jeden/jeder offen, mitzumischen und mit zu gestalten. Wer jetzt kommt und sagt, man möge doch noch über die zulassungspolitik diskutieren, hat es - auf gut deutsch - verpennt. Es gab viele diskussionen, wie die zulassungspolitik sein sollte und manche sind wieder ausgetreten - aber auch das ist kein grund, jetzt die entscheidung der orga-gruppe in frage zu stellen.“

(pear-femininity)

Das stimmt so leider nicht ganz, dass es „...jeden/jeder offen...“ gewesen wäre mitzumischen. Der Aufruf ging doch hauptsächlich über [eine website], und mein Profil dort wurde am 6. September 2013 gelöscht. Die Begründung des Menschen von [der website] war: „... weil in deinem Profil ... zu lesen ist, dass du ... nicht vorhast in Zukunft deinen Alltag als Frau zu verbringen ...“ und „... laut Nachschlagewerk sind Lesben Frauen, die sich zu Frauen sexuell hingezogen fühlen ...“.

Response 55 No consent to quote.

(plum-femme)

Response 56 @[pear]. An announcement was also made in the [gay website] Women, Trans, Inter, Queer group telling people about the meeting during [an event from the same website]. You are a member of that group.

(melon-femme) @[grape]. I really like your contribution.

Response 57 @ [melon]: You're right, and I'm wondering how I missed that. Hm.

(pear-femininity)

@ [plum]: Eine Mailingliste, das klingt interessant, vielen Dank für die Info! Wo kann ich mich denn eintragen?

Response 58 fasse zusammen: [pear] hats für dieses Jahr verschlafen und geht dann in die Vorbereitungsgruppe für die nächste Konferenz. Das nenne ich mal einen innovativen Lösungsvorschlag. :-)

(genderqueer-
fig)

Response 59

First of all, thanks everyone for the views and ideas. I am quite sure that I am not the only one who has been following this discussion with interest.

(female-mango)

I still don't know exactly where I stand in this debate and I don't feel that I have been around long enough in this scene to fully grasp the various positions, or perhaps even to have earned the right to pitch in when it comes to the Einladungspolitik. But I did get to thinking about some points that were raised, and that inform my viewpoint. I hope I am not derailing the thread by bringing this up.

As [plum] mentioned, some contributors use the same words, but understand them to mean different things. That led me to ask how I actually define some of these concepts myself, and how that influences my ideas and feelings about them.

To me personally, the most important one there is the idea of a safe(r) space to experience kink. For me, that is a space in which I myself can feel ok with who I am and what I desire. When I talked to others, some indicated that they already feel ok with themselves anywhere (I was briefly jealous), and they are far more concerned with feeling free from harrassment by others. That gives a totally different definition of a safer space - and as a result also of how I understand my own responsibility in creating a safer space for others.

A background on what informs my feeling of safety in a space: last year's [...] Conference was my first time at the Conference, and only my second time at a play party of any kind. It also marked my move to Berlin, from a very mainstream background. I came to the Conference without any kind of acquaintance with queer or trans* people for instance, and basically I think "utterly clueless" about the whole scene summed me up nicely. ("Pronoun?? Eh...") I was also in two relationships where kink was not an option, and my desires had until then been a source of anguish rather than delight. Kink had long been something I had tried to deny in myself.

So there I was, surrounded by the most overwhelming variety of non-genderconforming people I could imagine, who were interested in doing stuff (not just interested - they were actually doing it!!) that hadn't even crossed my pervy mind. The mainstream girl in me was probably gaping, but my kinky side was cheering, cheering with recognition and splashing to come out. So many different people - and all these people seemed very much at ease with that variety. And with their desires! Hey, wow, no-one seemed to judge others on their appearances or "rate" them!

[insert image of baby bunny, hopping up and down on an overdose of metamphetamine]

The effect on me was profound: all these people being (at least on the surface) at ease with themselves, and with their kinky desires - or more than just at ease! For me, this was an overwhelmingly liberating experience. I took my cue from others and didn't judge. Not them, and not myself or my desires. The realisation that my kinky side is not just acceptable, but even attractive to the others around me, made me accept myself in that space. And that is what made this space a safe space for me at that moment.

I talked to many others since, and to quite a few women, the idea of a safe space seemed more about a certain trust that within a space, you can expect "freedom from harassment". And yes, that definitely also goes into my definition of a safer space and it might even be a first prerequisite. But in itself, that is actually not enough to make me feel safe enough to play. For that, I also need that sense or feeling of acceptance of who I am and what I want - from myself as well as from the people around me. Freedom from judgment.

That has a consequence when it comes to my own responsibility for a safer space. I feel that if I want a safer bdsm space for myself, I also have to take my responsibility in working towards that for others. And for me, considering the above, that doesn't mean that I should merely refrain from harassing others. It also means that I want to acknowledge others the way they are and with the kinky desires they have - even if they are not my own, even if the way they are is not to my own personal tastes. Because I remember how intensely elating that experience was for me.

Had you asked my mainstream me two years ago how I felt about a straight guy who wanted to crash a lesbian space (confession: I was not thinking of trans* spaces yet two years ago) on the ri-di-cu-lous pretext of "feeling like a butch" , I would have undoubtedly gotten vivid castration fantasies. Like [plum] and probably many other lesbian women, I've just heard that joke too often from raunchy straight guys. But coming to Berlin and finding my safer space here for myself in the sheer diversity of people made me open up more to that diversity. Now, provided that this person who I initially perceive to be a straight-guy-who-says-he-is-a-lesbian refrains from harassing people, I will try and open up to him. And may well find myself discarding my initial incredulity and switching pronouns.

But, if I do, that should not be where it stops.

It might take me some time, but after a while I will find myself wondering what she might need from me to make it a safer space for her as well. Because shit, if I struggled with my self-perception already, merely on the basis of

being kinky, how must that be for her? To be perceived time and again as different from how you feel - and with a negative perception at that? Not just perceived, but even told by others? Maybe the same lack of judgement that I found so wonderful myself is a good start...

That said, I do realise that a masculine external appearance can be a (very) unpleasant trigger for quite a few women who attend the conference, and that it can make them feel very unsafe - whether it is a cis or a trans masculine body. And with that in mind, I can understand that SF's attendance would make people feel less safe - as would the attendance of various others with a markedly masculine performances, I suspect. Would you want to "offer up" the feeling of safety of these women for the attendance of someone like SF, who is apparently difficult to put in a handy familiar category? I really don't know. The fact is that there just aren't that many "male lesbians" in the scene, and unknown makes unloved. And I am not actually sure that the Conference is the perfect occasion to overcome this unfamiliarity, also simply because it takes time and people are actually focused on other things. Plus, the politics that [female-grape] mentioned are indeed (very) important, but I feel that the Conference is a result of those politics, and not the ideal place to decide* on them.

So, when it comes to the Conference and to making that as safe a space as possible, I still don't know what's wise or where exactly I stand. I guess you simply cannot make everyone happy.

But since the concept of a "safer space" is such a key concept in this discussion, I thought it might be useful to also consider that different people need very different things to feel safe.

Response 60 **No consent to quote.**

(plum-femme)

Response 61 Thanks @[mango] for sharing - that's a wonderful reflection on safe spaces!

**(grapefruit-
butch)**

Response 62 **No consent to quote.**

(orange-butch)

Response 63 Es tut uns leid, dass wir uns jetzt melden. Wir sind nur vier Personen mit unterschiedlichen zeitlichen Kapazitäten, die mit vielen Helferinnen die Organisation der Konferenz stemmen.

(Conference) Wir hatten auch innerhalb des Orga-Teams Diskussionsbedarf. Es gibt keinen Konsens im Hinblick auf den Ausschluss von [pear]. Die erste E-Mail, die sie hier veröffentlicht hat, wurde von nur einer Person des Orga-Teams verfasst. Nach ausführlichen Diskussionen konnte kein Konsens gefunden werden und dennoch haben wir entschieden, ein Veto aus persönlichen Gründen zu respektieren.

Wir möchten ausdrücklich darauf hinweisen, dass der Ausladung nicht die von [pear] formulierte Selbstdefinition zu Grunde liegt. [pear] wurde über unsere Entscheidung informiert.

Bitte habt Verständnis, dass wir auf einzelne Reaktionen zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt nicht eingehen werden, da wir kurz vor der [...]konferenz viel zu tun haben.

Wir wissen jedoch um den Diskussionsbedarf bezüglich der Einladungspolitik der [...]konferenz. Gerade auch im Hinblick auf die zukünftigen Konferenzen wollen wir deswegen während der [...]konferenz eine Möglichkeit bieten, sich zu diesem Thema auszutauschen.

Seid herzlich begrüßt

Orga-Team

[name], [name],[name], [name]