

# The Politics of (Dis-)location: Queer Migration, Activism, and Coalitional Possibilities

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## Abstract

This paper deals with the interrelatedness of borders and queer identities, bodies, sexualities, and the politics of (dis-)location in the U.S. and Germany. Looking into the relations between bodies and borders and the different ways in which activist groups in the U.S. and in Germany have attempted to develop new (re-)configurations of corporealities, this article shows how these groups help develop global and embodied forms of citizenship that present new forms of coalitional activism. As can be seen, processes of de- and reterritorialization increase the need for building alliances, which can function both as coalitional moments and revolutionary connections, revealing what Mohanty calls the “the temporality of struggle” (122) in the politics of location.

Keywords: queer migration, coalition building, Undocuqueer, queer refugees, de/reterritorialization, borders

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## Introduction: Queer Migration and Coalition Building

“Most scholarship, policymaking, service provision, activism, and cultural work,” Eithne Luibhéid states, “remain organized around the premise that migrants are heterosexuals (or on their way to becoming so) and queers are citizens (even though second-class ones)” (“Queer/Migration” 169). Where is the place of queer migrants in this framework? How can we conceive of the various subject positions of queer migrants? In attempting to answer these questions, a new field of queer migration scholarship has developed in the U.S. that focuses on the phenomenon of queer migration. Scholars like Eithne Luibhéid, Lionel Cantú, and Karma R. Chávez have developed critical frameworks that conceptualize queer issues of migration. *GLQ* ran a special issue on queer migration in 2008, and several books and articles have been published in the past ten years.<sup>1</sup> In Europe, by contrast, scholarship on queer migration is still scarce. There is, however, a growing sense of awareness in academia of the need of analyzing the intersections between sexuality and

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Karma R. Chávez’s *Queer Migration Politics* (2013), Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú’s collection *Queer Migrations* (2015) and David Murray’s *Queering Borders* (2016).

migration.<sup>2</sup> Conspicuously, there is also a new professionalization in queer activism, which entails new forms of coalition building between migrating queer people.

This paper considers ways in which activist groups in the U.S. and in Germany attempt to develop new (re-) configurations of corpo-realities. Focusing on the intersections of queer and undocumented bodies and experiences as manifested in the work of the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP)/United We Dream and the UndocuQueer Movement in the U.S., we want to juxtapose their politics with the activities of the Germany-founded activist group Queer Refugees for Pride. Looking at some strategies of these groups, which situate the constructions of sexual and queer identities within global processes of globalization, capitalism, and nationalism, we argue that the formation of coalitional politics has the power to shift the politics of dislocation to a politics of relocation. In advocating for a global and embodied form of citizenship these groups present new forms of coalitional activism that in attempting to challenge current anti-immigration policies oscillate between what Karma R. Chávez calls “coalitional moments” (8) and what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “revolutionary connections” (473). Reading queer/(im)migrant/refugee activist groups and coalitions in the U.S. alongside those in Germany allows us to see parallels in coalitional politics despite the many differences in the cultural contexts of these two groups. At the same time, a juxtaposed reading also calls attention to the necessity of global solidarity and so highlights the simultaneity of coalitional moments in multiple locations of the world.

### **Body, Politics of Location, and Multiplicities in Processes of De- and Reterritorialization**

“[A] place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create” (Rich 212). In 1984, the feminist thinker Adrienne Rich famously linked her existence as a subject to her location, and argued that the anchoring of her positionality in her body allowed for her very existence. Rich’s politics of location, which was later elaborated on by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, stands for the geographical, temporal and cultural circumstances that produce woman as a subject, providing a frame for her existence. Locating herself within geo-temporal frameworks, Rich linked her location “not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the geography closest in—the body” (212). What Rich calls politics of location refers to the very existence she becomes aware of within her own body, and which becomes visible, readably, and thus understandable within its location in a certain given geographical, temporal, and cultural space. For Rich, her own body is created in this geo-temporal and cultural environment as woman, lesbian, Jew, and feminist. As this environment is in constant flux, body and self also have to change in order to remain readable. On the one hand, the self, the

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<sup>2</sup> In 2016, Nuno Ferreira started his project “SOGICA—Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum: A European human rights challenge,” which is an EU-project funded by an ERC grant at the School of Law at the University of Sussex. For more info, see: [www.sogica.org/en/the-project/](http://www.sogica.org/en/the-project/). Accessed 25 Nov. 2017. In June 2017, Astrid M. Fellner and Eva Nossem organized the workshop “Queer/Migration/Legality” in Saarbrücken, Germany. We are currently editing the collection *Queer, Migration and Belonging: Intersections and Assemblages* (St. Ingbert, Röhrig forthcoming 2018).

intelligible subject itself, moves in a temporal dimension. On the other, the self also moves in geographical dimensions from one place on the map to another. Often it migrates from one set of geo-temporal and cultural circumstances, which impede the formation of a certain self in its multiplicities in a given condition, to another location, in the hope for a better existence or survival. The body moves away to other geographical locations, where it continues to transform in order to become intelligible in the new environment and to ensure its existence; at the same time the body introduces new geographies to the location of arrival, thus extending its territory. By leaving their original locations, the self and the body lose the geo-temporal and cultural contexts in which they were intelligible. The process of migration and border (crossing) provides a space for the different geo-temporal and cultural systems to clash, overlap, and merge; however, it is also a productive space that shapes the self/body. In the location of arrival, a reciprocal transformation process between the self and the new locality begins, where the self grapples to locate itself on the map, to become visible and intelligible in its new environment.

These experiences of migration shape the self and the body, be it as first-hand migration experiences of the body that itself has changed locations and crossed borders, or as a second-hand inherited experience. Thus, much as the location of origin, the first location has shaped the self and the body, so does the location of arrival/second location as well as the migratory movement and border crossing itself. Mohanty calls this continual struggle for the existence of the self in changing geo-temporal and cultural locations the “temporality of struggle” (122), which she also connects to the forces of colonialism. As she explains: “Movement among cultures, languages, and complex configurations of meaning and power have always been the territory of the colonized” (122). Referring to Caren Kaplan’s work on home and exile, the temporality of struggle entails “a continual reterritorialization, with the proviso that one moves on” (Kaplan 98). During this process, “this reterritorialization through struggle,” Mohanty adds, “allows me a paradoxical continuity of self, mapping and transforming my political location” (122). In other words, the movements and changes in the processes of de- and reterritorialization, which develop due to the necessity of visibility, intelligibility and consequently existence, become constitutive of the self. For Mohanty, the politics of location then “refer to the historical, geographical, cultural, psychic, and imaginative boundaries that provide the ground for political definition and self-definition [...]” (106). Analogously, we could speak of a politics of dislocation when thinking about the process of leaving one’s location and thus losing the signifying context; and of a politics of relocation for referring to the struggle of the self trying to locate its existence in a new geo-temporal and cultural context. Mohanty sees boundaries as constitutive for the creation of the self in a twofold way: On the one hand, through their limiting capacities, boundaries curtail and localize the self and the body. On the other, borders themselves become a fertile ground where the self is produced. Borders then, as Mohanty has it, are both “exclusionary and enabling” (2).

In Deleuzoguattarian terms, we could speak of relative deterritorializations, together with simultaneous reterritorializations, and the line of flight as the shifting moment in between the two. Mohanty’s productive vision of the border as a fertile ground for the production of selves entails the production of a self not as a monolithic “rocklike identity” (Massumi ix), but, again with

Deleuze and Guattari, as multiplicities. The merging or collision of different geo-temporal and cultural factors creates and shapes the self in its multiplicity, instead of a unity or identity. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, “Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities” (9).

What we are interested in is the productive role of the border (crossings), the shaping of the self and the body that happens in processes of de- and reterritorialization, the production of the self through weaving together several lines of flight. What, in other words, happens to the self during migrations and border crossings, and how do the processes of de- and reterritorialization shape the body in its multiplicities. How does queerness affect this body?

### Queer Migration

This shaping of the self and the body in the processes of border crossings and of de- and reterritorializations have been neglected not only in mainstream discourse, but also in much of the activist work and research that has been done on migration, in which the multiplicities of the self are often subsumed by a monolithic heteronormative vision of the border-crossing body. Even though, as Luibhéid has stressed, sexuality “structures every aspect of immigrant experiences” (“Heteronormativity” 227), migrants are generally seen as heterosexual cis-males in hegemonic discourse, while queer people are seen as citizens. Highlighting the many ways in which sexuality and gender performances are integral parts of immigration policies and procedures, Luibhéid argues that sexuality is “centrally implicated in—but not reducible to—the gender, racial, class, cultural, and legal inequalities that immigrants continually negotiate” (“Heteronormativity” 232). In *Queer Migration Politics*, Karma R. Chávez also writes about the interconnectedness of borders, gender, and sexuality on the U.S.-Mexican border, analyzing the role of the territorial, national border as an instrument of protecting the mutually constitutive discourses of heteronormativity and whiteness. As she puts it,

The protection of this international border [the U.S.-Mexican border] is an extension of the protection of other kinds of borders between white and nonwhite, heterosexual and nonheterosexual. [...] The preservation of whiteness literally depends on heterosexuality and appropriate gender norms, creating an interwoven relationship between the “nation-as-white” and the “nation-as-heterosexual” that leads to policing all kinds of borders. These borders are precisely the ones that are symbolically and physically violated by queers, migrants, and queer migrants. (11)

In this sense, the border fulfills the role of protecting and preserving a monolithic white heteronormative space, excluding border crossers who are considered a threat to this space.

Queer migrants are seen as violating these borders of the territory, of gender and of sexuality. Because of their non-heteronormative genders and sexualities, they fall outside of the field of vision of immigration politics and consequently become invisible subjects. If, following

Mohanty, borders “provide the ground for political definition and self-definition” (106), the body of the queer migrant is shaped as queer *and* migrant through the very process of crossing this border, which protects the white, heteronormative space. The various intersections within this multiplicity of the self lead to invisibility and exclusion: The queer migrant is invisible in migrant groups because of their queerness and in queer groups because of the experience of migration, the legal status, and social status, etc.

Deterritorialization is the consequence of geographical movement across borders. Additionally, a queer body is deterritorialized by the queerness of the body; this process becomes clearly visible when queerness openly clashes with a heteronormative/homo- or transphobic surrounding which expulses the queer body from the surrounding community. The multiplicity of the self and the body constructed in the location of origin is taken out of its signifying frame through dislocation and is no longer visible and intelligible in the new environment, where it then undergoes a process of relocation in order to regain visibility and thus to re-locate itself on the map.

In order to regain visibility and thus to recreate its own existence, the queer migrant body has to find new signifying frames through coalitional moments: coalitions in which the self is (re-)created and becomes intelligible. As K. Chávez observes, the queer migrant can therefore be seen as “an inherently coalitional subject, one whose identities and relationships to power mandate managing multiplicity” (9).

### **Borders and Coalitional Politics**

The body, as Adrienne Rich had it, also constitutes a border between the self and the rest of the world, between the “I” and the “Other.” The question arises whether these borders encapsulate every self individually with the consequence of precluding any possibilities of coalitions as expressed in the shift from “I” to “we” or whether building coalitions is possible. Rich outlines the difficulty of bringing different “I”s together to form a “we,” the basis for coalitional moments and solidarity:

*The difficulty of saying I*—a phrase from the East German novelist Christa Wolf. But once having said it, as we realize the necessity to go further, isn’t there a difficulty of saying “we”? *You cannot speak for me. I cannot speak for us.* Two thoughts: there is no liberation that only knows how to say “I”; there is no collective movement that speaks for each of us all the way through. (224, emphasis in the original)

In talking about building coalitions, María Lugones views coalition as a horizon of possibility. It “is always the horizon that rearranges both our possibilities and the conditions of those possibilities” (ix). A horizon is a “space where two seemingly different things merge and remain separate” (Chávez, *Queer Migration* 8), and it is an apt metaphor for the fine line of possible coalitional moments. As K. Chávez explains, coalition “connotes tension and precariousness [...]. It describes

the space in which we can engage, but because coalescing cannot be taken for granted, it requires constant work if it is to endure” (8).

Solidarity, as Jodi Dean has remarked, usually works as a request “I ask you to stand by me over and against a third” (3). Building on “Dean’s notion of a communicative, in-process understanding of the ‘we,’” (Mohanty 7), Mohanty has proposed a practice of solidarity in which the production of a third perspective should also mean that we decolonize and break down “feminist solidarity,” opening up the discussion to a more inclusive discussion of gender, queer and LGBTQIA-related issues. This expansion of the approaches to political solidarity—including feminist, gender, queer and LGBTQIA solidarity—can also challenge national identity politics, which is traditionally grounded in a politics of locality. As indicated by Judith Butler, solidarity should not be based on the obliteration, a doing away of the differences between identities, but it should rather constitute a “synthesis of a set of conflicts,” or, “*a mode of sustaining conflict in politically productive ways*, a practice of contestation that demands that these movements articulate their goals under the pressure of each other without therefore exactly becoming each other” (37, emphasis in the original). This form of solidarity leaves room for “self-difference,” which is at the core of each political position. Solidarity then can also be opened up to a transnational perspective, which is still involved in the politics of location but reaches out to translocal politics. This form of transnational solidarity should then be able to transcend boundaries.

Looking at queer migration through, what K. Chávez calls, “the analytic of the *coalitional moment*” (8, emphasis in the original), we now want to look at coalitional moments in the U.S. and in Germany, and argue that for all groups presented here there is a necessity of coalitional politics in order for them to utilize their differences as sources of strength. Coalitional moments, according to K. Chávez, are moments “when political issues coincide or merge in the public sphere in ways that create space to re-envision and potentially reconstruct rhetorical imaginaries” (8). Deleuze and Guattari, in turn, describe revolutionary movements as “the connection of flows, the composition of nondenumerable aggregates, the becoming-minoritarian of everybody/everything” (473) and observe:

Generally speaking, minorities do not receive a better solution of their problem by integration, even with axioms, statutes, autonomies, independences. Their tactics necessarily go that route. But if they are revolutionary, it is because they carry within them a deeper movement that challenges the worldwide axiomatic. (472)

In our analysis we want to show how borders and migration shape queer bodies and how the processes of (relative) de- and simultaneous reterritorialization increase the need and provide the ground for coalitional moments and revolutionary connections. Through our discussion of several community-based activist groups whose work exemplifies the territorialization and loca(liza)tion of queer bodies, we aim to show how coalitional politics are linked to the politics of (dis-/re-)location.

### **Coalitional Moments and Revolutionary Connections: Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (U.S.), Undocuqueer Movement (U.S.), and Queer Refugees for Pride (Germany)**

We have selected the activist groups Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP), which is part of the larger organization United We Dream, and the UndocuQueer Movement in the U.S. For comparison we want to look at the Germany-founded activist group Queer Refugees for Pride. As we want to show, these activist groups can be viewed as acentered assemblages due to their non-hierarchical order of the involved multiplicities. While the Germany-based activist group is exclusively organized by and for queer refugees and migrants, especially those who have newly arrived in Germany, the U.S.-based groups consist of and focus on queer undocumented persons. Many of the undocumented persons in the U.S. who join together to form these activists groups have not themselves crossed the border. Either their parents or other relatives crossed the border and they “inherited” the experience of border crossing, or, as Chican@s, the border has crossed them. Despite the fact that some members of these groups never crossed the border into the U.S. themselves, they are nevertheless read as migrants in the public discourse and owe their (lack of) rights to their status as being undocumented. Our examples will show how the lack of citizen rights both correlates with the (in)visibility and thus the (in)existence of queer migrant bodies and facilitates the efforts to form coalitional moments and revolutionary connections and to join together in a shared project as collective multiplicities. The strategies employed by both the German and the American groups “go that route,” as stated above by Deleuze and Guattari (472). That is, the activist groups aim at gaining visibility and re-creating their existence in order to obtain rights and find a place within their new cultural environments. At the same time, some of these activities are revolutionary as they happen outside given frames. While building transnational alliances helps elaborate reformist tactics in order to reclaim their existence within the respective environments, these alliances also bear the revolutionary potential of “challeng[ing] the worldwide axiomatic” (472).

The first group we examine is the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP), a subgroup of the organization United We Dream, which is the “largest immigrant youth-led organization in the United States.”<sup>3</sup> According to the mission statement on their website, United We Dream “organize[s] and advocate[s] for the dignity and fair treatment of immigrant youth and families, regardless of immigration status.”<sup>4</sup> The subgroup QUIP, a special interest group within the United We Dream network, focuses explicitly on the needs and (lack of) rights of queer migrants. QUIP

aims at organizing and empowering Undocumented Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer immigrants, LGBTQ immigrants and allies to address

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<sup>3</sup> See: [unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/](http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/). Accessed 26. Nov. 2017.

<sup>4</sup> See: [unitedwedream.org/about/our-missions-goals/](http://unitedwedream.org/about/our-missions-goals/). Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

social and systemic barriers that affect themselves and the broader LGBTQ & immigrant community.<sup>5</sup>

The second U.S.-based group is the UndocuQueer Movement, an alliance of activists who concentrate mainly on queer 1.5-generation undocumented immigrants.<sup>6</sup> On their website, they explain:

UndocuQueer activists came to the U.S. as infants or children. UndocuQueers struggle for the right to work, live, and love in the country in which they were raised and educated. Without documentation, even those who have earned college degrees are denied work in the above-ground economy and are subject to deportation.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the Germany-based group Queer Refugees for Pride is a self-organized activist group by LGBTQ asylum seekers/refugees in Germany founded in 2016. They explain their mission as follows:

Queer Refugees for Pride supports and advocates with people seeking refugee protection because of persecution based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status. We are engaging in outreach, advocacy and public education on LGBT\*QI refugee issues.<sup>8</sup>

The Queer Refugees for Pride group consists exclusively of refugees and migrants from many different countries of origin with different legal status who are currently based in different parts of Germany. As set out in their mission statement, Queer Refugees for Pride commits to helping all sexually and gender non-conforming migrants and refugees. At the same time, the group establishes collaborations with other LGBTQ rights organizations and supporters to be able to count on their solidarity through creating alliances, forming coalitions.

Both the U.S.-based organization Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP) / United We Dream and the Germany-based activist group Queer Refugees for Pride introduce themselves and their coalitional politics on their respective websites and outline their ideas and the aims of their activism in a mission statement. Both QUIP and Queer Refugees for Pride explicitly mention the fight for the rights of their respective groups. QUIP advocates for an intersectional analysis in its activism<sup>9</sup> and Julio Salgado, who is a member of the UndocuQueer Movement, explains the need for an intersectional approach:

Immigration and LGBTIQ issues are controversial topics that have gained prominence in political and social circles throughout the nation and at the ballot

<sup>5</sup> See: [unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/](http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/). Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

<sup>6</sup> 1.5-generation undocumented immigrants refer to “those who emigrate before adolescence” (Seif 90).

<sup>7</sup> See: [equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/](http://equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/). Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

<sup>8</sup> See: [www.refugee-pride.org/index.php/en/about/about-1](http://www.refugee-pride.org/index.php/en/about/about-1), acc. 15/0972017. Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

<sup>9</sup> See: [unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/](http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/). Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.



boxes. These are not parallel movements, but intersecting ones in the fight for social justice. This is true for those who are undocumented and identify as queer, but also for those who are in one or the other (or neither) because of the interconnectedness of all those fighting for human rights.”<sup>10</sup>

Queer Refugees for Pride explicitly mentions their fight for visibility and full participation in the social and civil life in Germany.<sup>11</sup> The UndocuQueer Movement also points to visibility, but underlines the risks that it brings with it in the U.S. context: “Given their precarious citizenship

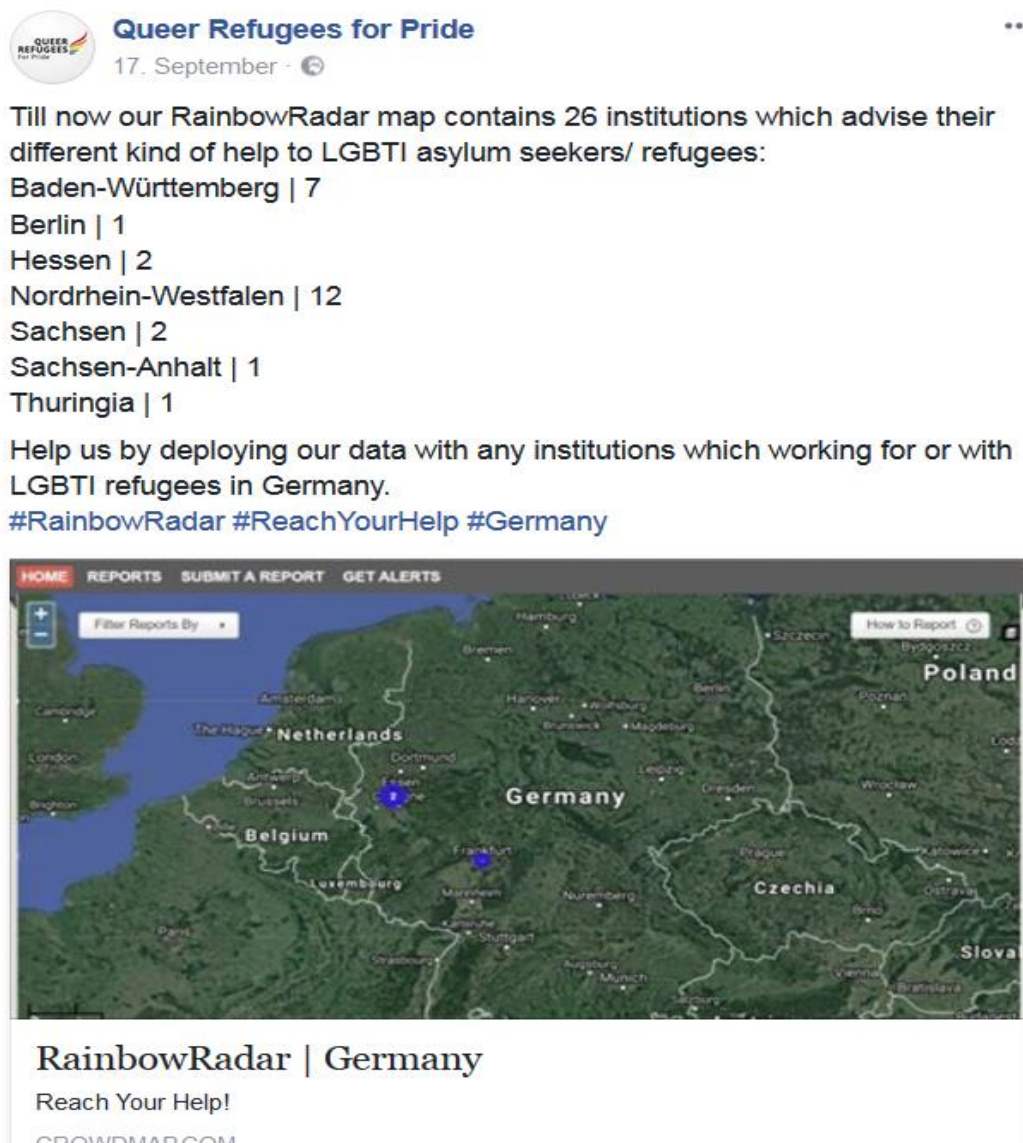


Fig. 1: The Rainbow Radar shared on their website and social media, [www.facebook.com/QueerRefugeesForPride/?ref=br\\_rs](http://www.facebook.com/QueerRefugeesForPride/?ref=br_rs).

<sup>10</sup> Julio Salgado 2012; [equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement](http://equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement) . Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

<sup>11</sup> See: [refugee-pride.org/index.php/de/ueber/unsere-aufgabe](http://refugee-pride.org/index.php/de/ueber/unsere-aufgabe) . Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

status, sexual orientation and transgender realities, visibility makes UndocuQueers vulnerable, however, they refuse to remain in the shadows.”<sup>12</sup>

Both QUIP/United We Dream in the U.S. and Queer Refugees for Pride in Germany offer direct contact for help. QUIP offers a list of affiliate organizations all over the U.S.; Queer Refugees for Pride features helping institutions and groups on a map of Germany (*Fig. 1*). We can observe that Queer Refugees for Pride makes use of a map that shows Germany as a territory which is clearly defined by the borders to its neighboring states. Clearly, Queer Refugees for Pride deals with Germany in its organization as a state. Furthermore, in the provided list of contact points, this group sticks to the administrative division of the country into states (*Länder*), though this internal German administrative regional distinction does not show on the map. What is to be noted is that Queer Refugees for Pride only lists those *Länder* where contact points can be found, thereby rendering the other *Länder* invisible. By placing themselves and their contact points on the map, they mark and re-create their existence on the German territory, where hitherto their presence had been ignored. As the idea behind the creation of such a map is to provide information about where to find help to other “queer refugees” and to point to the closest contact point to one’s own location, each of these contact points covers a determined part of the territory. So we can say that by building this network of contact points, a new territory is created, or, in other words, the process of reterritorialization becomes visible. This newly created territorial network of contact points, on the one hand, represents a place in which the queer refugee exists and lives, in contrast to the former German territory that has denied their existence; on the other hand, this new network is connected with Germany and also modifies it by adding a new layer.

What is to be noted is that the creation of this process of reterritorialization is initially produced on Queer Refugees for Pride’s Facebook page, that is, in cyberspace. Also QUIP makes use of the digital world to mark its presence in the U.S. In so doing they both augment their visibility in cyberspace and, in a process of reterritorialization, claim their existence on U.S.-American soil.

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<sup>12</sup> See: [equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/](http://equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/) . Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

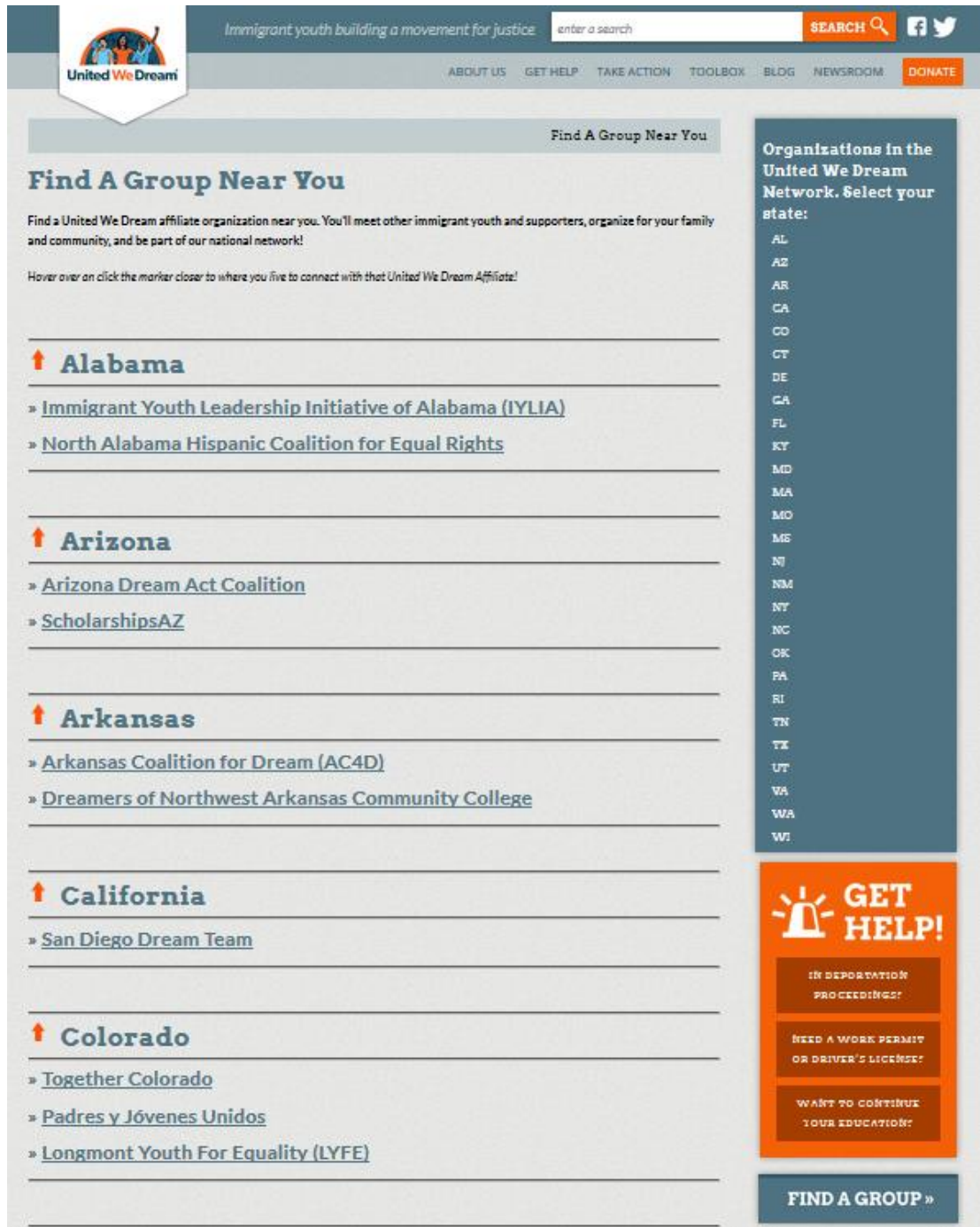


Fig. 2: [unitedwedream.org/groups/](http://unitedwedream.org/groups/)

For both Queer Refugees for Pride and QUIP, the process of locating oneself on a map bespeaks a process of reterritorialization that facilitates a politics of relocation. Both groups locate themselves and their coalitional partners within the space in which they live and which so far has denied their existence. By placing themselves and their allies on the map, they locate themselves and become intelligible and thus create and anchor their existence. While the placing on the map of an individual could be seen as indicative of an individual politics of relocation (for example, by

obtaining one's own address = a (new) place to live = location), the placing on the map of coalitional groups can be regarded as a reterritorialization. That is, mapping delineates a net(work) that also shapes a new territory on the map, grating against and transforming the space/territory in which it develops. In this sense, we see that the formation of a coalitional net is a conscious act of the formation of a politics of relocation.

Key to the building of this coalitional net, as well as more broadly of a discourse, is the use of labels. As Palmeri and Rylander explain, "Although the consistent and repeated use of the term *undocuqueer* [...] makes visible the experiences of people who identify as both queer and undocumented, it, like all brand representations, risks flattening the complex embodiments of those it seeks to represent" (36). Analogously, we can say that the generalizing use of the label "queer refugee" might also lead to a flattening and essentializing effect of obliterating multiplicities. In light of the need to assemble under a common label, the term "queer refugee" proves, however, a useful and important tool for coalition building. All the activist groups that we have discussed, QUIP, the UndocuQueer Movement, and Queer Refugees for Pride, work for the creation of a shared identity under a common label, and at the same time they fight against the essentializing production of a monolithic overarching identity as "the" undocuqueer or "the" queer refugee, and strive for allowing and promoting multiplicities. The chance of uniting both apparently oppositional objectives can succeed in what Deleuze and Guattari call "collective multiplicities whose elements remain distinct but move together in a shared project to evade recapture" (Purcell 27). Respectively, both QUIP and Queer Refugees for Pride have conducted surveys about their communities, which, on the one hand, show their communities' multiplicities and, on the other hand, produce community based on a coalition.

The QUIP survey comes with the title "No more closets: Experiences of discrimination among the LGBTQ immigrant community 2016" and is a survey targeting queer undocumented people in the U.S. Also in 2016, Queer Refugees for Pride conducted and published their "Research about Queer Refugees in Germany 2016," a survey of queer refugees/asylum seekers in Germany. In both surveys the community members are asked to answer questions about their age, their current place of residence, their country of origin, their gender and sexual identity, and also give information about their experiences with discrimination and violence. The survey questions materialize the shaping of the body/self as migrant through questions regarding their place of origin and the current place of residence, and as queer through questions about the gender and sexuality of the interviewee.

Included in both surveys are singular quotes by the interviewed persons, which sum up the need of the community members to form alliances, creating shared identities and collective multiplicities, as the following quote in the report "No More Closets" shows:

I have to come out as both queer and undocumented, and each time people are only interested in one part of that struggle. They also expect me to be able to build up a another [sic] border, this time between my identities. When I point this out they say I'm being too sensitive, but they can't cut me in half and expect me not to bleed. I've decided to take control of the narrative to talk about my identity as a whole

and not let other's decided how to define me. I am a queer latinx, I am undocumented, a survivor, and I'm no longer afraid to say it.<sup>13</sup>

This quote displays a transformational agenda: the forming of what Deleuze and Guattari have called "revolutionary connections" (473). It is exactly this decision of seizing the power of definition of the self and simultaneously wresting this power from others which could manifest within this group of allies, foregrounding the groundbreaking potential of the group. Deleuze and Guattari see the possibility of overcoming the limiting cycle of flight and recapture by forming net(work)s. As Purcell explains:

When an element is deterritorialized, when it escapes from an apparatus of capture and begins to construct its line of flight, it does not have to do so alone. It has the potential to connect up with other lines of flight, to line up with other deterritorialized elements and begin to form not just simple lines, but flows, aggregates, collective multiplicities whose elements remain distinct but move together in a shared project to evade recapture (27).

The formation of "revolutionary connections" shapes the queer migrant body/self who is "no longer afraid to say it." The acknowledging and awareness of one's own self and its existence leads to a politics of new-location that no longer requires inclusion through an externally-influenced politics of re-location, and advocates for an auto-determined shaping of the own queer migrant body/self.

The surveys, however, also focus on a series of reformist aims: In the "No More Closets"-survey, we also find questions about "income and financial stability," while the Queer Refugees for Pride's survey also includes questions about "living conditions." This difference in the survey shows the different needs of the U.S. group, which consists mostly of people who have been living in their place of residence already for a long time, and the German group, which consists of newly-arrived persons who need to find a home in Germany. The fight for recognition and citizenship rights for Queer Refugees for Pride therefore includes also the right to be able to work in Germany, a right which is limited by the (not yet) assigned legal status. The interviewees in the U.S. survey are also asked to classify their current immigrant status, thereby defining their status as non-citizens and highlighting the lack of citizen rights. This question was not raised in the German survey, maybe because the legal status of the "refugee" who is in the process of seeking asylum is subject to rather quick changes.

The survey "No More Closets" includes a specific question about the relationship to and the coming out status within the family of origin. This is a question that seems irrelevant for the German survey. In this case, the interviewers seem to assume that the interviewee entered Germany alone and has been living without their family since arrival. The U.S.-based persons are thought to live in a family environment which might or might not be hostile towards their queerness, and

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<sup>13</sup> Dulce Gutierrez-Vasquez; Wenatchee, Washington. [unitedwedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Report-No-More-Closets-1.pdf](http://unitedwedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Report-No-More-Closets-1.pdf). Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

thus many of them are part of (family) networks. They struggle with acceptance and recognition in their family community because of their queerness, and in queer environments because of their status as being undocumented. The family environment might offer a partial coalitional moment for the shared migration experience, and it might prove supportive of the queerness of the family member. But because the family can also be a dangerous space from which the queer subjects have to flee, some U.S.-based undocumented queers also have to look for extra-familial alliances. The German Queer Refugees for Pride cannot rely on any family network, as most members of this activist group presumably live on their own. In most cases, their only coalitional possibilities are queer communities and networks.

Both the UndocuQueer Movement and Queer Refugees for Pride launched campaigns in 2016 with the aim of having a voice and being heard. The Queer Refugees for Pride campaign focused on distributing a flyer with the slogan “We have a voice!” at events, mostly pride parades, all over Germany. Furthermore, the activists have given interviews in group discussions, participated in conferences,<sup>14</sup> and offered workshops themselves; they have produced short informational videos about themselves and their projects and about current events which affect the LGBTQ community in Germany or abroad. Also the UndocuQueer Movement has produced a video, the *UndocuQueer Manifesto*. In this video, a series of queer undocumented activists give short statements, drawing the attention to their motivations and the need for them to make their voices heard and to form coalitions. One of the activists explains the need for coalitions and solidarity for their existence: “We have created a queer *familia* in our movement because our survival depends on it.”<sup>15</sup> This quote shows how the collective multiplicities of such activist groups can offer coalitional moments that take on the supportive role which is missing, for example, in the context of the family of origin.

In addition to campaigns which aim at making voices heard, there are also campaigns which focus on gaining visibility. Both types of campaigns can be seen as strategies of reterritorialization in what Mohanty calls the “temporality of struggle” (122). In the light of a politics of (re)location, being heard and being visible equal the creation of an existence. Visibility is intrinsically linked to the action of coming out; it implies a stop to hiding, to no longer being afraid, to coming out of the closet (“being” queer) and to coming out of the shadows (“being” undocumented).<sup>16</sup> All the examined activist groups point to the importance of visibility through the participation in social events. For the German Queer Refugees for Pride group, social visibility through participation in public events is particularly important. They try to reach their goal of gaining visibility through active participation in Pride events all over Germany. In these events they make other queer people and the general public aware of their situation. Furthermore, they

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<sup>14</sup> Abdullah Jbr Al-Busaidi, Alia Khannum, and Javid Nabiyeu for instance, participated in our conference on “Queer/Migration/Legality” in Saarbrücken in June 2017.

<sup>15</sup> See: [equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/](http://equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/) 0:32-0:39 Emphasis in the original.. Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Leo Chavez describes undocumented people as living “shadowed lives” in his book: *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*.

take advantage of the occasion in order to be able to build relationships with other LGBTQ persons and groups, and in so doing strive to build alliances and networks. The UndocuQueer Movement also focuses on coming out in a twofold way, namely coming out of the closet as queer and coming out of the shadows as undocumented.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, all the examined activist groups under investigation here rely on their strong presence on social media. Their works can be summed up with the slogans “immigrant rights are queer rights—queer rights are immigrant rights”<sup>18</sup> and “Nothing about us without us.”<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

As we can see in these examples, border crossings shape the multiplicities of queer migrant selves and bodies in the politics of dis- and relocation. Processes of de- and reterritorialization increase the need for building alliances, which can function as coalitional moments and revolutionary connections. Our analysis of both the multiplicities of activists in groups and their many similar actions has shown how “the temporality of struggle,” in Mohanty’s words, allows for “a paradoxical continuity of self, mapping and transforming [the] political location” (122). We have examined how deterritorialization leads to losing one’s existence through losing one’s signifying framework, and how processes of reterritorialization can be seen as attempts to make the body visible and intelligible within a new given territory through the help of coalitional moments. Coalition building, as we can see, helps create new forms of territorialization with their own signifying frames. Juxtaposing queer/(im)migrant/refugee activist groups in the U.S. and in Germany can help us begin to account for the entangled relations of power in multiple locations of the world, and so draw attention to the need for translocal forms of solidarity. The transnational coalitional moments that we have talked about also point to a horizon of possible global solidarity—an example of Deleuze and Guattari’s “revolutionary connections.” By having staged a conversation between these activist groups in this article we hope to have opened up a pathway to new forms of transnational and transcultural connections. For truly revolutionary connections to take hold, global solidarity should not eradicate the local and national specificities but should constitute a form of coalition building that leaves room for self-difference. Only then can these connections help turn the experience of dislocation into a feeling of shared experience that constitutes a politics of relocation.

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<sup>17</sup> In her chapter “‘Coming Out of the Shadows’ and ‘undocuqueer,’” Hinda Seif delineates how the “language and political strategy of ‘coming out’ as undocumented” (88) has been adapted for immigrant political action. As she states: “Rather than the ‘closet,’ a dominant metaphor for undocumented immigrants in news, academia, and immigrant discourse is the ‘shadows,’ which reflects the different locations of undocumented status and its threats” (97). According to this immigrant discourse, “immigrants must be brought out of the shadow and into the light, with full rights, for society to be whole” (97).

<sup>18</sup> [equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/](http://equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/) 1:59-2:03. Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

<sup>19</sup> [gjspunk.de/queer-refugees-for-pride-nothing-about-us-without-us/](http://gjspunk.de/queer-refugees-for-pride-nothing-about-us-without-us/) . Accessed 3 Dec. 2017.

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