



THINKING GENDER IN TRANSNATIONAL TIMES

Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia and Turkey

Transnationalizing Spaces of Resistance

Selin Çağatay · Mia Liinason · Olga Sasunkevich



OPEN ACCESS

palgrave
macmillan

Thinking Gender in Transnational Times

Series Editors

Sadie Wearing, Department of Gender Studies,
London School of Economics and Political Science,
London, UK

Leticia Sabsay, Department of Gender Studies,
London School of Economics and Political Science,
London, UK

Sumi Madhok, Department of Gender Studies,
London School of Economics and Political Science,
London, UK

Gender theories have always been important, but no more so than now, when gender is increasingly acknowledged as an essential focus for economics, policy, law and development as well as being central to a range of fields in the humanities and social sciences such as cultural studies, literary criticism, queer studies, ethnic and racial studies, psychoanalytic studies and of course feminist studies. Yet while the growth areas for the field are those that seek to combine interdisciplinary theoretical approaches with transnational arenas of inquiry, or integrate theory and practice, there is currently no book series that foregrounds these exciting set of developments. The series 'Thinking Gender in Transnational Times' aims to redress this balance and to showcase the most innovative new work in this arena. We will be focusing on soliciting manuscripts or edited collections that foreground the following: Interdisciplinary work that pushes at the boundaries of existing knowledge and generates innovative contributions to the field. Transnational perspectives that highlight the relevance of gender theories to the analysis of global flows and practices. Integrative approaches that are attentive to the ways in which gender is linked to other areas of analysis such as 'race', ethnicity, religion, sexuality, violence, or age. The relationship between theory and practice in ways that assume both are important for sustainable transformation. The impact of power relations as felt by individuals and communities, and related concerns, such as those of structure and agency, or ontology and epistemology. In particular, we are interested in publishing original work that pushes at the boundaries of existing theories, extends our gendered understanding of global formations, and takes intellectual risks at the level of form or content. We welcome single or multiple-authored work, work from senior and junior scholars, or collections that provide a range of perspectives on a single theme.

More information about this series at
<https://link.springer.com/bookseries/14404>

Selin Çağatay · Mia Liinason ·
Olga Sasunkevich

Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia and Turkey

Transnationalizing Spaces
of Resistance

palgrave
macmillan

Selin Çağatay
Departments of History
and Gender Studies
Central European University
Wien, Austria

Mia Liinason
Department of Gender Studies
Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Olga Sasunkevich
Department of Cultural Sciences
University of Gothenburg
Göteborg, Sweden



Thinking Gender in Transnational Times

ISBN 978-3-030-84450-9

ISBN 978-3-030-84451-6 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84451-6>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2022. This book is an open access publication.

Open Access This book is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the book's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the book's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: Angelika Hirt/EyeEm

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

There is a complex interplay in transnational feminist and queer politics that asks for us to think together, while the tensions of doing this work remain firmly grounded in the politics we seek to critique and indeed dismantle. The Anglo-American dominance in geographies of sexualities work has been brought into question (Kulpa and Silva 2016; Silva and Ornat 2016), critiquing me and “the us” of this canon in ways that are necessary and uncomfortable (Browne and Bakshi 2014; Browne 2015; Vieira and Silva 2014). This does not contest the importance of work within and about Anglo-American hegemonies, instead it can encourage us to see the limits and boundaries that create our (sub)disciplines. It can also be deployed to encourage us to think together, to work together, and to cross borders not only in conferences, but through creating work that enables new conversations, new thoughts, and new alliances. This book is working through how we might do this, as well as what we can learn from the process, while offering key openings to consider how much there is within and beyond our own national contexts, and our positionings. In this foreword, I want to name some of the key problematics it engages, particularly geopolitical hegemonies in the construction of knowledges

and activism and also to articulate the potentials and import of transnational research that works with humility and an awareness of the potentials, as well as the tensions and possibilities of reiterating existing power relations.

Working Within and Beyond Geopolitical Hegemonies

Feminists in the late twentieth century called our attention to situated knowledges, that is, how we create our theory and research as well as what we write. Situated knowledges matter to what we create, how we create, who we write for, and the power relations that make knowledges possible (Stanley and Wise 1983; Haraway 1988; Harding 1997). If all knowledge is seen to be situated then who constructs this knowledge is central to what is produced (Haraway 1990). This understanding has been developed, particularly in geographies of sexualities to consider the *where* of knowledge production (Brown 2012). Such a lens asks us not only to consider the spatialities of everyday lives and positionalities in the reconstitution of research, data collection, theorization, and broader knowledge production, it sees *where* we are as inherent to these actions, processes, and knowledge creation.

Complex and intertwined power relations reconstitute not only us, but the places that we write about, how we write about them, and the worlds we create through our research and writing. These power relations are apparent in the discussions of Anglo-American hegemonies and the universalizations of sexualities research and theorizing (Brown 2012; Browne and Bakshi 2013; Kulpa 2014; Kulpa and Mizelińska 2011; Silva and Ornat 2016; Mikdashi and Puar 2016). For example, Gavin Brown writes critically about the spatialities of homonormative theorizations in the early twenty-first century. He contended that where these theorizations occurred mattered to the constitution of their form, substance, and associated politics:

The development of theories of Homonormativity has primarily occurred in the same limited range of global cities that it studies—critical thought about homonormativity is largely the product of exactly the same spaces and social networks that it critiques (Brown 2012, 1067).

Creating theory from specific nations, and also specific urbanities within these nations, creates knowledge in particular ways that are often unacknowledged because of who and where the theorists are from. Moreover, Kulpa (2014) argues that some places are seen as creating universalizing theorizations, whereas others become “case studies” of these theories or the theories emerging are seen as place based. Thus, it is critical to theorize about, but also from outside the Anglo-American dominance, and the assumptions that can define the fields of sexualities and genders, and to do so from positions that understand theories from Anglo-American hegemonies as inherently built and located there.

Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey: Transnationalizing Spaces of Resistance points to issues of visibilities and outness that exemplify not only the creation of Anglo-American knowledges, but also understandings of politics that rely on these lenses. Tucker (2009) focuses on South African interconnections, localities, and social relations in constituting sexual lives. Noting the limitations of legislation on everyday lives, he contends, much like this book, that there is a need to foster awareness of the day-to-day needs of queers, including visibility between different groups—such that no one group is able to dictate the terms of visibility to another. Here questioning visibility as the preferred form of activism questions the terms of the Anglo-American LGBTI+ sexual politics that have been presumed to emerge and be manifest in particular ways. Kulpa and Mizielińska (2011) critically contest the linearity of such politics and the trajectories that are assumed from specific nations, creating the concept of geo-temporalities to critique a form of progress based on specific Anglo-American/Global North progress narratives. What they, and Tucker, share with this book is the importance of recognizing everyday acts of resistance and resilience as possibilities for undoing hegemonies in multi-scalar ways that refuse geopolitical hierarchies that define good/bad, progress/backwardness, East/West, the global North/global South.

These binary narratives have created geographical materialities, imaginaries, and power relations in the twenty-first century that have defined issues of sexualities and gender. They have strongly played out in the differentiation of the global North as “progressive” and the global South as “backwards” (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011; Kulpa and Silva 2016). Based in legislation (such as same-sex marriage, employment protections, and gender recognition) that only partially tells the story, such comparisons act as a “marker that distinguishes the so-called advanced western democracies in opposition to their ‘underdeveloped others,’” thereby justifying “the current re-articulation of orientalist and colonial politics” (Sabsay 2012, 606). Such markers of advancement, viewed through lenses of “progress” and the “Other” to such progress, backwardness, often focus on legislative reform as a key means of both establishing difference from other nations, but more importantly superiority (Browne et al. 2015). Yet the measures of “progress” and their fuzzy geographical definitions can often fail to account for the implementation of legislation and what makes life livable for LGBTI+ people in ways that engage with, and diverge from, legislative regimes (Browne et al. 2020). Rejecting East–West, North–South assumptions and challenging the “usual” networks and connections that can be assumed to replicate this is a critical task that this book takes up and develops.

Such a move does not refuse issues of power. It is important that similarities and divergences are examined in ways that refuse easy narratives and assumptions, without negating the key power relations that define sexual and gendered lives, politics, and resistances. This includes recognizing the importance of legislation that enables legal rights and protections, but also not assuming that legislation is a panacea, or that its absence creates specific (perhaps always diminished, “less than”) lives, activisms, and solidarities.

Possibilities of Transnational Working: Rejecting Comparative Hierarchies

Consideration of the *where* of knowledge production and how politics are recreated and narrated through comparisons between nations necessitates a multi-scalar, networked exploration of power that reconstitutes not only the places we inhabit, as they reconstitute us, but also how these places relate to each other. A key decolonial critique and insight in geographies of sexualities and beyond is a rejection of a solely comparative understanding of nations (e.g., Kulpa 2014; Kulpa and Silva 2016; Banerjea et al. 2018). Transnationalism has much promise in this arena. The relationalities between places as well as various divisions and hierarchies are key objects of study and represent necessary explorations. Working transnationally offers the possibilities of refusing a hierarchized and comparative model, based in Anglo-American understandings and conceptualizations of progress. This opens up spaces to explore relationalities between places that create solidarities.

Perhaps we might consider the betweenness theorized by Rose (1999) who contended that the space of relation between bodies should be studied using Irigaray's theorizing to work through spaces of "betweenness":

Thus there may be a geography of corporeal space that does not entail solid shape, boundaries, fixity, property and possession whether of the self or others. It may be possible to embody a space that allows a different kind of betweenness. (Rose 1999, 254)

It is possible to extend Rose's conceptualization here to include bodies, places, networks, and lives in a multi-scalar way. That would enable a consideration of how the end of presumptions of "solid" shapes, fixities, and boundaries that define self/other, might also be applied to nations, nationalisms, and sexual politics as they are continually reformed in spaces of betweenness, and spaces between us. This refuses separateness and eschews closure/exclusion:

Irigaray is trying to work through a space in which the separateness of identity does not entail closure, exclusion and imprisonment, *where women can be separate yet connected.*

(Rose 1999, 254, my emphasis)

Our lives are created across borders and our (im)mobilities matter, and these movements or lack thereof are a key focus of geographies of sexualities work (DiFelicianantonio 2020; Gorman-Murray 2007, 2009; Lewis 2014; Gorman-Murray and Nash 2016a, b). They are “separate yet connected.” It is important to both understand and to query the primacy of the nation-state in reconstituting sexual and gendered lives and politics to explore as well our interconnectedness. This does not negate the place and importance of the nation, for example, the Irish referendum on same-sex marriage was located in and through imaginings of the Irish mammy (see Browne et al. 2018, 2019). Yet even in recognizing the import of context-specific resistances, this is undertaken in relation to relational and mobile considerations (Nash and Gorman-Murray 2014, 2015). In our current interconnected world, there is a need to consider how sexual and gender politics, manifestations, lives, and cultures are created. This requires a consideration of moving between specificities of context and their inter-relational creations and solidarities.

Such a conceptualization of betweenness offers pluralisms that refuse comparisons without negating legislation or national contexts as relational constructions. Transnational betweenness refuses hierarchies that rely on specific forms of knowledge and activism. Instead, as *Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey: Transnationalizing Spaces of Resistance* shows, contemporaneously it is in what is shared, as well as what is different that is crucial to recognizing that national struggles are created through international connections, and emboldened by these networks.

As people and things move across borders and boundaries, so too do ideas, emotions, and friendships—creating networks, links, and solidarities. Transnational solidarities and working across nation-states are critical sites of investigation as we travel, link, and network, and our resistances gain support. Exploring “allies in struggle” as this book does is critical in contesting the here/there, progress/backward narratives that

assume discrete units and recreate colonial relations of power that favor particular nations. Such coalitions are imperfect, limited, and partial; they can reproduce power relations and tensions, and they also hold the potential to be transformative, to create new understandings, new lives, open new horizons, and new possibilities. Indeed, tensions are key to our understandings, to our histories, and to divides that can re-emerge generationally as well as internationally, along with those that are transcended and papered-over to emerge later. There are possibilities in examining then both the possibilities and the tensions.

Conclusion: The “Largely Untold” Stories of Transnational Activisms

As I was writing this in Dublin, Ireland, an email appeared in my inbox from the EPIC—the Irish Emigration Museum advertising their “Out in the World: Ireland’s LGBTQ+ Diaspora” exhibit. The exhibit was described as:

Across the generations, Irish LGBTQ+ people have emigrated and found opportunities to live and love openly. Yet this journey was rarely a simple transition from an oppressive island to a liberal wider world. Irish LGBTQ+ emigrants often faced prejudice abroad. Home, once a place of shame and silence, could also become a welcoming site of return. This exhibition highlights 12 stories from the vast yet largely untold history of Ireland’s LGBTQ+ diaspora.

This reminded me that the personal is always political, and the political is always personal. As Irish LGBTI+ people, our lives are often transnational. Leaving and returning is often the focus of transnational/migration work but the “largely untold” histories are also reflected in contemporary stories of activism, politics, and relationships that operate between nations (see Binnie and Klesse 2012).

There can be little doubt that there is an undervaluing and an under-exploration of feminist and LGBTI+ activisms within nations. Yet beyond national boundaries these are even more sparse. We have long

acknowledged the diversities of feminist and LGBTI+ politics. This is predominantly explored through divisions between these politics, their contestations, objects of contention, theoretical groundings, political understandings, and tactics. However, what is less well known is the pluralisms required to understand transnational feminist and LGBTI+ activisms and resistances. Formed across diverse spaces and scales, we need to understand how they can both address and reproduce inequalities that define our geopolitical and interpersonal worlds. Alongside this, we need to look to transnationalism as offering potential moments of hope, solidarity, and care.

Dublin, Ireland

Kath Browne

References

- Banerjea, N., and K. Browne. 2018. "Liveable Lives: A Transnational Queer-Feminist Reflection on Sexuality, Development and Governance." In *Routledge Handbook of Queer Development Studies*, edited by C. L. Mason, 169–79. London and New York: Routledge.
- Banerjea, N., D. Dasgupta, R. K. Dasgupta, and J. Grant. 2018. *Friendship as Social Justice Activism: Critical Solidarities in a Global Perspective*. London and Kolkata: Seagull.
- Binnie J., and C. Klesse. 2013. "The Politics of Age, Temporality and Intergenerationality in Transnational Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Activist Networks." *Sociology* 47 (3): 580–95.
- Brown, G. 2012. "Homonormativity: A Metropolitan Concept That Denigrates 'Ordinary' Gay Lives." *Journal of Homosexuality* 59 (7): 1065–72.
- Browne, K. 2015. "Contesting Anglo-American Privilege in the Production of Knowledge in Geographies of Sexualities and Genders." *Revista Latino-Americana de Geografia e Genero* 6 (2): 250–70.
- Browne, K., and L. Bakshi. 2013. *Ordinary in Brighton? LGBT, activisms and the city*. London: Routledge.
- Browne, K., and L. Bakshi. 2014. "Participation Beyond Boundaries? Working as, with and for Lesbian, Gay Bi and Trans Communities." In *The Entrepreneurial University*, edited by Y. Taylor, 43–60. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Browne, K., N. Banerjea, L. Bakshi, and N. McGlynn. 2015. "Gay-Friendly or Homophobic? The Absence and Problems of Global Standards." *Antipode*. <https://antipodefoundation.org/2015/05/11/gay-friendly-or-homophobic/>.
- Browne, K., C. J. Nash, and A. Gorman-Murray. 2018. "Geographies of Heteroactivism: Resisting Sexual Rights in the Reconstitution of Irish Nationhood." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 43 (4): 526–39.
- Browne, K., N. Banerjea, N. McGlynn, L. Bakshi, S. Beethi, and R. Biswas. 2019. "The Limits of Legislative Change: Moving Beyond Inclusion/Exclusion to Create 'A Life Worth Living'." *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 39 (1): 30–52.
- Browne, K., J. Lim, J. Hall, and N. McGlynn. 2021. "Sexual(ities that) Progress: Introduction." *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 39 (1): 3–10.
- Di Feliciano, C. 2020. "Migration as an Active Strategy to Escape the 'Second Closet' for HIV-Positive Gay Men in Barcelona and Rome." *Social & Cultural Geography* 21 (9): 1177–96.
- Gorman-Murray, A. 2007. "Rethinking Queer Migration through the Body." *Social & Cultural Geography* 8 (1): 105–21.
- Gorman-Murray, A. 2009. "Intimate Mobilities: Emotional Embodiment and Queer Migration." *Social & Cultural Geography* 10 (4): 441–60.
- Gorman-Murray, A., and C. J. Nash. 2016a. "Mobile Sexualities: Section Introduction." In *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, edited by K. Browne and G. Brown, 195–200. London: Routledge.
- Gorman-Murray, A., and C. J. Nash. 2016b. "LGBT Communities, Identities, and the Politics of Mobility: Moving from Visibility to Recognition in Contemporary Urban Landscapes." In *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, edited by K. Browne and G. Brown, 247–53. London: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575–99.
- Harding, S. 1997. "Comment on Hekman's 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited': Whose Standpoint Needs the Regimes of Truth and Reality?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22 (2): 382–91.
- Kulpa, R. 2014. "Western *Leveraged Pedagogy* of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21 (4): 431–48.

- Kulpa, R., and J. Mizielinska (eds.). 2011. *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*. London: Ashgate.
- Kulpa, R., and J. M. Silva. 2016. "Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies: Section Introduction." In *Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, edited by G. Brown and K. Browne, 139–42. London: Routledge.
- Lewis, N. M. 2014. "Moving 'Out,' Moving On: Gay Men's Migrations Through the Life Course." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104 (2): 225–33.
- Mikdash, M., and J. Puar. 2016. "Queer Theory and Permanent War." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 22 (2): 215–22.
- Nash, C. J., and A. Gorman-Murray. 2014. "LGBT Neighbourhoods and 'New Mobilities': Towards Understanding Transformations in Sexual and Gendered Urban Landscapes." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, no. 38: 756–72.
- Nash, C. J., and A. Gorman-Murray. 2015. "Lesbians in the City: Mobilities and Relational Geographies." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 19 (2): 173–91.
- Rose, G. 1999. "Performing Space." In *Human Geography Today*, edited by D. Massey, J. Allen, and P. Sarre, 279–94. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Sabsay, L. 2012. "The Emergence of the Other Sexual Citizen: Orientalism and the Modernisation of Sexuality." *Citizenship Studies* 16 (5–6): 605–23.
- Silva, J. M., and P. J. Vieira. 2014. "Geographies of Sexualities: Displacing Hegemonies? An Interview with Kath Browne." *Revista Latino-Americana de Geografia e Genero* 5 (1): 263–70.
- Silva, J. M., and M. Ornat. 2016. "'Wake Up, Alice, This Is Not Wonderland!': Power, Diversity and Knowledge in Geographies of Sexualities." In *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, edited by K. Browne and G. Brown, 185–94. London: Routledge.
- Stanley, L., and S. Wise. 1993. *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*. London: Routledge.
- Tucker, A. 2009. *Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity and Interaction in Cape Town*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Acknowledgments

The work on this book has been generously supported by a number of institutions and colleagues whom we want to acknowledge. The book is based on research conducted within the project *Spaces of Resistance. A Study of Gender and Sexuality in Times of Transformations* funded by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg's Foundation (KAW 2015.0180, 2016–2021). With this support we were able to conduct ethnographic work and action research, deliver conference and workshop presentations, and organize several internal meetings where the book's conceptual and methodological framework was developed. We also benefited from the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond's Research Initiation Grant (F17-1391:1) which allowed us to organize the workshop "Transnational solidarities: Gender and sexuality beyond geopolitics" in 2018 in Gothenburg where we presented the project to a broader milieu of gender and queer studies scholars. The intellectual stimulus of this workshop was crucial for our project. We are thankful to all workshop participants for two days of fruitful and engaging dialogues. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of Hülya Arik, postdoctoral fellow in *Spaces of*

Resistance, to the entire project and to the development of the book's concept.

The research that laid the foundation for this book has been presented individually and collectively on various occasions. We are grateful to Erika Svedberg and all participants of the Gender Studies Collegium Seminar at Malmö University where Mia and Olga were invited to present some parts of this research. We are also heartily thankful to Prof. Teresa Kulawik from Södertörn University who arranged the Gender Studies Seminar where Mia, Olga, and Selin presented the book concept for the first time. We are also indebted to activists and scholars from the *Feminist and Queer Solidarities Beyond Borders* project for their feedback on our approach to the analysis of feminist and LGBTI+ activism in Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey. We thank our colleagues Deniz Akin, Erika Alm, Kris Clarke, Elisabeth L. Engebretsen, Nico Miskow Friberg, Roberto Kulpa, Adi Kuntsman, Linda Lapina, Lena Martinsson, Faith Mkwesha, Diana Mulinari, Mina Skouen, Anna-Maria Sörberg, and Manté Vertelyté whose intellectual and personal support inspired us across the years of the project. We are also grateful to Kath Browne for the insightful foreword.

We want to acknowledge that writing this book was a truly inspirational professional journey for the three of us. We consider our collaboration as a genuine example of collective feminist knowledge production where co-authors felt stimulated and supported intellectually but even more so emotionally and personally during the hardships of the academic writing process. This book is a fully collective product at all stages—from writing the book proposal to drafting these acknowledgments. We hope that the readers will sense the importance and value of collective knowledge production for feminist and queer scholarship in times of neoliberal individualization in academia.

We would also like to thank all our research partners for contributing with their precious time and expertise to this project. We regret that we cannot acknowledge each and every of you due to anonymity and ethical concerns. But we hope that you will recognize your stories which are the most important source of inspiration and knowledge provided in this book.

On a personal note:

Olga wants to thank Anna Alimpieva, Valentina Cherevatenko, Olga Dzhumailo, Dana Jirous, Asya Khodyreva, Marina Grasse, Maria Kokhanovskaya, Inga Luther, Galina Orlova, Nadia Plungian, and Alexandra Yaseneva for the special treatment and support during her fieldwork in Russia and Germany. Thanks to Dmitry Vorontsov for arranging the guest researcher visit to the Southern Federal University in Rostov-on-Don. I am also thankful to Masha Neufeld and Katharina Wiedlack as well as the other organizers and participants of the conference *Fucking Solidarity: Queering Concepts on/from a Post-Soviet Perspective* (Vienna, Austria), for the great intellectual stimulus that was crucial for this project. Thank you, Sophija Savtchouk, Valerie Havemann, and especially Nasta Mancewicz for transcribing most of the interviews for this research. And thank you, my friend Nastasia Makarenko, for your occasional but very warm company in Moscow.

Selin is grateful for the political and intellectual discussions she was very lucky to have with Aysun Çeper, Cemre Baytok, Ece Kocabıçak, Dilan Yılmaz, Fatoş Hacivelioglu, Filiz Karakuş, Gülnur Acar Savran, Nehir Kovar, Selda Tuncer, and Yasemin Yıldırım in different stages of her research period. These people and the comrades and colleagues in *Çatlak Zemin*, *Lezbidüş*, *Feminist ve Queer Araştırmacılar Ağı*, *Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü*, and *Kadınlar Greve İnisyatifi* have all contributed to the development of the Turkish case study. I am indebted to Aylin Akpınar and Zsófia Lóránd for inviting me to present my research results at Linnaeus University, Department of Sociology, and the Left Feminist Theory and Historiography Workshop at the Czech Academy of Sciences, respectively. Special thanks goes to Onur Kılıç, whose excellent research report helped me to design the fieldwork in Turkey, and to Gökşen Ayvaz and Irem Gerkuş who transcribed most of the interviews I conducted as part of my research. Warmest thanks also go to Alexa Tjornhom, Jenny Lind, and Melih Arslan for their invaluable friendship in Gothenburg, and to Ewa Mączyńska, Bonbon, and Yucca for their lovely company while I worked on this book under lockdown in Budapest.

Mia wants to thank Sabine Grenz, Maki Kimura, Nana Osei-Kofi, Lisen Selander, Nella van den Brandt, Konstanze Hanitsch, Lena Martinsson, Erika Alm, Arman Heljic, Valeria Villegas Lindvall, Onur

Kılıç, Nadia Ruiz Bravo, Marta Cuesta, and Sama Khosravi Ooryad for all enriching dialogues on the topics of this book. I have had the pleasure of giving presentations of work in progress at the European Sociological Conference in Prague, at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, at the Young Academy of Sweden, the center for Digital Humanities in the University of Gothenburg, Humlab in Umeå University, and the European Feminist Research Conference in Göttingen. All these conversations helped me to further develop some of the ideas brought forward here. During the work on this research, I have also been invited as guest professor at the University of Vienna, Lund University, and the University of Göttingen and am grateful for the inspiring intellectual exchanges in these environments.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to our editorial team at Palgrave Macmillan—Poppy Hull, Nina Guttapalle, and Connie Li—for their swift and generous responses to our queries along the way. We are also grateful for the fruitful feedback to our book proposal provided by three anonymous reviewers and we are especially indebted to the reviewer who read the whole book-length manuscript after submission.

Praise for *Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia and Turkey*

“This is a stimulating book that resists easy answers and embraces meandering tensions inhabiting ‘Spaces of Resistance’ of feminist and queer movements (notwithstanding researchers’ own positionalities across academia and activism). Together with the authors we ponder the multifaceted forms of resistance that permeate and underlie collective resilience. Or rather resiliences and resistances, always already in plural, and not of the individualist, neoliberal form—but of the feminist and queer collective commoning, caring and becoming in solidarity.”

—Roberto Kulpa, *Lecturer, Edinburgh Napier University, UK*

“The multiscalar transnational approach to spaces of resistance in this book provides an original and sophisticated contribution to research on transnational feminism and resistance.”

—Pauline Stoltz, *Associate Professor, Aalborg University, Denmark*

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Transnational Spaces of Resistance	49
3	Transforming Conditions of Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism	83
4	Solidarities Across: Borders, Belongings, Movements	143
5	Spaces of Appearance and the Right to Appear: March 8 in Local Bodily Assemblies	191
6	Conclusion	239
	Index	249

List of Figures

Fig. 3.1	“Russia aiming towards the future.” The photo captures feminist intervention during Women’s Historical Night in May 2018 in Kaliningrad. The photo contains the portrait of Hannah Arendt in black-and-white on the building colored in the tricolor of the Russian flag with the text “Russia aiming towards the future.” Arendt spent her childhood in Königsberg, today’s Kaliningrad, that was a German city until 1945. Creators: Maria Kokhanovskaya and Alexandra Solodovnikova (Photo Credit: Olga Sasunkevich)	87
Fig. 4.1	Pride flag waving in the light wind outside of Kirkenes Church (Photo Credit: Mia Liinason)	160
Fig. 5.1	Capture: Feminist rally in St. Petersburg (Photo credit: Olga Sasunkevich)	214
Fig. 5.2	Preparations for the Feminist Night March at the Feminist Space (<i>Feminist Mekan</i>) (Photo credit: Selin Çağatay)	222



1

Introduction

“We went to a wedding in June,” Zoey said, “and we were seated at the family side.” Zoey clarified: “It was us, the people from the office, sitting at the side of the family, with a few others, and we were introduced as the family. I got to hold a speech on behalf of the family.” As a member of staff in an association for LGBTI+ people with minority background in Norway, this story about becoming family highlights some of the borders that become blurred in feminist and LGBTI+ activisms and illustrates the many layers of connectivity that links non-heterosexual, feminist, migrant, racialized, and colonized populations across national frontiers and multiple spatial scales. Zoey’s narrative about a migrant, gay couple getting married in a church in Greenland shines light on how relationships traversing local and transnational scales can build spaces for feminist, trans,* and queer lives and livabilities within and across places and relations characterized by multiple constraints.

In resonance with other narratives in this book, Zoey’s story illuminates the creative routes through which non-normative geographies of connectivity are shaped within and beyond contemporary Russia,

Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries.¹ By so doing, the narratives collected here brings forth their potential of such linkages to disrupt or by-pass nation-states and challenge the ways in which national borders work to define “(racialized) boundaries through sexual [and gendered] politics” (Suchland 2018, 1073). Despite the distinct and diverse genealogies of feminist and LGBTI+ struggles, the actors and political projects that appear in this book oftentimes recognize their shared features and approach each other as allies in the struggle. Indeed, these movements frequently build coalitions when neoconservative and other violent forces construct these movements as one single enemy. Yet, as highlighted across the pages of this book, these developments have not so much erased the tension between the movements as it has strengthened the solidarities between them, when today they often see themselves encountering similar threats.

In contrast to the bounty of scholarship that approach transnational feminist and LGBTI+ struggles as cross-border organizing (Belmonte 2021; Ferree and Tripp 2006; Patil 2011; Sperling et al. 2001), or as a form of internationalism among nation-scale associations and exchanges on a national–international axis (Conway 2017; Sandell 2015), this book contributes to expand existing understandings of transnational in two main ways: *To begin with*, rather than approaching subjects, places, and histories as separate and comparable, we direct our attention to the relationality between them and explore how gender and sexual politics are

¹ The Scandinavian countries are constituted by Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. These countries are distinct and diverse. Simultaneously, they share some significant features, as they are keen to position themselves at the forefront of global progress for women and LGBTI+ people (Liinason 2018). In this book, we engage critically with the frequent description of Scandinavia as a homogenous area, geographically, culturally, socially, and politically, and we argue that a construction of these countries as homogenous needs to be understood as the result of certain demarcations, drawn along the lines of racialized and ethnicized difference, in which notions of gender equality and homotolerance contribute to produce hierarchically differentiating discourses between “us” and “them” (Keskinen et al. 2009). When we discuss phenomena that take place in one of these countries, we refer to Norway, Sweden, or Denmark, while we use the Scandinavian countries, or Scandinavia, to refer to phenomena that, in various ways, are valid in all three countries. We conceptualize the Scandinavian context as an imagined community, providing its citizens with another layer of belonging, in addition to their specific national belongings. Yet, this is not an entirely harmonious or conflict-free relationship but characterized by the multiple power struggles that construct this space.

shaped through this relationality. Our approach is inspired by feminist and queer transnational methodologies with their focus “on the multiplicities *within* locations that make the ‘many-many lives’ in each important, rather than framing locations as discrete units of analysis to be compared” (Browne et al. 2017, 1377). By tracing convergences and contrasts between seemingly disparate places, we employ a transnational lens to bring into focus the “shared location of specific categories of people ... across national frontiers and in contrast to a universal global community” (Martinsson and Mulinari 2018, 6) and reveal the impact of this relationality on gendered and sexual lives and livabilities in specific, located sites (Bhambra 2011, 2014; Subrahmanyam 1997). We seek to reject dominant cartographies that privilege the nation-state or the arena of “global capital” (Gopinath 2018, 5). *Second*, by doing so, the analyses in this book are influenced by a tradition of research that has formulated a nuanced critique of nation-bound models of explanation and brought forward problematic implications of the absence of attention to relations and flows across national frontiers (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Baksh and Harcourt 2015; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Lock Swarr and Nagar 2010).

As we build further on this research, we aspire to foreground new directions in the field by approaching the transnational on multiple scales and in variegated sites. This allows us to attend to the offline and online spaces created by the appearance and work of feminist and LGBTI+ activisms across scales—local, national, regional, global—and in various settings, from the mundane and everyday, to the rare and spectacular. With a focus on connectivities below and beyond the national scale, sub-nationally as well as transnationally nationally, the analyses of this book move beyond a rights-based and state-centered approach to reveal the pluralist convergences, overlaps, and tensions that connect feminist and LGBTI+ activists across Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries. Such linkages, this book shows, have a potential to forge new modes of affiliation, bring inspiration and knowledge to struggles, and offer other ways of being, through which the exclusionary boundaries of the nation-state can be challenged, side-stepped, or temporarily dismantled.

Space, in our use of the concept, is not a passive or flat surface upon which people act, but a product of our relations and connections with

each other (Massey 2005). As a spatial phenomenon, resistance not only takes place in space, but seeks to appropriate space to create new spaces (Pile 1997). Such spaces, this book argues, created by resistance, have an impact on the multiple and ambiguous dynamics of political identities. We are interested in this dynamic potential of spaces of resistance as simultaneously expressing collective forms of protest and creating new relations of connectivity and belonging as an effect—a transgressive potential which we understand as the very stuff of resistance. We explore such spaces of resistance across the chapters of this book: in analyses of how feminist and queer struggles navigate within the ongoing neoconservative turn and in the current conditions of neoliberalism (Chapter 3), through explorations of feminist and LGBTI+ practices of solidarity across borders, belongings, and movements (Chapter 4), and through examinations of the corporeal and embodied dimensions of transnational feminist and LGBTI+ activisms (Chapter 5).

Foregrounding an understanding of transnational communities as characterized by a prominence of diversity, variety, and multiplicity (Franklin et al. 2000; Al-Ali 2000; Grewal 2005), this book suggests the usefulness of approaching the transnational as a process, activity, or event. By doing so, we conceptualize the transnational as carrying a possibility for unexpected encounters, for moving beyond monolithic notions of the West, and for conceptualizing feminist and queer struggles as multiple, contradictory, and transgressive. The concept of transnationalizing, as Dufour et al. (2010) suggest, brings attention to enactments of solidarity which not only extends across borders but also seeks to overcome a tendency to compartmentalize struggles: “the transnationalization of solidarities refers to the processes not only by which solidarities travel beyond established national borders, but also by which they are deepened among women or among feminists. ... Solidarities may also be ‘stretched’ beyond feminist and women’s constituencies and beyond women’s issues” (4). While feminism and queer indeed include different struggles with particular histories and visions, in this book, we follow the initiative of scholars who, in similarity with Dufour et al. (2010), have recognized the similar challenges encountered by women and LGBTI+ subjects. Situated in a broader ongoing discussion on building coalitions across movements (Carty and Mohanty 2015; Butler 2015), this book

sees such coalitions between feminism and queer as potentially transformative. Rather than focusing on the discontinuities between different struggles or focusing on a fixed moment in time when a particular claim was met by policy change, we take an interest in stressing the links between struggles, attending to the points of connectivity that take shape and produce spaces of resistance across different scales and sites.

Informed by our understanding of feminist and LGBTI+ struggles as a history of continuing contestations, this book follows a topic-based structure instead of a linear or unidirectional logic structured by a chronological or geographical master frame. Influenced by Clare Hemmings' (2005) insights into ways of imagining feminist and LGBTI+ pasts differently, we offer an analysis of feminist and LGBTI+ activism within and across three seemingly different contexts, as we ultimately aspire to deepen existing understandings of what these transnational enactments, characterized by overlaps as well as tensions, can teach us about struggles for gender and sexual justice as a history of ongoing struggles rather than a series of linear displacements, as we set out to shine light on the plural and creative connectivities between feminist and LGBTI+ struggles within and across Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries.

Transnationalizing Feminist and LGBTI+ Activisms in Russia, the Scandinavian Countries, and Turkey

Existing scholarship in gender studies rarely brings Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries under one roof (notable exceptions are Dogangün 2019; Sümer and Eslen-Ziya 2017). These contexts belong to historically distinguished geopolitical regions with Russia's embeddedness in (post-)socialist geographies (Stella 2015; Suchland 2011; Tlostanova 2012), Turkey's gravitation toward the Middle East (Işıksal and Göksel 2018; White 2013), and Scandinavia's positionality in the European North (Dahl et al. 2016; Hilson 2008). Their histories of struggles for women's rights and sexual liberties significantly vary. Neither

of them fit neatly in the established categories of West–East and North–South. The three contexts are seldom interrogated together in existing debates on transnational feminism and queer solidarities where North–South tensions are more salient (Ghodsee 2019; Tlostanova et al. 2019). Currently, Russia and Turkey, on the one hand, and Scandinavian countries, on the other, have remarkably different positionalities in gender and sexual politics with the latter seen as forerunners of democracy, gender equality, and homotolerance, whereas the former as leaders in anti-gender and homophobic campaigns aimed at the consolidation of authoritarian state power (Arik et al., 2022). Acknowledging the distinct trajectories of Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries in struggles around gender equality and sexual rights as its point of departure, this book simultaneously offers to investigate overlaps and similarities alongside divergences between these struggles.

We situate the discussions in this book in the shifts and continuities following distinct projects of modernization in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries. We approach such projects of modernization by attending to the processes of normalization, expansion of capitalist markets, projects of imperialism and colonialism/coloniality in the variegated contexts of the book. We also highlight how globalization, neoliberalism, and controversies over gender equality and sexual rights forged by global governance and neoconservative and fundamentalist forces alike currently reshape the terrain of varieties of modernization into a more coherent, transnationally intertwined period. In exploring the historical roots and legacies of these modernization projects, we have been influenced by Foucault's notion of biopolitics, which allows us to attend to the ways in which the population itself has become an object of political intervention (Lemke 2011, 33; see also Butler 2015; Foucault 1978, 2008; Mbembé 2003).

Our point of departure is that politics of gender and sexuality varied over time across the regions we are writing about. The counterpositioning of Turkey and Russia vis-a-vis Scandinavia in terms of gender equality and women's rights is a relatively recent phenomenon that is traceable to the early 2010s when Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were consolidating authoritarian political power in Russia and Turkey, respectively. The revival of traditional patriarchy with an appeal

to the Orthodox Christianity in Russia and Sunni Islam in Turkey as opposed to the values of “corrupted West” (Dogangün 2019, 2) is in stark contrast with the processes of (r)evolutionary modernization of gender relations and sexuality that Turkey, Scandinavian countries, and Soviet Russia underwent almost simultaneously in the 1910s–1930s (Çakır 1994; Durakbaşa 2000; Güneş-Ayata and Acar 1999; Sancar 2012; Florin 2006; Melby et al. 2009; Engelstein 1992; Roldugina 2018; Wood 1997). The continuities and shifts of these developments shape the historical landscapes within which contemporary activism in Russia, Turkey, and Scandinavia is embedded, which we in the following turn to illuminate shortly.

Varieties of Modernization in the Early Twentieth Century

In Russia, groundbreaking changes in gender and sexual politics occurred in the aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917, which brought the new Soviet state and its “alternative project of modernity” into life (Kondakov 2019; Wood 1997). Reformation of legislation that the Bolsheviks inherited from the Russian Empire led to the decriminalization of homosexuality and prostitution in 1917 and abortion in 1920. The legal and political changes created space for liberalization of public moral norms and codes and for the emergence of new “politically emphasized subjectivities” (Roldugina 2018, 9) based on gender and sexuality. At the same time, in Turkey, in contrast to many European cities of the early twentieth century, LGBTI+ people could enjoy sexual freedoms and even freely engage in sex work upon paying taxes (Çetin 2016, 6; Schick 2020). Debates around gender and sexuality were part of nation-building and population and health policies already prior to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (Balsoy 2016; Miller 2007; Toprak 2017). Kemalist reforms in the early Republican period, such as the 1926 Civil Code that outlawed polygamy and brought gender equality in the matters of marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, strengthened women’s position in the family and society and enabled their public participation in greater numbers. Further, in Scandinavia, the emergence

of the modern welfare state in the 1920s and 1930s, in response to high poverty levels, poor housing, falling birth rates, and unemployment, brought women's and sexual rights to the fore of the public discussion.

Projects of modernization in these three contexts were distinctive in relation to each other and, in the case of Turkey and Russia, particularly shaped in relation to Western/European modernity that “served as a benchmark against which cultures on the European margin judged themselves” (Engelstein 1992, 9). Nonetheless, control over gender relations and sexuality as a biopolitical mechanism for consolidating state power in the process of transitioning from peripheral empires/monarchies to modern nations were present in all three contexts. In some aspects, the early twentieth century modernizing politics of governing gender relations and sexuality in Russia, the Scandinavian countries, and Turkey are remarkably aligned. Their aim was to establish a modern secular state and society with the help of political and legal reforms, education, scientific knowledge, and expertise at the expense of producing clear boundaries between deviance and normality. In the early Soviet Russia as well as early Republican Turkey, “deviance” was defined as embodied by illiterate women from peasantry, seen as traditional thus backward; women involved in prostitution; and women from non-Russian and non-Orthodox (in the Soviet case) and non-Turkish and non-Sunni Muslim (in the Turkish case) ethnic and religious groups (Gradskova 2013, 2020; Ülker 2008; Wood 1997; Yeğenoğlu 1998). In the Scandinavian countries, working mothers, poor mothers with “too many” children, ethnic minority women, illiterate women, and women involved in prostitution were opposed to the “normality” of the bourgeois middle-class of the dominant society. Thus, at their core, modernization processes of Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey, though distinct from each other in manner and scale, followed a path of Western/European modernity with their shift from a repressive to a productive mode of power where the anatomo-politics of human body and biopolitics of population overlapped (Foucault 2006 [1976]).²

² It is important to acknowledge that a repressive, state-centered mode of power never ceased existence in Soviet Russia. It especially thrived during political repressions of the Stalinist period. This is the reason why historians of Soviet Russia still debate whether the term *modernity* is at all applicable to the Russian history (David-Fox 2016). While the applicability of *modernity*

Cold War Rivalries and Transnational Organizing

Variegated versions of modernity that arose in the local contexts of Soviet Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey in the early twentieth century laid the foundation for competitive narratives of women's emancipation after World War II. Transnational exchanges were central for shaping alliances between women's activists in different countries and, in some cases, gave legitimacy for supporting women's rights in national contexts. To situate contemporary feminist activism in the three contexts of the book in such historical legacy of transnational exchanges, below we provide a brief illustration of some of these transnational exchanges.

With its roots in socialism, the Soviet idea of gender equality understood "women's question" as incorporated into struggles against class inequalities, imperialism, and global capitalism. The Soviet model of women's emancipation was an ideological cornerstone of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), a transnational women's organization established by pro-communist and anti-fascist women from forty countries in November 1945 in Paris (de Haan 2010; Gradskova 2020). Being deprived of the possibility for independent political organizing within the Soviet Union, Soviet women took an active role in transnational political struggles as members of the WIDF (Gradskova 2020). The role of WIDF is often disregarded in the historiography of transnational women's movement due to its close association with the Soviet Union (Ghodsee 2019; Gradskova 2020; de Haan 2010). Indeed, transnationalization of the women's question in this context was to some extent a side effect of Cold War rivalries between the socialist East led by Soviet Russia and the capitalist West (Gradskova 2020; Ghodsee 2019). Yet, the WIDF played a significant role in initiating the UN International Women's Year in 1975 and paved the way to the Convention

to the late-Ottoman and early Republican periods is not contested by historians in a similar manner, the "strong state" thesis is similarly present in the Turkish case (Berkes 1998; Hanioglu 2008; Heper 1985; Mardin 1973). We share the opinion of scholars who claim that Russia's and Turkey's approaches to the regulation of sexuality and gender relations in the twentieth century was in line with European modernity (Balsoy 2016; Engelstein 1992; Kondakov 2019; Stella 2015; Suchland 2018; Toprak 2017).

on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), important milestones in the history of transnational feminism as well as the emergence of a global gender equality agenda that was later adopted by women from the global West, East, and South (Antrobus 2004; Ghodsee 2019; Gradskova 2020; de Haan 2010). In the aftermath of WWII, Turkey aligned with the West “as a Muslim country fighting against Soviet communism” and with aspirations for integration in the capitalist world system (Brockett 2011, 22; Zürcher 2004). Most of them established in the 1950s and 1960s by Kemalist women, women’s organizations in this period embraced agendas that were in line with those of dominant women’s organizations in the West, such as the International Council of Women and the International Women’s Alliance (Scott 2017). The International Women’s Year in 1975 and the ensuing UN Decade for Women (1975–1985) gave these organizations a legitimate framework in which to participate in decision-making processes at the national level promoting gender equality and to reverse the conservative turn of the early Cold War period (Çağatay 2017; Sancar 2012). Similarly, the involvement of Scandinavian women in transnational contexts, such as the UN women’s conferences, resulted in stronger and more comprehensive frameworks to sustain and expand questions of women’s rights nationally (Kjærsgaard 2018). Women’s rights activists in Scandinavia had a long-term engagement in transnational women’s organizations, not least the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (Sandell 2015), established in the Hague, the Netherlands, in 1915 (Eklund and Härén 2015; Theorin 2015), working against militarism, for peace and solidarity across borders. They were also involved in the Women’s International Democratic Federation. In relation to this exchange, the ties between the Federation and the Women’s Socialist Association in Sweden were particularly strong with one Swedish member upholding key posts in the organization across several years in the 1940s, -50s, and -60s (de Haan 2010). During the Cold War, all Scandinavian countries took up anti-imperialist positionings, especially in relation to the Vietnam war, and despite the fact that Norway and Denmark from 1949 were members of NATO. These anti-imperialist positionings still give an imprint on the international image of these countries (Keskinen et al. 2009). While the Nordic countries often

are missing in the historiography of the UN women's conferences, for women's rights activists and parliamentarians of these countries, the UN women's conferences as well as the ratification of CEDAW have been central (Kjærsgaard 2018; Quataert 2012). Scholars detail how these conferences shaped a space for engagement, exchange, community, and network building among women parliamentarians, transnationally and in transnordic exchanges as well as within respective national contexts (Kjærsgaard 2018), which helped to shape a structure to develop national policy measures for strengthening the equality for women.

Due to substantial differences in history and legislations regulating and organizing homosexuality, the development of LGBTI+ politics in Russia, Turkey and Scandinavia after WWII has been uneven.³ In Russia, male homosexuality (*muzhelozhstvo*, lit. "man lying with man") remained criminalized from 1933 until 1993 while women's same-sex desire was treated as medical abnormality and subjected to psychiatric intervention (Stella 2015). Although alternative spaces and terms for experiencing and describing homosexuality existed in Soviet Russia (Essig 1999; Kondakov 2014, 2019; Stella 2015), homosexual subjectivity, with the exclusion of the 1920s (Roldugina 2018), was criminalized (Essig 1999). At the same time, Scandinavia, and Sweden in particular, gained an international reputation as being sex-positive as it introduced sexual education in public schools by the end of the 1940s and established liberal legislation regarding pornography in the 1960s and 1970s (Arnberg 2009). While attitudes regarding sexuality were more conservative in Norway than in Denmark and Sweden, with the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1972, compared with 1933 in Denmark and 1944 in Sweden, although these countries didn't abolish the designation of homosexuality as an illness until 1979 (Sweden) and 1981 (Denmark) (Nyegaard 2011),⁴ the formal recognition of sexual rights in Norway has since then been

³ The problem with universal applicability of the term "LGBTI+" in relation to the histories of Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey is discussed in the next section.

⁴ In Norway, the designation of homosexuality as an illness was "partly removed" in 1977 (Hofstad 2014, 1).

more swift with registered partnership of same-sex relationships established in the early 1990s and with the same-sex marriage law in January 2009 as the first Nordic country (compared with the legislation of gay marriages in Sweden later in the same year, and in Denmark in 2012) (Wickman 2012). Broader transnational and transnordic exchanges in LGBTI+ activism in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are recognized as crucial in the histories of the nation-wide organizations in Scandinavia. For example, established as a Swedish section of the Danish organization the Association of 1948 (*Förbundet af 1948*). RFSL became an independent organization in 1952. Further, LGBT Denmark was one of seven founding members of the International lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex association (ILGA) in Coventry, UK, in 1978 (Paternotte et al., n.d.). While previous research on LGBTI+ activism in the Scandinavian context have focused mainly on national developments, ongoing research is examining transnational exchanges in the history of Scandinavian LGBTI+ activism, with the project NordiQueer as an example, involving an interdisciplinary group of scholars from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.⁵ Differently, in Turkey, homosexuality was never criminalized. Up until the 1970s, public discourses and policies around sexual orientation and gender identity have been remarkably absent, leading researchers to interpret outright discrimination against non-normative sex as a reaction to Turkey's Europeanization (e.g., Çetin 2016). At the same time, the modern state systematically ignored equal rights and protection for LGBTI+ people (Çetin 2016; Muedini 2018). Gender reassignment has been accessible since the late 1980s, but same-sex relationships are still not legally recognized except as an offense to public morality when visible in the public sphere. LGBTI+ rights were somewhat secured in the 2000s (e.g., the article no. 122 of the Criminal Code on hate and discrimination), but little was done to eliminate the crimes committed against LGBTI+ people including the brutal murders of transwomen (Erensü and Alemdaroğlu 2018, 22; Zengin 2016).

⁵ See <https://www.gender.lu.se/nordiqueer-nordic-queer-revolution>.

Contemporary Contestations of Gender Equality and Sexual Rights

The end of Cold War intensified transnational collaborations within feminist and LGBTI+ activism. After seventy years of state surveillance, repressions and underground activities, independent civil society flourished in Russia. Women's organizations that aligned with feminism to various degrees occupied a prominent role in this process. Decriminalization (1993) and depathologization (1999) of homosexuality also paved the way for the emergence of grassroots LGBTI+ activism in the country (Kirey-Sitnikova 2020; Kondakov 2019). The opening of Soviet borders allowed increased collaboration with the international activist community and foreign donors (Hemment 2007; Johnson 2009; Khodyreva 2020; Sundstrom 2006). The support from the US and Scandinavian governments and civil society organizations played a prominent role in this process (Gradszkova 2019; Johnson 2009; Sperling et al. 2001). While gender equality and sexual rights became a litmus test for Russia's transition from state socialism to liberal democracy, public discourses and state policies around gender and sexuality in Turkey were largely informed by Turkey's commitment to Europeanization and the UN-led gender equality agenda. The 1990s saw the institutionalization and NGOization of different women's movements, including feminist, Kemalist, Kurdish, and Islamic, that competed over the definition of women's interests as well as donor funds with which to pursue their agendas (Arat 2001; Çağatay 2017; Ertürk 2006; Kardam 2005). In the 2000s, Turkey's EU accession prospect enabled significant improvements in women's rights as the notion of gender equality got incorporated in the Constitution (2004, 2010), the Penal Code (2004), and the Labor Code (2003) (Müftüleri-Baç, 2012). The mainstreaming of gender equality as required by the EU led to the establishment of issue-based platforms that brought together feminist, Kemalist, Islamic, and Kurdish women's; LGBTI+ and human rights organizations (Aldıkaçtı Marshall 2013; Çağatay 2018a). While the legacy of these platforms has enabled broader alliances for gender equality and sexual rights against their increasing violation today, feminist and LGBTI+ activists' embeddedness in transnational networks and reliance on funding from UN and

EU structures and individual states such as Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands, led to their depiction by conservative, fundamentalist, and ultra-nationalist actors as non-national, Western agents (Acuner 1999; Kandiyoti 2016).

Whereas Russia and Turkey were invited to align their gender and sexuality politics with the post-Cold War liberal democratic agenda, Scandinavian countries took as their ambition to lead the very process of agenda setting (Einarsdóttir 2020; Jezierska and Towns 2018; Valaskivi 2016). Being described as a moral super power (Nilsson 1991) and a harmonious cluster of nations, associated with “development aid, peace building and cooperation” (Keskinen et al. 2009, 16), Norway, Denmark, and Sweden promoted gender equality and sexual rights as part of a liberal ideology at the core of their national and regional self-understanding. By doing so, they also drew a clear boundary between a gender-equal and homotolerant “us” as part of the liberal democratic West and a misogynistic and homophobic “them,” represented by the global South and East (Liinason 2018). Hence, the end of Cold War as the “end of history” intensified the universal hegemony of Western liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1992) and expansion of a rights-centered, policy-based understanding of gender equality and sexual citizenship to contexts with different political cultures and history (Ghodsee 2004; Husakouskaya 2018; Klapeer 2017; Mizielińska and Kulpa 2011).

Historical developments described above inform our understanding of the recent counterpositioning of Russia and Turkey vis-à-vis Scandinavia in terms of gender equality and sexual rights. As both the Russian and the Turkish governments, along with those in countries such as Poland or Hungary, clearly frame feminist and LGBTI+ agendas as “[perverse] ideologies of an arrogant Western neoliberal elite” (Shirinian 2020), we acknowledge that their anti-gender and homophobic politics is a part of a global contest aimed at challenging Western epistemological, economic, and geopolitical hegemony (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Çağatay 2019; Edenborg 2017; Korolczuk and Graff 2018; Moss 2017; Özkazanç 2019, 2020). As Rao (2020, 11) argues, the “civilizational logic of homonationalism,” or the acceptance of liberal LGBTI+ rights by the states, serves as “a barometer of nation’s fitness for sovereignty.” Opposed to homonationalism is “heteronationalism” (Moss 2014, cited in Shirinian 2020),

an anti-gender homophobic ideology, which right-wing nationalists or nationalistic state elites from the “illiberal East” employ to push against the West (Shirinian 2020).

Notwithstanding that Turkey and Russia, on the one hand, and the Scandinavian countries, on the other, are situated on the opposite ends of the gender equality and sexual rights barometer, the centrality of these struggles for national imaginary and geopolitical positionality of all three contexts is striking. As we argue elsewhere, at stake here is “the structural realignment of the sovereign nation-state in facing simultaneous challenges from above from supranational entities and global capitalist markets, and from below from grassroots movements who refer to international law and human rights” (Arik et al., 2022; see also Barker 2017). In this book, we attentively investigate how feminist and LGBTI+ activists navigate the complexity of a multi-polar world (Kahlina and Ristivojević 2015) where gender equality and sexual rights are, on the one hand, under continuous threat from authoritarian states (Kandiyoti 2016; Kondakov 2014; Moss 2017), conservative religious powers (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017), and right-wing intellectuals (Martinsson 2020); on the other hand, they are instrumentalized within discourses of Western sexual and gender exceptionalism and reproduction of (post)colonial hierarchies (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Husakouskaya 2018; Klapeer 2017; Kulpa 2014).

Navigating Contested Terms

The variegated, yet overlapping, developments of struggles for gender and sexual justice in Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey make the issue of language and terminology particularly salient. Although the terms and labels we use throughout the book such as feminism, LGBTI+, queer, activism, NGOs, West–East, and North–South are well established in the discipline of gender studies as well as in activist circles across the contexts we write about, we also recognize that each of these terms have politically and theoretically laden histories behind. In the book, LGBTI+ activism refers to grassroots and organizational struggles centered around sexuality, gender identity, and non-heterosexual desire.

Each category recognized in this abbreviation, namely Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and sexual and gender spectrum (+) as well as the initialism itself has strong roots in Western-centered activist practices and, therefore, reflects a Western bias and establishes a distinction between prepolitical same-sex relations and politicized, out and modern, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex subjectivities (e.g., Manalansan 1997). Moreover, identities included in LGBTI+ used to have unequal status in the history of LGBTI+ struggles with “gay” being the dominant mode of LGBTI+ activism until the 1980s⁶ and trans being included into these struggles only in the late 1990s (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014). While in the USA trans activists explicitly advocated for being included in LGBTI+ initialism and organizations, in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, for example, where the term LGBTI+ was borrowed from Western activist practices, “homosexual activism was self-labeled as ‘LGBT’, even if ‘B’ and ‘T’ were purely discursive invocations” (Kulpa and Mizieleńska 2011, 4; Kirey-Sitnikova 2020). As Kirey-Sitnikova (2020) argues, trans people in the region who did not previously collaborate with lesbian and gay activism found this automatic “inclusion” forceful and unjust (Kirey-Sitnikova 2020, 782). Thus, LGBTI+ is a contested term in the contexts of our study, and there is a tendency to reclaim and politically reinscribe colloquial, sometimes pejorative, terminology that designates same-sex desire and practice (e.g., Gorbachev 2019; Ilmonen et al. 2017; Mamedov 2019; Wickman 2012). Yet, since English is the *lingua franca* of transnational LGBTI+ activism (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Husakouskaya 2019), this initialism is widely recognized by our research partners.

The Anglo-American term “queer” has been taken up in different ways in the contexts of the research. In Scandinavia, for instance, scholars have cautioned for the risks of queer to become “too popular” and depoliticized (Dahl 2009, 145; 2011). During the early 2000s, the term queer was introduced in Norwegian (Bolsø 2010), however since then, the term *skeiv* has become more popular. Yet, critics argue, *skeiv* lost some of the transformative or deconstructive force of the concept since *skeiv*

⁶ For example, ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association), the first and the most influential organization in the history of the global LGBTI+ activism, was called International Gay Association until 1986 (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014, 9).

was never derogatory to the same extent as queer in Anglo-American linguistic contexts (Andersen et al. 2004). Sweden adopted the term queer in the mid-1990s and in Denmark, queer was incorporated into everyday language in the early 2000s. In both these contexts, queer was closely connected to feminism, and some scholars argue that critical edge in the political movement was lost as a result of this close relationship, criticized for cutting the ties between queer theory and sex radicalism (Rosenberg 2006; Kulick 2005; Wickman 2012; Ilmonen et al. 2017).

We define feminism as a broadly understood political activity (see Arik et al., 2022), protesting against gender oppression and exploitation, aimed at improving an economic, cultural, political, and social situation of women. Given the contested, even antagonistic, understanding of feminism in Russia (Khodyreva 2020; Sperling 2015), Turkey (Saygılıgil and Berber 2020), and Scandinavia (Kulick 2005; Dahl 2009), the broad definition of feminism allows us to recognize and include in our analysis the struggles that avoid self-identifying as feminist while endorsing feminist principles on their agenda. While there have been tensions between feminism and queer (Brade et al. 2013), the two have also been closely connected to each other, for instance, in the Scandinavian context especially involving lesbian activists for whom queer feminism have been a fruitful term to designate performative and spectacular, disobedient forms of political expression (Laskar 1996 in Wickman 2012). Furthermore, in our research contexts, activists relate to feminism in different ways. For instance, in Turkey, women who organized in left-socialist organizations historically avoided the term feminist. In the 2010s the rise of intersectional feminism and attacks on gender equality and sexual rights have led many young women to identify as feminist. Still, due to the participation of some women's groups who are critical of the term, tensions remain. Another trend we observed in Turkey is that activists identify themselves but not their organizations as feminist, to provide an inclusive space also for those women who are prejudiced against or not knowledgeable of feminism.

Further, related to the various historical contexts of the sites and struggles involved in this book, the terms that designate the sphere and practice of political action—civil society, NGOs, and activism—have a variegated trajectory impregnated by the many local developments

and rejections of the positionalities these terms imply in relation to notions and practices of the state. For example, in Scandinavia, the term nongovernmental organization (NGO) is rarely used, which results from the more or less active involvement of the state in all activities of civil society—an involvement which today most often translates to funding of activities. In this context, civil society actors also often have a close collaboration with state actors, a relationship that carries further the historical trajectory of the social democratic welfare state emergent from the early twentieth century onwards. Before the 2000s, the notion of voluntary organization was more frequently in use. Resulting from the neoliberal reconfigurations of these states, the current concept used by and for the organizations in the Scandinavian context is civil society organization (CSO), so also in this book. A similar situation concerns the Turkish context, within which CSO is the concept used by the organizations, replacing the notion of voluntary organizations of the pre-2000 era. However, in the Turkish case, the preference for CSO instead of NGO stands for actors' self-positioning in the sphere of civil society as opposed to the state sphere (Duruşan 2008), rather than indicating their organizations' engagement with the state or its lack thereof. In Russia, several contested terms to describe civil society organizing is in use including *obshchestvennye organizatsii* (societal organizations), *tretii sektor* (the third sector), NKO (*nekommercheskaia organizatsiia*, non-profit organization), and NPO (*nepravitelstvennaia organizatsiia*, nongovernmental organization). The first term is inherited from the Soviet times (Evans 2006), the last three emerged in the mid-1990s as the adoption of Western terminology intensified signifying international collaboration and donor support in Russian civil society (Salmenniemi 2008). The term activism is also disputable. Some research partners in Russia and the Scandinavian countries consciously refrained from defining themselves as “activists” or as “political” because they did not feel to be active (meaning: political) enough to claim this definition (see Arik et al., 2022). By contrast, in Turkey, some research partners avoid identifying as activists as they find this term too liberal, apolitical, or a Western import. For them, their activist work can simply be framed as “doing politics” (*politika yapmak*), which they consider as radical and militant activity.

Lastly, given the ambiguous positioning of our research partners vis-à-vis the North–South and East–West distinctions (Keskinen et al. 2009; Tlostanova 2012; Yanik 2011) in this book we deploy the North together with the West, and the South together with the East. Instead of taking these notions for granted, we highlight their performativity in activist imaginaries and positionings. Seeing that the contexts of our book does not fit neatly into the categories of North–South and West–East, we engage with these distinctions critically. The concept semi-periphery has been used for shedding light on regions and locales located beyond the core and the periphery of the world system (Blagojevic 2009). We find this a useful concept which allows us to encompass a situation where Turkey, Russia, and the Scandinavian countries are at once positioned as important actors on a global arena, yet in many debates and developments, still sidelined. The notion of semi-periphery challenges the idea of a bi-polar world, bringing instead attention to multi-polar struggles (Kahlina and Ristivojević 2015), which to us has been a fruitful way of conceptualizing the variously peripheral positionings of the geopolitical contexts in this book.

Multi-scalar Transnational Methodology

This book is written in the spirit of transnational feminism's emphasis on the politics and praxis of hope (Ahmed 2014; Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Browne et al. 2017; Chowdhury and Philipose 2016; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Fernandes 2013; Lock Swarr and Nagar 2010; Liinason and Cuesta 2016; Martinsson and Mulinari 2018). Emerging as a challenge to the study of geographic regions in terms of area studies where places as bounded locales are demarcated and disconnected from each other, transnational feminist perspectives highlight the interdependence of the lives of women and LGBTI+ people across borders and argue that academic knowledge of regions cannot be separated from their interconnected histories (Schaeffer 2016). With the aim of advancing methodological discussions in transnational feminism, in this book we develop a methodology for the study of transnationalizing feminist and queer struggles. As a research methodology, transnationalism entails that

scholarly explorations investigate the flows, linkages, relationships, and identities across multiple units and levels of analysis, in order to grasp transnational processes and realities (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Dufour et al. 2010; Giles and Hyndman 2004; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Khagram and Levitt 2008; Roy 2016). In the past two decades, much research in feminist and queer scholarship have contributed to methodological discussions around the transnational by critically engaging with globalism, regionalism, strict oppositions between the local and the global, and the salience of the nation-state as the main unit of analysis (Basu 2016; Çakırlar 2016; Grewal 2005; Lock Swarr and Nagar 2010; Mohanty 2013; Rao 2014). In studies on activism and activist practices, however, much of the transnationalism-inspired scholarship has focused on exchanges across national borders or the ways in which local contexts are shaped by discourses, identifications, and repertoires of action that are globally salient (Churchill 2009; Conway 2010; Crang et al. 2003; Ferree and Tripp 2006; Kulpa and Mizielinska 2011; Patil 2011). What distinguishes our approach in this book is the focus on scales that are both “finer” and “coarser” than that of the nation-state (Hyndman 2001, 210). Employing a multi-scalar transnational approach (Cerwonka 2008; Lock Swarr and Nagar 2010; Nash and Browne 2015; Valentine 2018), we wish to develop more nuanced understandings of gender equality and sexual rights activism and how dynamics across different scales influence practices at various local sites, and decenter hegemonic versions of feminist and LGBTI+ activism within and across the three contexts of our research.

As we progressed with our research in Turkey, Russia, and the Scandinavian countries over a four-year period (2017–2020), multi-scalarity emerged as a significant dynamic to be addressed in transnationalizing activism. Among our research participants were activists who pursued politics on different, often multiple, scales; some of whom engaging in large-scale and well-established transnational and national organizations, while others participated in small-scale, informal, grassroots initiatives. In line with the high level of mobility of the late-capitalist era, activists often changed location, moving across the North/West and South/East axis as well as between metropole and province. With the advancement of digital technologies sources of influence multiplied on local, national,

regional, and global levels. Notions, concepts, identities, and even the meaning of activism changed based on activists' belongings, positionality, and geographical location. We needed to attend to these simultaneously, without privileging any of the scales over others but discussing at each instance their specific influence. Against this background, we set out to trace the linkages between our seemingly unrelated contexts by relating them to each other through their "common differences" (Mohanty 2003). This way, we were able to mitigate the shortcomings of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) that is characteristic of studies that rely on comparison as their primary method of analysis. At the same time, we parted from a globalist approach that looked at developments and influences that are only worldwide in scope but focused on how seemingly local-only practices and discourses, and sub-national scales of analysis were still relevant for the study of the global (Sassen 2010).

Multi-scalar transnational methodology shaped our data analysis into a "collaborative process of looking for connections or points of convergence in our empirical material collected in different geopolitical contexts" (Arik et al., 2022). Inspired by feminist and queer research that implemented dialogue as a method of knowledge production (Brosi and hooks 2012; Browne et al. 2017; Butler and Spivak 2007; Mohanty and Carty 2018; Mohanty et al. 2021; Mountz et al. 2015), we analyzed our research findings at regularly held project meetings, searching for differences as well as overlaps across our research fields. After each meeting we moved on to further stages of research weaving our fields together through transnational collaboration.⁷

Echoing our multi-scalar transnational methodology, we employed an "ethnographically informed micro-level approach" to activism (Salmenniemi 2008, 11). With its attention to the "micro-politics" of everyday life, this approach was in line with our understanding of resistance as a space between the mundane daily life practices and macro-scale contestations of political power (Chapter 2). The micro-level approach

⁷ On several occasions, we also had a chance to develop our multi-scalar transnational methodology in conversation with a transnational network of scholars (FFQS 2019; Mohanty and Carty 2018; Transnational Solidarities 2018). These conversations assisted us to situate our research contribution within a broader framework of transnational ethnography.

as close, oftentimes long-lasting, friendly collaborative engagements with organizations and initiatives allowed to explore the interaction between activist agency and structural constraints as well as to recognize them as resistance practices that are often overlooked by civil society scholars who focus on visible, large-scale forms of contentious politics.

Within and across our contexts, we used multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995) to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in feminist and LGBTI+ activism. As a mobile methodology, multi-sited ethnography was very well suited for our examinations of feminism and LGBTI+ activism as micro-politics in emergent cultural formations within and across various locations, as it enabled us to collect a range of different examples brought together under a more general topic, such as the relationship between state, civil society, and the market in feminist and LGBTI+ activism within and beyond national borders (Chapter 3), or the International Women's Day, conceptualized as an event with linkages across time and space (Chapter 5). It allowed us to follow certain concepts, stories, or even activists upon their travel beyond place-based locations and to scrutinize cases where activists brought certain place-based, limiting, or prejudiced notions to the exchange, enabling us to pay attention to the complex tensions arising as a result (see Chapter 4). Employing this methodology, we were able to go deep into but also move out from the single sites of exploration to trace notions, practices, communities, and places and catch sight on the broader social, geopolitical, cultural, and political dynamics to which these expressions and performances of feminist and LGBTI+ activism contributed and themselves were a part.

Fieldwork in/on Russia

The fieldwork for the Russian case started in March 2017 at the seminar “International Cooperation with Russia in Changing Times” jointly organized by the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) and the Swedish Institute in Stockholm. The participants of the seminar—representatives of civil society organizations in Russia and Sweden—discussed how Russian civil society was affected by the political developments on

global, regional, and national levels determined by authoritarian tendencies, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and following imposition of economic and political sanctions by Western countries, and Russia's crackdown against "Western agents" including human rights, LGBTI+, and women's organizations. The fieldwork material includes a number of other transnational events with a focus on Russia and the post-Soviet space such as the Fucking Solidarity conference in Vienna in 2017 (see Chapter 4), the Barents Pride in support of Russian LGBTI+ people organized annually by Norwegian and Russian activists in Norwegian Kirkenes since 2017 (Chapter 4), and the peace dialogue project with women from Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and Switzerland (Chapter 3).

Through the fieldwork within Russia, Olga foremost aspired to lift up the experience of LGBTI+ and feminist activists in various Russian regions.⁸ As it is frequently brought up by regional activists, the feminist and LGBTI+ activist scene in Russia spins around two of Russia's metropolitan cities—Moscow and St. Petersburg—where largest organizations and initiatives are concentrated. Regional activists frequently mention their invisibility on the Russian activist arena including donor politics. They also complain about the lack of knowledge about regional specificities among activists based in metropolitan cities. Olga visited and interviewed grassroots initiatives and organizations in the Russian South and West, Siberia, and Ural. Another intention was to look at small-scale, less institutionalized, and more recent initiatives and practices at the expense of well-known and well-established activists and organizations who, with some exceptions, were intentionally left outside the scope of this study.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg, Olga attended large- and small-scale activist events such as Forum for LGBT+ activists annually organized by The Russian LGBT Network in Moscow (2017), the annual Conference on LGBTQIAPP Families in Moscow (2018), the March 8 rally in 2019 in St. Petersburg (Chapter 5), and a number of conferences and activist

⁸ Region is the generic designation of eighty-five constituent entities (subjects) of the Russian Federation. While formally Moscow and St. Petersburg are also regions, in the colloquial language "regions" designate the territories outside these two metropolitan cities. Several feminist groups in social networks use "regional" in their names to distinguish themselves from feminist groups in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

events on March 8, 2018, in Moscow. In 2020, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, Olga attended several online events, including those dedicated to bridging the divide between regional and metropolitan feminist activism. She also interviewed several Moscow- and St. Petersburg-based organizations and initiatives.

Along with participant observations, the Russian material includes 25 in-depth individual and group interviews with individual activists and members of feminist and LGBTI+ initiatives, community centers, women's organizations, and transnational organizations working with feminist and LGBTI+ agenda in Russia and the post-Soviet space. Interviews took place in different cities and spaces—most often in cafes or organizations' offices, but sometimes in activists' private apartments or digitally. The relations with research partners vary—some connections established during the project resulted in further collaborations and professional friendships while others remained at the level of temporal interactions. Olga also volunteered as a translator and protocolist of a peace dialogue project (Chapter 3), and as a translator and a section moderator during the Fucking Solidarity conference in Vienna (Chapter 4).

Most material for the Russian case has been in Russian (with the exception of one interview in German and some fieldwork at transnational events in English). The interviews were transcribed verbatim. All quotes were translated from Russian to English by Olga Sasunkevich. We use the Library of Congress system for transliteration of some words and terms where the original usage is important.

Fieldwork in the Scandinavian Countries

Using a multi-scalar approach, fieldwork in the Scandinavian countries sought to trace transnational interactions and grasp broader formations of feminist and LGBTI+ practices on various levels, “below” as well as “beyond” the national realm (Marcus 1995). Feminist and LGBTI+ actors and activism were in focus of the ethnography, and the research material includes data from fieldwork conducted in various sites and

types of events within Norway, Denmark, and Sweden as well as outside of the Scandinavian countries and includes also material collected online.

Fieldwork in the Scandinavian countries begun in Spring 2017 with interviews and participant observation in Denmark, where Mia attended activities in several feminist and queer as well as queer feminist activist groups. In the fall of 2017, Mia took part in the conference *Across and in between (På tværs og imellem)*, which was a one-day event located at Christiansborg, the Danish Parliament, aimed at raising awareness on the multiple forms of discrimination migrant LGBTI+ people are exposed to and to shape better conditions for this group in society broadly and in policy specifically. The event was arranged by Sabaah, an organization for LGBTI+ people of minority background. Participants at the event were Danish politicians, journalists, scholars, and members of Sabaah. In her later fieldwork, Mia participated in a great number of events, among them the workshop ABC of love with Queer World in Oslo, Barents Pride in Kirkenes, together with Olga, and the celebration of the International Women's Day 2018 in Gothenburg (Chapter 5). During fieldwork, Mia put a particular emphasis on gathering material among feminist and LGBTI+ communities who experience multiple forms of discrimination and express difficulties in receiving attention from state actors, news media, and funders, among them, migrant and asylum-seeking LGBTI+s, Muslim feminists and queers, feminists and queers of color, and Sami women and LGBTI+ people. Parts of the fieldwork in the Scandinavian context attend to the tensions that arise as a result of such power relations in civil society (see Chapter 3), while other parts focus on the solidarities and strengths experienced when diverse groups of feminists and LGBTI+ actors come together to struggle against such forms of exclusion and marginalization (see Chapters 4 and 5).

In Scandinavia, feminist and queer activism in regional contexts is vivid, and fieldwork data in this context was distributed on both smaller regional areas and larger cities like Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Malmö, Oslo, Stockholm, Kristiansand, Trondheim, and Tromsø. Our research participants recognized the larger cities, such as Oslo, Malmö, or Copenhagen, as important sites for pursuing activism, especially among LGBTI+ people with migrant background and asylum-seeking LGBTI+s. The capital city or a more multicultural city, like Malmö,

research participants argued, made it easier to find spots to socialize, to visit gay(-friendly) night clubs, cafés, and bars. While organizations such as Queer World (*Skeiv verden*) in Norway or Sabaah in Denmark also had regional or local offices in regional cities where they organized activities for the community on a weekly basis, in the capital city, larger and longer events were organized. In order to attend such events, participants traveled from the whole of the country.

In addition to participant observation in events, workshops, conferences, and meetings across three years (2017–2019) as well as online ethnography, following social media accounts of the groups, the material from the Scandinavian context includes 20 in-depth individual and group interviews with activists and members of feminist and LGBTI+ groups, local initiatives, national organizations as well as transnational organizations engaged in strengthening feminist or LGBTI+ issues in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the global North and South. Interviews were conducted in various places, from cafés, in offices, over the telephone, in the kitchen area of the organization, and in the home of activists. During events and at larger dinner festivities, Mia volunteered to assist in the kitchen. The relationships with research partners were diverse in character, from some exchanges having resulted in further collaborations and professional relations, and other interactions remaining more temporal. All encounters, however, have in significant ways contributed to deepen our understandings of structural conditions and everyday struggles of feminist and LGBTI+ activism within and beyond the Scandinavian region, and to shine a light on what transnational exchanges and non-normative geographies of connectivity can mean for feminist and LGBTI+ actors in this context, as the chapters of this book further illuminate.

The material for the Scandinavian case study came in different languages: English, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish; the language use during data collection was determined by the preference of our research partners. Mia transcribed the interview recordings word-for-word. Fieldwork diaries were written in English or Swedish. Quotes and fieldwork diary entries were translated by Mia Liinason from Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish to English.

Fieldwork in Turkey

In Turkey, Selin focused on activism in and around the Istanbul-based initiative Women Are Strong Together (*Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü*, hereafter Strong Together) as a springboard to investigate the changing forms, agendas, and strategies of feminist and LGBTI+ struggles, alongside the shifts and transformations in their political environment, in a context where they faced marginalization and criminalization by the Turkish state. Strong Together is a still-in-the-making coalition of women involved in gender equality and sexual rights activism. Since its establishment in 2017, it became a significant platform where counterhegemonic feminist and queer struggles strategize about how to build solidarity across difference and resist the ruling party's anti-egalitarian gender and sexual politics from an intersectional point of view. Most actively participating in the initiative are women organized in feminist, left-socialist, and pro-Kurdish organizations. Yet, as a platform, Strong Together forms a network of women from various political belongings; including anarchist, Alevi, Muslim feminist, queer/LB* and trans, social democratic, and left Kemalist women as well as various kinds of organizations such as local women's platforms, women's shelters, NGOs, labor unions, and political parties; who become active during times of issue-based campaigns online and offline.

Among the various coalition-building initiatives that emerged in the 2010s in Turkey in response to the attacks on gender equality and sexual rights, Strong Together garnered the broadest alliance and the most inclusive agenda due to its diverse composition (Çağatay 2018b). This served as a good ground to study transnational influence and exchange between activists with different political, local/geopolitical, and identity belongings, but there were two specific points that motivated Selin's choice to take Strong Together as a springboard for the Turkish case study. First, as a feminist activist, Selin had pursued politics for more than a decade with several groups and activists that were now participating in Strong Together. Second, doing research with/on this initiative offered the possibility to include in research the experiences and perspectives of groups that are often overlooked in the literature on women's and feminist activism, namely young feminist and LGBTI+ activists who participate

in mix-gender organizing where they combine gender and sexual politics with class-based and/or pro-peace, pro-Kurdish, and pro-secular agendas.

A transnational research methodology proved suitable to study the activism in and around Strong Together since global campaigns such as Ni Una Menos, International Women's Strike, and #MeToo served as important sources of inspiration for Strong Together activists in relation to coalition-building at home and solidarity-building abroad. Strong Together constituents organized solidarity campaigns with the White Wednesdays movement in Iran and Kurdish women who took part in the Rojava revolution, and established ties with feminists in Poland, Spain, Argentina, Chile, and Switzerland. Moreover, Strong Together's efforts to connect, relate, and unite small-scale, local struggles for gender equality and sexual rights during the time of Selin's research sparked many conversations about feminist and queer struggles on the sub-national scale and the relationship between national and sub-national levels of activism. These conversations brought to light the differential agendas of women based on geopolitical location beyond the nationally salient axes of differentiation based on secularism-Islam and Turkish-Kurdish identities, and provided an appropriate ground to discuss gender and sexual politics from a multi-scalar point of view.

Between October 2018 and March 2020, Selin conducted participatory action research (PAR), field and digital ethnography, and in-depth interviews with feminist and LGBTI+ activists connected to Strong Together. PAR took place in Istanbul and online as Selin actively participated in Strong Together organizing numerous campaigns, events, and public protests. Some events she co-organized are featured in this book, such as the 2019 Turkey Women's Gathering in Istanbul (Chapter 4) and the 2019 Feminist Night March on March 8 (Chapter 5). PAR was combined with field and online ethnography of women's, feminist, and LGBTI+ activisms by attending internal group meetings, seminars, public events and demonstrations, and following websites, social media accounts, listservs, and groups on messenger apps of activist formations. In addition, from March to November 2019, Selin conducted

49 in-depth interviews in Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakır (Amed),⁹ Izmir, Bodrum, Mersin, Adana, and Antakya. In choosing these locations, Selin’s concern was to include in her research metropolitan and provincial activist experiences and perspectives simultaneously. Stretching across five out of the seven regions in Turkey, these locations offered a vital opportunity to tackle women’s differential, geopolitical agendas and how center—periphery relations served as a source of tension in activism. Interviews took place in various places including activists’ homes and workplaces, public parks and cafés, and political spaces such as feminist and LGBTI+ organizations and party or union buildings.

The digital and print material gathered for this study was in Turkish and English. Selin conducted interviews and held a fieldwork diary in Turkish. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by two people: one of them a research participant herself, the other an activist from the extended network of Strong Together. Direct quotes from activists featured in the book were translated from Turkish to English Selin Çağatay.

Positionality and Ethical Concerns

Emphasizing our collective knowledge production process and the dialogic methodology we follow, we write as “we” except when we refer to our individual experiences and reflections. Due to the differences in contexts, the profile of our research partners, and the methods we employed, however, we had different positionalities and our respective

⁹ Kurdish feminists who participated in this study belonged to the Kurdish liberation movement exclusively. During interviews with these participants, Selin referred to the Kurdish-majority southeast Turkey as part of greater Kurdistan and the major cities in this territory by their Kurdish names, i.e., Amed instead of Diyarbakır and Dersim instead of Tunceli. The latter names, Diyarbakır (1937) and Tunceli (1935), were given by the Turkish state as part of its politics of assimilation and Turkification. In this book, we use Diyarbakır instead of Amed since this is the official and internationally recognized name of the Kurdish-majority metropole. For the relationship between Kurds and the Turkish state see Yadirgi (2017). For scholarly considerations over Kurdistan as both geographical territory and matter of political struggle see Kaya (2020) and O’Shea (2004).

research required different ethical considerations. Bridging the activist-academic divide by understanding activism and academia as “mutually constitutive and permeable constructs” and not as separate worlds (Lock Swarr and Nagar 2010, 9; see also Eschle and Maiguashca 2006) has been a common concern for us, but due to our different positionalities and the diverse histories of institutionalization of gender research, we pursued different paths when problematizing the activism-academia relationship in our respective contexts. Yet, motivating future researchers for doing collaborative work across activism and academia has been one of our common aspirations when writing this book. This, we believe, is needed in a world where the livabilities of feminist and queer activists and academics are similarly shaped by neoliberal conditions as well as anti-gender mobilizations that threaten the prospect of gender equality and sexual rights.

In the Turkish study, Selin’s involvement as a feminist activist in a number of initiatives over many years made it possible for her to pursue participatory action research and to involve her fellow activists as research participants “in all stages of research including research design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination of findings” (Sullivan et al. 2005, 978; see also Banerjea 2018; Cahill 2007; Mojab 2009; Nagar and Ali 2003; Reid and Gillberg 2014). During interviews, Selin debated with activists the findings of her research as well as how differences in power and privilege shape research relationships, which enabled collective knowledge production as well as the incorporation of conflicting views and disagreements into research findings. Activists who participated in this study have their names anonymized, but the original names of organizations are provided with a concern over making visible of the small-scale, informal initiatives or “peripheral” organizations and activists (e.g., left-feminist section of a political party or a queer feminist member of a labor union) that are often overlooked in the literature on feminist and queer struggles.

In the case of Russia, Olga’s positionality was of an internal outsider (Narayan 1993). As a Russian-speaking feminist academic with relations to feminist and LGBTI+ activism in neighboring Belarus, Olga collaborated with gender scholars and feminists from Russia long before she started the project (Cope et al. 2017). Yet, she felt as an outsider to the

Russian feminist and LGBTI+ activist scene where she did not have a first-hand experience prior this study. However, Olga's situatedness in post-Soviet feminist struggles made it possible for her to relate to activist experiences in Russia. In spite of her professional employment in Swedish academia at the time of the research, her Belarusianness, the subaltern position in relation to the imperial legacy of Russia,¹⁰ leveled the power disbalance between a researcher and a researched subject (this is further problematized in Chapter 4). Moreover, many Russian activists and their transnational partners had an academic background or education in the fields related to gender studies. Therefore, many interviews provided a space for discussing Olga's preliminary conclusions and assumptions and for clarification of her theoretical standpoints. While writing this book, Olga also discussed some of her examples with research partners and in all such cases research partners unreservedly supported her line of argument and representation of their experience. Olga decided to anonymize most names, organizations and even locations (except for Moscow and St. Petersburg or public events) of her research partners for ethical and security reasons to avoid compromising activists by sharing their critique of other activists' practices or by exposing their transnational collaborations including the sources of funding, which can have legal consequences for organizations and individual activists in Russia.

Being based in Sweden and as a researcher involved in feminist and LGBTI+ struggles in this context, Mia's fieldwork in the Scandinavian countries took its starting point in the transnational networks of feminist and LGBTI+ organizing across national borders in the Nordic region. Her position in relation to the geopolitical contexts of the Scandinavian countries was looking "both from the outside in and from the inside out" (hooks 1984: vii), focusing her attention on the center as well as on the margins. Informed both by her structural social position and her social positioning (Anthias 2008), situated in critical race and queer knowledges (Shinozaki 2012), Mia was involved in conversation with research partners about the tensions that shaped the limits and possibilities for cross-border engagements in struggles for feminist, people of color, trans

¹⁰ The territories of contemporary Belarus were part of the Russian Empire until 1917. On the specificity of Russian coloniality see Tlostanova (2012); on the subalternity of Belarus in relation to Russia see Morozov (2015).

and queer lives and livabilities in Scandinavia. The names of individual activists included in the Scandinavian case study of this research are kept confidential, by the use of a pseudonym instead of the real names. The included organizations, however, appear in the book by their real name, decided in agreement with the activists involved.

Chapter Outline

In the next chapter, we engage with theoretical perspectives that inform our empirical work in the following chapters; Chapter 2 lays out how we understand resistance and situate it in space from a multi-scalar transnational perspective. We provide our positionality in relation to debates in feminist scholarship around activism and state–civil society relations, transnational solidarities, and embodied practices of resistance beyond the visibility–invisibility dichotomy. Focusing on feminist and queer struggles within the ongoing neoconservative turn and current conditions of neoliberalism, in Chapter 3, we trace how feminist and LGBTI+ activists navigate hegemonic relations at the intersections between the state, civil society, transnational actors, and the market. Here, we look at the relations between activists and state in the contexts of study, explore the distinct historical landscapes within which contemporary activism in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries is embedded, and follow the diverse trajectories of organizing in light of transnational collaboration. Directing our attention to practices of solidarity across borders, Chapter 4 examines practices of community- and coalition-building situated in imagined and concrete relationships on multiple scales and life fields, and across diverse borders and belongings. We engage with a variety of material from feminist and LGBTI+ activism to expose the embodied and affective processes involved in community- and coalition-building within and across local, national, regional, and global levels. Next, Chapter 5 focuses on the significance of embodied forms of resistance for the (re)making of space through the lens of March 8. Based on an analysis of multi-sited ethnography on the International Women's Day in Russian, Turkish, and Scandinavian contexts, this chapter examines the distinct and overlapping ways in which bodily assemblies take

shape in public space and brings together questions discussed in previous chapters, as we recognize and seek to illuminate the long genealogies in struggles for feminist and sexual rights, and highlight the new dimensions brought to these genealogies by today's actors. Chapter 6 provides a summary of our findings in empirical chapters and their implications for researching transnationalizing feminist and LGBTI+ activisms. As we conclude the book, we also pick up and reflect further on some of the discussions we initiated in this chapter regarding feminist and queer struggles.

References

- Acuner, Selma. 1999. "Türkiye'de Kadın-Erkek Eşitliği ve Resmi Kurumsallaşma Süreci." PhD thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.
- Al-Ali, Nadje. 2000. *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women's Movement*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Aldıkaçtı Marshall, Gül. 2013. *Shaping Gender Policy in Turkey: Grassroots Women Activists, the European Union, and the Turkish State*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Alexander, Jacqui, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds. 1997. *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Andersen, Britt, Trine Annfelt, Agnes Bolsø, and Elin Havelin Rekdal. 2004. "Folk Flest Er Skeive. Mange Vil at Landsforeningen for Lesbisk Och Homosexuell Frigjøring (LLH) Skal Fornye Seg." *Blikk*, no. 8: 14.
- Anthias, Floya. 2008. "Thinking through the Lens of Translocational Positionality: An Intersectionality Frame for Understanding Identity and Belonging'." *Translocations: Migration and Social Change* 4 (1): 5–20.
- Antrobus, Peggy. 2004. *The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies*. London, New York: Zed Books.
- Arat, Yeşim. 2001. "Women's Rights as Human Rights: The Turkish Case." *Human Rights Review* 3 (1): 27–34.
- Arik, Hülya, Selin Çagatay, Mia Liinason, and Olga Sasunkevich. 2022. "Unsettling political: Conceptualizing the political in feminist and LGBTI+ activism across Russia, Scandinavian countries and Turkey." *International Journal of Feminist Politics* (in press). Online First.

- Arnberg, Klara. 2009. "Synd På Export. 1960-Talets Pornografiska Press Och Den Svenska Synden." *Historisk Tidskrift*, no. 3: 467–86.
- Ayoub, Phillip, and David Paternotte. 2014. "Introduction." In *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe: A Rainbow Europe?* edited by Phillip Ayoub and David Paternotte, 1–25. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baksh, Rawwida, and Wendy Harcourt, eds. 2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Balsoy, Gülhan. 2016. *The Politics of Reproduction in Ottoman Society, 1838–1900*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Banerjea, Niharika. 2018. "Liveability as a Decolonial Option through Collaborative Research and Activisms (Keynote Speech)." In *Keynote Speech*. Göttingen University. <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/document/download/2dc3649ce9f411cd7318be83342d5385.pdf/KeynoteTalk%20NiharikaBanerjea.pdf>.
- Barker, Vanessa. 2017. "Penal Power at the Border: Realigning State and Nation." *Theoretical Criminology* 21 (4): 441–57.
- Basu, Amrita. 2016. *Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms*. 2nd edition. Boulder: Routledge.
- Belmonte, Laura A. 2021. *The International LGBT Rights Movement. A History*. London et al.: Bloomsbury.
- Berkes, Niyazi. 1998. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K. 2011. "Talking among Themselves? Weberian and Marxist Historical Sociologies as Dialogues without 'Others'." *Millenium: Journal of Historical Studies* 39 (3): 667–81.
- . 2014. "Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues." *Postcolonial Studies* 17 (2): 115–21.
- Blagojević, Marina. 2009. *Knowledge Production at the Semiperiphery: A Gender Perspective*. Belgrade: Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research.
- Bolsø, Agnes. 2010. *Folk Flest Er Skeive – Queer Teori Og Politikk*. Oslo: Manifest.
- Brade, Lovise Haj, Erika Lundell, and Sebastian Mohr, eds. 2013. "[kvæær]." Special issue of *Kvinder, Køn og Forskning* 1.
- Brockett, Gavin D. 2011. *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk: Provincial Newspapers and the Negotiation of a Muslim National Identity*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Brosi, George, and bell hooks. 2012. "The Beloved Community: A Conversation between Bell Hooks and George Brosi." *Appalachian Heritage* 40 (4): 76–86.

- Browne, Kath, Niharika Banerjea, Nick McGlynn, Sumita B, Leela Bakshi, Rukmini Banerjee, and Ranjita Biswas. 2017. "Towards Transnational Feminist Queer Methodologies." *Gender, Place & Culture* 24 (10): 1376–97.
- Butler, Judith. 2015. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Butler, Judith and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 2007. *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging*. London: Seagull.
- Çağatay, Selin. 2017. "The Politics of Gender and the Making of Kemalist Feminist Activism in Contemporary Turkey (1946–2011)." PhD dissertation, Central European University.
- . 2018a. "In, against (and beyond?) The State? Women's Rights, Global Gender Equality Regime, and Feminist Counterpublics in 21st-Century Turkey." In *Dreaming Global Change, Doing Local Feminisms*, edited by Lena Martinsson and Diana Mulinari. New York and London: Routledge.
- . 2018b. "Women's Coalitions beyond the Laicism–Islamism Divide in Turkey: Towards an Inclusive Struggle for Gender Equality?" *Social Inclusion* 6 (4): 48–58.
- . 2019. "Varieties of Anti-Gender Mobilizations. Is Turkey a Case?" *Engenderings* (blog), January 9. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/gender/2019/01/09/varieties-of-anti-gender-mobilizations-is-turkey-a-case/>.
- Cahill, Caitlin. 2007. "Including Excluded Perspectives in Participatory Action Research." *Design Studies* 28 (3): 325–40.
- Çakır, Serpil. 1994. *Osmanlı kadın hareketi*. Istanbul: Metis Yayınları.
- Çakırlar, Cüneyt. 2016. "Introduction to Queer/Ing Regions." *Gender, Place and Culture : A Journal of Feminist Geography* 23 (11): 1615–18.
- Carty, Linda E., and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. 2015. "Mapping Transnational Feminist Engagements: Neoliberalism and the Politics of Solidarity." In *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*, edited by Rawwida Baksh and Wendy Harcourt, 82–115. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cerwonka, Allaine. 2008. "Traveling Feminist Thought: Difference and Transculturation in Central and Eastern European Feminism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33 (4): 809–32.
- Çetin, Zülfukar. 2016. "The Dynamics of the Queer Movement in Turkey before and during the Conservative AKP Government." Working Paper. Research Group EU/Europe. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik/German Institute for International and Security Affairs, January. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/the-dynamics-of-the-queer-movement-in-turkey-before-and-during-the-conservative-akp-government/>.

- Chowdhury, Elora, and Liz Philipose, eds. 2016. *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism, and Transnational Solidarity*. Reprint edition. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press.
- Churchill, Lindsey. 2009. "Transnational Alliances: Radical U.S Feminist Solidarity and Contention with Latin America, 1970–1989." *Latin American Perspective* 36 (6): 10–26.
- Conway, Janet M. 2010. "Troubling Transnational Feminism(s) at the World Social Forum." In *Solidarities without Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*, edited by Pascale Dufour, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, 139–59. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- . 2017. "Troubling Transnational Feminism(s): Theorising Activist Praxis." *Feminist Theory* 18 (2): 205–27.
- Cope, Ben, Lena Minchenia, and Olga Sasunkevich. 2017. "Post-Socialist Anxiety: Gender Studies in Eastern Europe in the Context of the Conservative Backlash (Special Issue for the 20th anniversary of the Centre for Gender Studies at EHU)." *Perekrestki*, nos. 1–2. https://ru.ehu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CrossRoad_2017_1_2.pdf.
- Crang, Philip, Claire Dwyer, and Peter Jackson. 2003. "Transnationalism and the Spaces of Commodity Culture." *Progress in Human Geography* 27 (4): 438–56.
- Dahl, Ulrika. 2009. "Queer in the Nordic Region: Telling Queer (Feminist) Stories." In *Queer in Europe*, edited by Lisa Downing and Robert Gillett, 143–58. London: Ashgate.
- . 2011. "Queer in the Nordic Region: Telling Queer (Feminist) Stories." In *Queer in Europe*, edited by Lisa Downing and Robert Gillett, 143–57. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Dahl, Ulrika, Marianne Liljeström, and Ulla Manns. 2016. *The Geopolitics of Nordic and Russian Gender Research 1975–2005*. Huddinge: Södertörn University.
- David-Fox, Michael. 2016. "Modernost' v Rossi i SSSR: otsutstvuiushchaia, obshchaia, al'ternativnaia, perepletennaia?" *NLO [New Literary Observer]* 140 (4): 271–81.
- Dogangün, Gökten Huriye. 2019. *Gender Politics in Turkey and Russia: From State Feminism to Authoritarian Rule*. London et al.: I.B. Tauris.
- Dufour, Pascale, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, eds. 2010. *Solidarities Beyond Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Durakbaşa, Ayşe. 2000. *Halide Edib: Türk modernleşmesi ve feminizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

- Duruşan, Fırat. 2008. "Debates on Civil Society: From Center-Periphery to Radical Civil Societarianism." MA thesis, Middle East Technical University.
- Edenborg, Emil. 2017. *Politics of Visibility and Belonging: From Russia's "Homosexual Propaganda" Laws to the Ukraine War*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Einarsdóttir, Þorgerður J. 2020. "All That Glitters Is Not Gold: Shrinking and Bending Gender Equality in Rankings and Nation Branding." *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 28 (2): 140–52.
- Eklund, Benita, and Sofia Härén. 2015. *Kvinnornas Kamp För Fred*. Stockholm. <http://www.kvinnorforfred.se/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/KFF-Kvinnokamp-webpdf.pdf>.
- Engelstein, Laura. 1992. *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Erensü, Sinan, and Ayça Alemdaroğlu. 2018. "Dialectics of Reform and Repression: Unpacking Turkey's Authoritarian 'Turn.'" *Review of Middle East Studies* 52 (1): 16–28.
- Ertürk, Yakın. 2006. "Turkey's Modern Paradoxes: Identity Politics, Women's Agency, and Universal Rights." In *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, edited by Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp, 79–109. NYU Press.
- Eschle, Catherine, and Bice Maiguashca. 2006. "Bridging the Academic/Activist Divide: Feminist Activism and the Teaching of Global Politics." *Millennium* 35 (1): 119–37.
- Essig, Laurie. 1999. *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and the Other*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Evans, Alfred B. Jr. 2006. "Civil Society in the Soviet Union?" In *Russian Civil Society: A Critical Assessment*, edited by Alfred B. Evans, Laura A. Henry, and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom, 28–54. Armonk, New York and London, England: ME Sharpe.
- Fernandes, Leela. 2013. *Transnational Feminism in the United States: Knowledge, Ethics, and Power: Knowledge, Ethics, Power*. New York: NYU Press.
- Ferree, Myra Marx, and Aili Mari Tripp, eds. 2006. *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*. New York: New York University Press.
- FFQS. 2019. "Futures of Feminist and Queer Solidarities: Connectivity, Materiality, and Mobility in a Digitalized World." Online International Conference, Hosted by Gothenburg University, October 30. <https://technactcluster.com/conferences/futures-of-feminist-and-queer-solidarities-connectivity-materiality-and-mobility-in-a-digitalized-world/>.
- Florin, Christina. 2006. *Kvinnor Får Röst: Kön, Känslor Och Politisk Kultur i Kvinnornas Rösträttsrörelse*. Stockholm: Atlas.

- Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction*. New York: Random House.
- . 2006. *The Will to Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books Limited.
- . 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Franklin, Sarah, Celia Lury, and Jackie Stacey. 2000. *Global Nature, Global Culture*. London: Sage.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2004. “Feminism-by-Design: Emerging Capitalisms, Cultural Feminism, and Women’s Nongovernmental Organizations in Post-socialist Eastern Europe.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29 (3): 727–53.
- . 2019. *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women’s Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Giles, Wenona, and Jennifer Hyndman. 2004. *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gopinath, Gayatri. 2018. *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Gorbachev, Nikolai. 2019. “«Pidor mechty». Nikolai Gorbachev o rekleiminge, rugatel’stve i gomofobii.” *SpidCenter* (blog), December 18. <https://www.spid.center/ru/articles/2595/>.
- Gradskova, Yulia. 2019. “Gender Equality as a Declaration : The Changing Environment of Nordic-Russian Cooperation.” In *Rethinking Gender Equality in Global Governance: The Delusion of Norm Diffusion*, edited by Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Adam Fejerskov, and Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde, 169–90. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2020. “Opening the (Muslim) Woman’s Space—The Soviet Politics of Emancipation in the 1920s–1930s.” *Ethnicities* 20 (4): 667–84.
- Gradskova, Yuliya. 2013. “Svoboda kak prinuzhdenie? Sovetskoe nastuplenie na ‘zakrepushchenie zhenshchin’ i nasledie imperii (seredina 1920 - nachalo 1930kh gg., Volgo-Ural’skii region).” *Ab Imperio: Theory and History of Nationalities and Nationalism in the post-Soviet Realm*, no. 4: 113–44.
- Grewal, Inderpal. 2005. *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 1994. *Scattered Hegemonies. Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Güneş-Ayata, Ayşe, and Feride Acar. 1999. “Conclusion.” In *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey*, edited by Feride Acar and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata. Leiden: Brill.

- de Haan, F. 2010. "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: The Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)." *Women's History Review* 19 (4): 547–73.
- Hanioglu, M. Şükri. 2008. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hemment, Julie. 2007. *Empowering Women in Russia: Activism, Aid, and NGOs*. Illustrated edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hemmings, Clare. 2005. "Invoking Affect." *Cultural Studies* 19 (5): 548–67.
- Heper, Metin. 1985. *The State Tradition in Turkey*. Beverley: The Eothen Press.
- Hilson, Mary. 2008. *The Nordic Model: Scandinavia since 1945*. London: Reaktion.
- Hofstad, Eivor. 2014. "Moderne Homohistorikk. Homohistoriske Merkesteiner Fra 1948 Frem Til i Dag." Sykepleien, February 10. <https://sykepleien.no/2014/10/moderne-homohistorikk>.
- hooks, bell. 1984. *From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End.
- Husakouskaya, Nadzeya. 2018. "Transgender, Transition, and Dilemma of Choice in Contemporary Ukraine." In *Gender and Choice after Socialism*, edited by Lynne Attwood, Elisabeth Schimpfössl, and Marina Yusupova, 23–46. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2019. "Problematising the Transgender Phenomenon: Sexual Geopolitics and Europeanization in Contemporary Ukraine." PhD, University of Bergen.
- Hyndman, Jennifer. 2001. "Towards a Feminist Geopolitics." *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien* 45 (2): 210–222.
- Ilmonen, Kaisa, Mathias Danbolt, and Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen. 2017. "Narrating the Nordic Queer. Comparative Perspectives on Queer Studies in Denmark, Finland, and Norway." *Lambda Nordica*, no. 1: 95–113.
- Işıksal, Hüseyin, and Oğuzhan Göksel. 2018. *Turkey's Relations with the Middle East: Political Encounters after the Arab Spring*. Cham: Springer.
- Jeziarska, Katarzyna, and Ann Towns. 2018. "Taming Feminism? The Place of Gender Equality in the 'Progressive Sweden' Brand." *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 14 (1): 55–63.
- Johnson, Janet Elise. 2009. *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention*. Illustrated edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kahlina, Katja, and Dušica Ristivojević. 2015. "LGBT Rights, Standards of 'Civilisation' and the Multipolar World Order." *E-International Relations* (blog), September 10. <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/09/10/lgbt-rights-standards-of-civilisation-and-the-multipolar-world-order/>.

- Kandiyoti, Deniz. 2016. "Locating the Politics of Gender: Patriarchy, Neo-Liberal Governance and Violence in Turkey." *Research and Policy on Turkey* 1 (2): 103–18.
- Kardam, Nüket. 2005. *Turkey's Engagement with Global Women's Human Rights*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate.
- Kaya, Zeynep N. 2020. *Mapping Kurdistan: Territory, Self-Determination and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keskinen, Suvi, Salla Tuori, Sara Irni, and Diana Mulinari. 2009. *Complying with Colonialism. Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Khagram, Sanjeev, and Peggy Levitt, eds. 2008. *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections and Innovations*. New York: Routledge.
- Khodyreva, Ananastasiia. 2020. "Samizdat 'Zhenshchina i Rossiia': K 40-Letiiu Pozdne- i Post-Sovetskoi Feministkoi Traditsii v Rossii." In *Feministkii Samizdat 40 Let Spustia*, edited by Oksana Vasiakina, Dmitrii Kozlov, and Sasha Talaver, 100–17. Moskva: Common Place.
- Kirey-Sitnikova, Yana. 2020. "Borrowing and Imitation in Post-Soviet Trans Activisms." In *The SAGE Handbook of Global Sexualities*, edited by Zowie Davy, Ana Cristina Santos, Chiara Bertone, Ryan Thoreson, and Saskia E. Wieringa, 774–97. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kjærsgaard, Kristine. 2018. "International Arenas and Domestic Institution Formation: The Impact of the UN Women's Conferences in Denmark, 1975–1985." *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 36 (3): 271–86.
- Klapeer, Christine M. 2017. "Queering Development in Homotransnationalist Times." *Lambda Nordica* 22 (2–3): 41–67.
- Kondakov, Aleksandr. 2014. "Formirovanie kvir-arkhiva issledovaniia seksual'nostei." In *Na pereput'e: metodologiya, teoriia i praktika LGBT i kvir-issledovaniia*, edited by Aleksandr Kondakov, xi–xxii. St Petersburg: Tsentrazavisimyykh sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniia.
- . 2019. "Rethinking the Sexual Citizenship from Queer and Post-Soviet Perspectives: Queer Urban Spaces and the Right to the Socialist City." *Sexualities* 22 (3): 401–17.
- Korolczuk, Elżbieta, and Agnieszka Graff. 2018. "Gender as 'Ebola from Brussels': The Anticolonial Frame and the Rise of Illiberal Populism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43 (4): 797–821.
- Kuhar, Roman, and David Paternotte, eds. 2017. *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*. London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Kulick, Don, ed. 2005. *Queersverige*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

- Kulpa, Robert. 2014. "Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21 (4): 431–48.
- Kulpa, Robert, and Joanna Mizielińska. 2011. "Introduction: Why Study Sexualities in Central and Eastern Europe?" In (Eds.) Kulpa, R., and Mizielińska, J., *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern Europe Perspectives* (pp. 1–10). Routledge.
- Lemke, Thomas. 2011. *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Liinason, Mia. 2018. "Borders and Belongings in Nordic Feminisms and Beyond." *Gender, Place & Culture* 25 (7): 1041–56.
- Liinason, Mia, and Marta Cuesta. 2016. *Hoppets politik: feministisk aktivism i Sverige idag*. Göteborg: Makadam.
- Lock Swarr, Amanda, and Richa Nagar, eds. 2010. *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. SUNY Series, Praxis: Theory in Action. New York: SUNY Press.
- Mamedov, Georgii. 2019. "Identichnost' i Sotsial'naiia Sreda. 'Tema' Kak Analiticheskaia i Politicheskaia Kategoriiia." Paper presented at *V teme: seks, politika i zhizn' LGBT v Tsentralnoi Azii, Bishkek, March 22–23, 2019*.
- Manalansan IV, Martin F. 1997. *In the Shadows of Stonewall: Examining Gay Transnational Politics and the Diasporic Dilemma*. Edited by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Marcus, George. 1995. "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95–117.
- Mardin, Şerif. 1973. "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus* 102 (1): 169–90.
- Martinsson, Lena. 2020. "When Gender Studies Becomes a Threatening Religion." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 27 (3): 293–300.
- Martinsson, Lena, and Diana Mulinari, eds. 2018. *Dreaming Global Change, Doing Local Feminisms Visions of Feminism. Global North/Global South Encounters, Conversations and Disagreements*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Massey, Doreen. 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage.
- Mbembé, Joseph-Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15 (1): 11–40.
- Melby, Kari, Christina Carlsson Wetterberg, and Anna-Birte Ravn, eds. 2009. *Gender Equality and Welfare Politics in Scandinavia: The Limits of Political Ambition?* Bristol: Policy.

- Miller, Ruth A. 2007. "Rights, Reproduction, Sexuality, and Citizenship in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32 (2): 347–73.
- Mizelińska, Joanna, and Robert Kulpa. 2011. "Contemporary Peripheries': Queer Studies, Circulation of Knowledge and East/West Divide." In *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern Europe Perspectives*, edited by Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizelińska, 11–26. London, New York: Routledge.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press Books.
- . 2013. "Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38 (4): 967–91.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, and Linda E. Carty, eds. 2018. *Feminist Freedom Warriors: Genealogies, Justice, Politics, and Hope*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Linda E. Carty, Taveesi Singh, Pritika Seshadri, Kim E. Powell, Jingyi Wang, Breanna Dickson, Maria Norris, and Marlon Walcott. 2021. "Feminist Freedom Warriors Archive." <http://feministfreedomwarriors.org>.
- Mojab, Shahrzad. 2009. "Imperialism, 'Post-War Reconstruction' and Kurdish Women's NGOs." In *Women and War in the Middle East*, edited by Nadje Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, 99–130. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Morozov, V. 2015. *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*. Houndmills et al.: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moss, Kevin. 2017. "Russia as the Savior of European Civilization: Gender and the Geopolitics of Traditional Values." In *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*, edited by Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte. London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Mountz, Alison, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, and Ranu Basu. 2015. "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14 (4): 1235–59.
- Muedini, Fait. 2018. *LGBTI Rights in Turkey: Sexuality and the State in the Middle East*. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Müftüler-Baç, Meltem. 2012. "Gender Equality in Turkey." European Parliament's Committee on Gender Equality. Brussels: European Parliament. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201204/201204_24ATT43808/20120424ATT43808EN.pdf.
- Nagar, Richa, and Frah Ali. 2003. "Collaboration across Borders: Moving beyond Positionality." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24 (3): 356–72.
- Narayan, Kirin. 1993. "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* 95 (3): 671–86.
- Nash, Catherine J., and Kath Browne. 2015. "Best for Society? Transnational Opposition to Sexual and Gender Equalities in Canada and Great Britain." *Gender, Place & Culture* 22 (4): 561–77.
- Nilsson, Ann-Sofie. 1991. *Den Moraliska Stormakten*. Stockholm: Timbro.
- Nyegaard, Nils. 2011. "Homoseksualitetsbegrebet i Danmark." Danmarkshistorien.dk. Aarhus universitet. <https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/homoseksualitetsbegrebet-i-danmark/>.
- O'Shea, Maria Theresa. 2004. *Trapped between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan*. New York: Routledge.
- Özkazanç, Alev. 2019. "The New Episode of Anti-Gender Politics in Turkey." *Engenderings* (blog), May 20. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/gender/2019/05/20/new-episode-anti-gender-turkey/>.
- . 2020. "Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the Case of Turkey." *Baltic Worlds: A Scholarly Journal and News Magazine* 13 (1): 45–53.
- Paternotte, David, David Cosials Apellaniz, and David Tong. n.d. "The History of ILGA: 1978/2012." <https://ilga.org/ilga-history>.
- Patil, Vrushali. 2011. "Transnational Feminism in Sociology: Articulations, Agendas, Debates." *Sociology Compass* 5 (7): 540–50.
- Pile, Steve. 1997. "Introduction." In *Geographies of Resistance*, edited by Steve Pile and Michael Keith, 1–32. London and New York: Routledge.
- Quataert, Jean. 2012. "Human Rights, Global Conferences and the Making of Postwar Transnational Feminisms." *Journal of Women's History* 24 (4): 11–23.
- Rao, Rahul. 2014. "The Locations of Homophobia." *London Review of International Law* 2 (2): 169–99.
- . 2020. *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reid, Colleen, and Claudia Gillberg. 2014. "Feminist Participatory Action Research." In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research*, edited by David Coghlan and Mary Brydon-Miller, 344–48. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Roldugina, Irina. 2018. "Half-Hidden or Half-Open? Scholarly Research on Soviet Homosexuals in Contemporary Russia." In *Gender and Choice after Socialism*, edited by Lynne Attwood, Elisabeth Schimpfössl, and Marina Yusupova, 3–22. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rosenberg, Tiina. 2006. *L-Ordet: Vart Tog Alla Lesbiska Vägen?* Stockholm: Normal.
- Roy, Srila. 2016. "Women's Movements in the Global South: Towards a Scalar Analysis." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29 (3): 289–306.
- Salmenniemi, Sivi. 2008. *Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sancar, Serpil. 2012. *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Sandell, Marie. 2015. *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism: Identity and Sisterhood between the World Wars*. London and New York: IB Tauris.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2010. "The Global inside the National: A Research Agenda for Sociology." *Sociopedia.Isa*. <http://saskiasassen.com/PDFs/publications/the-global-inside-the-national.pdf>.
- Saygılıgil, Feryal, and Nacide Berber, eds. 2020. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce. Feminizm (Cilt 10)*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Schaeffer, Felicity Amaya. 2016. "Transnationalism: Gender and Queer Approaches." In *Gender: Sources, Perspectives, and Methodologies*, edited by Renée C Hoogland. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Farmington Hills, MI: MacMillan Reference.
- Schick, Irvin Cemil. 2020. "Three Genders, Two Sexualities: The Evidence of Ottoman Erotic Terminology." In *Sex and Desire in Muslim Cultures: Beyond Norms and Transgression from the Abbasids to the Present Day*, edited by Aymon Kreil, Lucia Sorbera, and Serena Tolino, 87–110. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. 2017. *Sex and Secularism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Shinozaki, Kyoko. 2012. "Transnational Dynamics in Researching Migrants: Self-Reflexivity and Boundary-Drawing in Fieldwork." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (10): 1810–27.
- Shirinian, Tamar. 2020. "The Illiberal East: The Gender and Sexuality of the Imagined Geography of Eurasia in Armenia." *Gender, Place & Culture* 28 (7): 1–20.
- Sperling, Valerie. 2015. *Sex, Politics, and Putin: Political Legitimacy in Russia. Sex, Politics, and Putin*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

- Sperling, Valerie, Myra Marx Ferree, and Barbara Risman. 2001. "Constructing Global Feminism: Transnational Advocacy Networks and Russian Women's Activism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26 (4): 1155–86.
- Stella, F. 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. 1997. "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia." *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (3): 735–762.
- Suchland, Jennifer. 2011. "Is Postsocialism Transnational?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (4): 837–62.
- . 2018. "The LGBT specter in Russia: Refusing queerness, claiming 'Whiteness'." *Gender, Place & Culture* 25 (7), 1073–1088.
- Sullivan, Marianne, Rupaleem Bhuyan, Kirsten Senturia, Sharyne Shiu-Thornton, and Sandy Ciske. 2005. "Participatory Action Research in Practice: A Case Study in Addressing Domestic Violence in Nine Cultural Communities." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 20 (8): 977–95.
- Sümer, Sevil, and Hande Eslen-Ziya. 2017. "New Waves for Old Rights? Women's Mobilization and Bodily Rights in Turkey and Norway." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 24 (1): 23–38.
- Sundstrom, Lisa McIntosh. 2006. *Funding Civil Society: Foreign Assistance and NGO Development in Russia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Theorin, Maj Britt. 2015. "Kampen Mot Svenska Atomvapen Och För Internationell Nedrustning." In *Kvinnornas Kamp För Fred*, edited by Benita Eklund and Sofia Härén, 20–38. Stockholm: Kvinnor för fred.
- Tlostanova, Madina. 2012. "Postsocialist ≠ Postcolonial? On Post-Soviet Imaginary and Global Coloniality." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48 (2): 130–42.
- Tlostanova, Madina, Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, and Redi Koobak. 2019. "The Postsocialist 'Missing Other' of Transnational Feminism?" *Feminist Review* 121 (1): 81–87.
- Toprak, Zafer. 2017. *Türkiye'de Yeni Hayat: İnkılap ve Travma 1908–1928*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap.
- Transnational Solidarities. 2018. "Transnational Solidarities: Gender and Sexualities beyond Geopolitics." International Workshop, Hosted by Gothenburg University, May 23–24.
- Ülker, Erol. 2008. "Assimilation of the Muslim Communities in the First Decade of the Turkish Republic (1923–1934)." *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 7. <http://ejts.revues.org/822>.

- Valaskivi, Katja. 2016. "Circulating a Fashion: Performance of Nation Branding in Finland and Sweden." *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 12 (2–3): 139–51.
- Valentine, Jeremy. 2018. "Politics and the Concept of the Political: The Political Imagination." *Contemporary Political Theory*, no. 17: 197–200.
- White, Jenny B. 2013. *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*. Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wickman, Jan. 2012. "Vad Är Det Som Heter Queeraktivism i Norge Och Sverige? Lokala Variationer i En Internationell Diskurs." *SQS*, no. 1–2: 1–21.
- Wimmer, Andreas, and Nina Glick Schiller. 2002. "Methodological Nationalism and beyond: Nation–State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks* 2 (4): 301–34.
- Wood, Elizabeth A. 1997. *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Yadirgi, Veli. 2017. *The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yanık, Lerna K. 2011. "Constructing Turkish 'Exceptionalism': Discourses of Liminality and Hybridity in Post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy." *Political Geography* 30 (2): 80–89.
- Yeğenoğlu, Meyda. 1998. *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Zengin, Aslı. 2016. "Mortal Life of Trans/Feminism: Notes on 'Gender Killings' in Turkey." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3 (1–2): 266–71.
- Zürcher, Erik J. 2004. *Turkey: A Modern History*. 3rd edition. London and New York: I.B.Tauris.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.





2

Transnational Spaces of Resistance

Scaling Resistance

In this book, resistance is defined as a response to relations of domination that undermines, negotiates, and challenges power (Baaz et al. 2017a, b). As a set of complex and multiple acts from “below,” this understanding of resistance is anchored in an approach to power in Foucauldian terms, as a network of dispersed micro-practices of control including, but not limited to, visible contentious forms of challenging political and state power. Scholars in resistance studies (Baaz et al. 2017a; Murru and Polese 2020) distinguish two traditions in conceptualizing resistance. One is rooted in research on social movements and contentious politics, and has its focus on visible forms of resistance such as street protests, social movements campaigns, or strikes (Della Porta 2014; Tarrow 2001; Tilly 2008). Another focuses on everyday, subtle forms of resistance that may or may not lead to a change in relations of domination but bring other gains to resistant subjects. Scott (1987) defines such resistance as “victories of the weak,” de Certeau (1984) as maneuvering tactics of the powerless in the space of the powerful while, in the conceptualization of Butler

(1993, 22), it is described as “[...] failure to approximate the norm,” or the process of undermining norms through a reiteration of dominant discourses with a slightly different meaning. Our understanding of resistance lies in between these, or rather covers both, situated in a “grey zone” (Murru 2020, 172) between everyday resistance, carried out by individuals in the form of unorganized resistance with low awareness of, or interest in, shared actions, and more organized forms of collective action, in which protesters gather in broader social or political movements to challenge authorities or hegemonic powers in national or transnational realms. From this outset, this book focuses, on the one hand, on transnational social movements represented by the struggles of feminist and LGBTI+ activists across Russia, the Scandinavian countries, and Turkey. On the other hand, the book brings forth small-scale, in/visible resistant tactics and the mundane work of activists aimed at redefining established relations of power. As we argue throughout the book, these two modes of resistance are not exclusive of each other, but, on the contrary, mutually determining. The empirical case studies that we consider vary from large-scale feminist gatherings such as Women’s March in Istanbul to almost invisible activist practices such as Church singing in a small Norwegian town or a flashmob with rainbow balloons in celebration of the Day against Homophobia and Transphobia in the south of Russia.

The current trend in resistance studies to reveal the invisible and subtle forms of resistance (Baaz et al. 2017a; Murru and Polese 2020) aligns with similar discussions in feminist and queer literature which puts under scrutiny the preoccupation with visible public forms of resistance in feminist and LGBTI+ activism. Researchers of transnational LGBTI+ politics argue that visibility and contentious public actions might not only be undesirable but also dangerous in particular contexts (Brock and Edenborg 2021; Ritchie 2010; Stella 2015). Feminist scholars maintain that a narrow focus on the public sphere as a space of resistance undermines the value of feminized resistance that is often contained in the private domain or around presumably apolitical matters such as social reproduction or care (Mason-Deese 2016; Murru 2020). Nonetheless, instead of dichotomizing public and private or visible and invisible forms of resistance, we, along with other scholars in the field (Motta

and Seppälä 2016; Polese and Murru 2020), suggest a multi-scalar analysis of resistance which acknowledges that resistance occurs on various levels, from large-scale transnational feminist protests to small-scale but meaningful LGBTI+ community-based interventions. In the following chapters, we consider resistant practices on three levels: macro level as relations between civil society, the state, and the market; meso level as relations within civil society—between activists and organizations from different geopolitical regions and countries as well as between small- and large-scale activist organizations and groups; and on micro level—as individual resistance practices and individual bodies as a part of collective political struggles.

This multi-scalar understanding of resistance brings to the fore the agentic experience of marginalized and less powerful actors whose resistant tactics otherwise may remain unnoticed. It is, however, important to distinguish between agency and resistance. Agency is a broader term and captures the subjects' capacity for action (Baaz et al. 2017b, 17; Mahmood 2005), while resistance is the exercise of actions aimed at destabilizing relations of power (Baaz et al. 2017b, 17). Using multi-scalar analysis in relation to feminist and LGBTI+ activism in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries, we problematize the superficial assumption that activists in Scandinavia have more freedom and capacity to resist the state and other relations of power than our research partners in Turkey and Russia where the general climate for LGBTI+ and feminist activists is more hostile (see Chapters 1 and 3 in this book). While activists in Scandinavia may have more resources to resist state power through direct negotiations with politicians or state bodies, activists in Russia and Turkey may be better equipped for informal resistant practices such as maneuvering the repressive state apparatus or relying on non-contentious forms of action in the space of community activism or culture. As we argue elsewhere (Arik et al., 2022), in all three contexts, the strategies and tactics of resistance depend on the scope and positionality of an activist group/organization in relation to hegemonic struggles embodied by relations between the state, global and local civil society, and markets. This also means that resistance is not universal, it depends on, adjusts to, and reproduces existing relations of power, which, as feminist anthropologists argue, are context-specific

(Abu-Lughod 1990; Mahmood 2005). Thus, any understanding of resistance should be accompanied by an analysis of established hierarchies existing in particular spaces constructed at the intersection of entities such as geopolitical regions, national states, dominant cultures, and social and economic relations.

A multi-scalar conceptualization of resistance also problematizes the dichotomy between the powerful and the powerless. Actors can be simultaneously resisters and dominators within different hierarchies (Baaz et al. 2017a; Hollander and Einwohner 2004). As we argue in the book, the fact that activists resist unjust relations of power does not exclude their complicity with existing structures that produce inequality. The scholarship on co-optation of feminist and queer struggles in maintaining imperialism, nationalism, neoliberalism, and racism is but one example (Ghodsee 2004; Farris 2017; Fraser 2009; Grewal 2005; INCITE! 2007; Spade 2015). With this, we claim that it is crucial to de-romanticize resistance (Abu-Lughod 1990; Murru 2020) and to acknowledge, as we discuss further in Chapter 4, that well-meant forms of solidarity as resistance to state homophobia and global patriarchy within transnational civil society may not only risk to reproduce but also strengthen existing hierarchies in transnational activist struggles.

Our multi-scalar approach to resistance sheds light on how acts and performances of individual bodies can shape spaces of struggle against dominant powers. As we show in the book, corporeality of resistance is at the core of feminist and LGBTI+ activism, which in itself is a struggle against the biopolitical power of state and state experts over the self, bodies, and sexuality. Attention to individual bodies brings to the surface modes of resistance that oftentimes remain outside of the scope of analysis such as affect, emotions, tactile practices, and materiality. The significance of these, often overlooked, aspects of resistance for undermining power hierarchies is stressed in feminist and queer scholarship (Ahmed 2014; Butler 2015; Hemmings 2005). These aspects are also the focus of our analyses throughout this book. For example, as we show in Chapter 5, the individual body as a micro-scale locus of resistance has a potential to contribute to the most visible and acknowledged forms of contentious politics, such as public protests or rallies. During public protests, individual emotions such as rage, anger, or dissatisfaction

are transformed into collective affects. Through these transformations, individual bodies form a collective body that, in return, becomes more than the sum of those individual bodies. Through our fieldwork experiences, we acknowledge that not only the media image but also personal experience of being part of a collectively resisting body is powerful. Collective bodily resistance in the form of public protests is also an important means of putting pressure on dominant powers and destabilizing and challenging the space of the powerful. Yet, the positive value we ascribe to public protests should not be read as one more affirmation of contentious politics in the public sphere as the dominant mode of dissent—the idea that we challenge throughout the book. Rather, we highlight the fluid and mutually determining relations between different scales, where resistance, which starts on the surface of an individual body, can incite and inspire collective practices of resistance, and in the longer run challenge and potentially dismantle established political, social, and economic hierarchies.

In our attention to spaces of resistance, we recognize both spatial and temporal dimensions of resistance. Rather than being a flat surface upon which people act, we conceptualize space as a product of our relationships and connections with each other (Massey 2005). When collective assemblies take place in space by demanding the right to appear, be listened to and heard, they are engaged in a claiming of space which, through the very act of resistance, create new relations of connectivity and belonging (Butler 2015). Using the notion of movement, Pile (1997) sees such spatial forms of resistance as the paths traversed in the course of struggle, which involves a change in location although without necessarily insisting on a clear origin or final destination. Being linked to our understanding of resistance in a grey zone, such movements, set into motion by resistance, do not have to be big or especially impressive but can be small-scale micro-movements, barely perceptible, even hidden or covert, difficult to categorize and define. This understanding also involves a temporal dimension of resistance which, unlike spatial, has been underrepresented in resistance studies (Baaz et al. 2017a, 119). Even though resistance, which is the focus of this book, does occur in the here and now, spaces of resistance simultaneously contain multiple temporalities (Ibid.) building on past struggles and aiming toward more

open-ended futures. Attention to the temporal dimension of resistance questions pessimism or indifference toward less visible and less recognized resistant practices. As we argue, the activist struggles which this book features may not directly challenge or undermine current relations of power but they do have a potential to contribute to radical changes over time.

Transnational Civil Society: Between Co-optation and Resistance

The first scale of analyzing resistance in this book is relations between civil society, the state, and the market (Chapter 3). There is a rich tradition of scholarship studying the role of civil society as a space of resistance, which has become especially noticeable since the 1980s–1990s in the context of the 1980s anti-Soviet uprisings in Eastern Europe and protests against military dictatorships in Latin America (Edwards 2011; Katz 2009; Räthzel et al. 2015). In this tradition, civil society is understood as a distinctive space in relation to the state and the market (Edwards 2011). Civil society is believed to contribute to democratization and the building of good governance in non-democratic contexts and states in transition as well as to strengthening the existing democratic system in the Western world by balancing the potential excesses of state power (Edwards 2011; Eder 2009; Räthzel et al. 2015; Sundstrom 2006; Warren 2011). These normative assumptions about the role of civil society in maintaining sustainable democracies have been critically scrutinized by a disciplinarily, methodologically, and contextually diverse body of scholarship. Our own critique of these assumptions is informed by a Gramscian understanding of relations between the state and civil society, feminist critiques of NGOization and co-optation of progressive politics by the state and/or neoliberal markets, and our spatial approach to resistant studies which, according to Baaz et al. (2017a, 31), “offers a possibility to understand the leakiness of civil society, the market and the state, as people move between these spaces, carrying out resistance with unconventional methods in unexpected locations.”

Our theoretical take on civil society refers to the Gramscian conceptualization of symbiotic relations between civil society and the state. With his concept of the integral state, Gramsci undermines the distinction between the state and civil society naming it merely analytical (“methodological”) but not organic, i.e., really existing (Anderson 1976; Gramsci 1999 [1971], 371; Texier 1979). According to Gramsci, the state is inclusive of civil society and there is “dialectical unity of civil society and political society” (Bobbio 1979, 41). Thus, the state and civil society are neither separate nor autonomous but co-constructed entities. Hegemony describes the processes through which particular political practices of a certain class or group lead them to seize state power and thereby define the nature of politics (Thomas 2009a). Civil society is understood here as the hegemonic apparatus of the ruling class to gather consent for its moral and intellectual leadership (Texier 1979). The integral state, in return, describes the relationship between civil society (social interests and the relations between them) and the state (political society and the state apparatus) (Humphrys 2018; Thomas 2009b).

The Gramscian perspective on civil society as integrally linked to the state challenges “civil society orthodoxy”—the liberal idea according to which an institutionalized “strong” civil society counterbalances the state apparatus and is unavoidably good for the democratic process (Salmenniemi 2008, 5). On the contrary, in Gramscian terms, a “strong” (consistent) civil society works to ensure the solidity of the state (Texier 1979). Drawing on this understanding, Rätzzel et al. (2015, 156) suggest that boundaries between the state and civil society are the strongest when the state power is most oppressive. In other words, the less civil society and the state are opposed to each other, the higher affinities between them are. This applies to both authoritarian and liberal states as civil society may become an extended arm of the state apparatus regardless of its agendas. As we reveal in Chapter 3, while non-democratic governments such as those in Turkey and Russia limit the space of the liberal civil society by restrictive legislation or repressive actions (Doyle 2018; Eldén and Levin 2018; Erensü and Alemdaroğlu 2018; Gradskova 2019; Kaya and Ögünç 2020; Skokova et al. 2018), they strengthen ties with civil societal actors with pro-government agendas in ways that are very similar to the liberal states of Scandinavia that co-opt civil society

through neoliberal governance (Ålund 1995; Babül 2015; Silliman 1999; Fahlgren et al. 2011; Fink and Lundqvist 2010; Yabancı 2016). As Liinason (2017) shows in her analysis of relations between women's organizations in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden and national governments, civil society organizations in Scandinavia have played a significant role in facilitating neoliberal reforms that Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish governments have implemented since the 1990s. As a result of its neoliberal reconfiguration, civil society is seen as more trustworthy than state actors, but the state still governs civil society through political decisions and distribution of funds to achieve certain goals such as social cohesion or gender equality, for example. Hence, the Gramscian conceptualization of civil society challenges the assumption that only in non-democratic countries such as Turkey and Russia the independent space of civil societies is endangered by repressive governments (Humphrys 2018; Thomas 2009b; Echagüe and Youngs 2017; Robinson 2005). In its most recognizable and legit forms such as NGOs or CSOs, civil society is entwined with the state through governmentality (Bernal and Grewal 2014). While relations between civil society and the state in Turkey and Russia are more antagonistic than in the Scandinavian countries, feminist and LGBTI+ organizations in Russia and Turkey are still aligned with foreign states that serve as donors and in the Scandinavian countries, as we detail further in Chapter 3, civil society organizations may experience exclusion from state-political channels due to power struggles in civil society. By including sub-national and transnational mechanisms of funding into our analysis of the conditions of feminist and LGBTI+ activism in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries, we highlight structural commonalities in activist struggles across the West/East and North/South as well as the authoritarian-liberal/democratic divide.

Feminist critiques of the NGOization, professionalization, and depoliticization of civil society have long demonstrated that along with the state, the neoliberal market is an important factor that structures the conditions of activist work across the globe (Alvarez 1999; Bernal and Grewal 2014; Lang 1997). NGOs are located within transnational circuits of neoliberal power and even local ones are included in the space of transnational civil society through mechanisms of funding which

are considered as the major ground for their co-optation by the institutes and discourses of neoliberal governmentality (Bernal and Grewal 2014). There are two distinctive ways of how the market and civil society interact. One way is that, as empirical research shows, NGOization often augments the expansion of neoliberal markets and the state's withdrawal from or delegation of its functions such as welfare provision or social support (Alvarez 1999; Hemment 2007; Liinason 2017; Paley 2001; Silliman 1999). Donors' investments in civil society often accompany economic restructuring in favor of the free market and the diminished role of the state in ensuring redistribution (Paley 2001; Hagemann et al. 2011; Hemment 2007). NGOs serve as a vehicle to encourage impoverished citizens to develop their entrepreneurial skills in the absence of state policies for economic inclusion (Hemment 2007). They contribute to the individualization of structural phenomena such as mass unemployment or rising inequality and, in the spirit of neoliberal governance, move responsibility from the crumbling/withdrawing states to individuals and private actors (Hemment 2007; Schild 2015; Suchland 2015).

Another concern is that neoliberal governmentality penetrates civil society through marketization of activism in the form of competition for funding, bureaucratization, and business rationality in measuring efficiency of activist work that is aimed at the production of "marketable expert knowledge or services" (Lang 2012, 64; Schultz 2010). Notwithstanding the source of funding—national or foreign governments, international donors, or corporations—marketization of activist work is believed to influence the activist agenda at the cost of communities' needs and concerns (Bagić 2006; Ghodsee 2004; Kirey-Sitnikova 2020; Tadros 2010). The competitive conditions of obtaining funding urge activists to be innovative and creative while sacrificing sustainability and longevity of commitment to stakeholders and partners (Guenther 2011). The widely implemented scheme of project-based funding raises precarity among activists (Bernal and Grewal 2014; Liinason 2021; Lorenz-Meyer 2013) and, as a result, adds to the already high level of stress and burnout among civil society actors (Gorski and Chen 2015; Gorski 2019; Vaccaro and Mena 2011). Thus, marketization and dependence on external funding undermines the assumed independence of

civil society in setting their own agenda or its separation from the state and the market (INCITE! 2007). Rather, these three spaces—the state, the market, and civil society—are closely entangled. However, the degree of their entanglement and the space of resistance that is still left for activist struggles vary across contexts, as we meticulously discuss in Chapter 3.

But does entanglement between the state, the market, and civil society mean that civil society has no resistant potential? Anticipating our analysis throughout the book, the answer is “no.” Instead of prioritizing either co-optation or resistance as explanatory models, we look at the ambiguities of activist struggles within and across our three contexts (Eschle and Maignushca 2018; Liinason 2021). A number of scholars (Alvarez 2014; García-Del Moral et al. 2019; Guenther 2011; Roy 2011) argue that feminist and LGBTI+ activists’ relations with the state and the market are more complex than the “NGOization paradigm” (Hodžić 2014, 221) suggests. The critique of NGOization juxtaposes social movements and NGOs (Hodžić 2014; Roy 2011); yet, in practice, these two can co-exist or NGOs can have the potential to trigger social movements (Alvarez 1999; Helms 2014; Roy 2011). Grassroots movements which, in contrast to NGOs, are perceived as “the purest form of resistance,” do not always withstand the temptation of power hierarchies and exclusionary practices (García-Del Moral et al. 2019, 228). Both movements and NGOs can be hybrid in character and simultaneously combine institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of organizing (Alvarez 1999; Roy 2011). In many contexts, such as in the case of non-democratic governments of Russia and Turkey, foreign-funded NGOs and non-funded grassroots initiatives form alliances and work together against the repressive state apparatus. Moreover, as we reveal in Chapter 3, grassroots initiatives can create ersatz NGOs to become eligible subjects for receiving international donor funding or making claims to the state. The donor dependence that the “NGOization paradigm” condemns for its role in the increasing professionalization and managerialism of feminist and LGBTI+ movements (Roy 2011) does not necessarily lead to co-optation or top-down agenda setting. On the contrary, continuous funding may give activists more time and

space for negotiating established relations of power and lobbying their local interests and concerns in the space of (trans)national civil society (García-Del Moral et al. 2019). Moreover, funding allows activists from a less privileged social background or without other sources of financial support to be engaged in socially and politically meaningful waged work (Roy 2011). Individual life trajectories (Räthzel et al. 2015) of particular activists, which we investigate throughout the book, also show that the boundaries between professional NGOs and grassroots movements are permeable. Activists' trespassing of these boundaries, their choice to work for NGOs to access resources and expertise that can then be invested in grassroots movements is in itself a resistant practice, as some would argue (Baaz et al. 2017a; Guenther 2011; Lugones 2003). Thus, while we do consider it important to expose activists' complicity and investments in the existing power relations (de Jong 2017), this book also aspires to reveal activists' potential to resist and negotiate power. We regard this task as our scholarly contribution to conceptualization of the production of hope as an indispensable part of political struggles in transnational feminist and LGBTI+ organizing (Martinsson and Mulinari 2018, 10; Liinason and Cuesta 2016). Our understanding of resistance as navigating the space of the powerful (de Certeau 1984; Lugones 2003), the grey zone between everyday subtle resistant tactics and more visible strategies of undermining power (Murru 2020), underlines that power and resistance are constantly determining one another. Thus, our analysis of feminist and LGBTI+ activists' resistant tactics is simultaneously an investigation of relations of domination and hierarchies that activists negotiate and challenge but simultaneously strengthen and reproduce (Abu-Lughod 1990). This ambivalence of the resistance/power dyad is especially striking in struggles around transnational solidarity-building that we further discuss.

Promises and Pitfalls of Transnational Solidarity

The second scale of our investigation of resistance is by attending to the making of transnational solidarities. Feminist and queer struggles

have been invested in community- and coalition-building among women and LGBTI+ people encountering gender- and sexuality-based oppression and marginalization. Efforts to build solidarity within and between feminist, LGBTI+, and “ally” activisms and social movements have been subject to extensive scholarly debate, especially in theoretical and empirical works by Black, queer, postcolonial, and left feminists who grappled with the question of solidarity across difference and were critical of universalistic approaches to women’s interests in terms of “global sisterhood” (Morgan 1984). These works highlighted the divisions among women based on race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality, and geographical location, which revoked the idea of a shared oppression of women by showing how it ultimately served the interests of women belonging to dominant classes and social groups (Combahee River Collective 1986; Crenshaw 1991; hooks 1984; Mahmood 2005; Lugones 2003; Mohanty 1984, 2003a; Moraga and Anzaldúa 2015; Narayan 1997; Young 2002). As bell hooks maintained in her essay, “Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Among Women,” women did not need to eliminate their differences to build solidarity; they did not “need to share common oppression to fight equally to end oppression” (hooks 1984, 67; Lorde 1984). Solidarity across difference could thus be built in alliances of “communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together” with diversity and difference as their core values (Mohanty 2003a, 7).

Forming a new basis of transnational feminist and queer coalition politics, this vision of solidarity across difference emphasized diversity and difference in a way that enabled a move beyond identity politics, toward “an inclusive and ultimately universal understanding” of solidarity (Dean 1996, 11). Jodi Dean’s notion of reflective solidarity, defined as “the mutual expectation of a responsible orientation to relationship” (1996, 3), implied that a collectivity must be a discursively achieved “we” that is always in the making, always seeking the inclusion of an “other” that is not yet part of the “we,” as opposed to the traditional model of solidarity based on “us” vs. “them.” Drawing on Jodi Dean’s (1996) concept of reflective solidarity, Chandra Talpade Mohanty developed her notion of “feminism without borders” with the aim:

to stress that our most expansive and inclusive visions of feminism need to be attentive to borders while learning to transcend them. Feminism without borders is not the same as “border-less” feminism. It acknowledges the fault lines, conflicts, differences, fears, and containment that borders represent. It acknowledges that there is no one sense of a border, that the lines between and through nations, races, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities, are real—and that a feminism without borders must envision change and social justice work across these lines of demarcation and division. (Mohanty 2003a, 2)

This notion not only suggested a conceptualization of solidarity oriented toward praxis based on political and historical analysis but also paid special attention to the terms, possibilities, hindrances of solidarity in small, everyday resistant struggles as well as global coalitions for change (see also Mohanty 1984). Acknowledging that similarities as well as differences across borders, belongings, and movements “exist in relation and tension with each other in all contexts,” in this book, we follow the lead of Mohanty in implementing the idea of “common differences” in our approach to understanding activist practices of building solidarity across difference (Mohanty 2003b, 518; 521). It is these practices, we contend, that enable, foster, challenge, and hinder transnationalizing spaces of resistance.

The period of NGOization in the 1990s and 2000s created novel lines of demarcation within feminist and queer struggles based on their relationship with the state and mechanisms of global governance. Integrating previous insights on solidarity across difference with a focus on the co-optation of feminist and LGBTI+ activisms by dominant institutional structures, a new literature emerged that criticized transnational solidarities for privileging and universalizing Western/Northern feminisms and imposing gender-only agendas through transnational NGOs that implemented neoliberal policies. While acknowledging the positive outcomes of transnational gatherings (often endorsed by the UN) in terms of politicizing the issues of marginalized women, especially of those in the South/East, and setting up national mechanisms (e.g., via CEDAW) to address and eliminate gender-based oppression, this literature showed how the exclusion of working-class and minority women by local and

global elites from transnational alliances worked to maintain capitalism, imperialism, and unequal relations of power on local, national, regional, and global levels simultaneously (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Basu 2016; Dhawan 2013; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Hawkesworth 2006; Meyer and Prügl 1999; Roy 2016; Wilson 2015). Local repercussions of transnational solidarities have been discussed in terms of politics of translation (Alvarez et al. 2014; Hemment 2007; Hodžić 2016; Thayer 2009) as well as the impact of “shaping orientations and agendas in ways that privilege Western style priorities, discourses, and models of feminist organizing over domestic ones; and, on the whole, of colonizing, dividing, and fragmenting domestic movements” (Dufour et al. 2010, 18). Scholars of postcolonial and critical theory specifically questioned the “complicities between liberal cosmopolitan articulations of solidarity and the global structures of domination they claim to resist” (Dhawan 2013, 144; Jabri 2007; Roy 2016; Spivak 1996; Wilson 2015). All in all, this body of literature has been immensely important for establishing a multi-scalar vision of solidarity by showing that transnational solidarities do not happen only on a global scale or between different nations or supranational organizations, and that solidarities within national boundaries are co-constructed by sub- and transnational processes.

In the past decade, political, economic, and social developments such as the rise of anti-gender mobilizations, repercussions of the 2007–2008 financial crisis, increased connectivity between activists from different world regions under the influence of digitalization and intensified global migration, encouraged researchers to dig deeper into the notion of solidarity across difference as praxis. Feminist scholars developed new conceptualizations of solidarity as “hands-on” (Rai 2018), “care-full” (Emejulu 2018), “active” (Einwohner et al. 2021), and “intersectional” (Tormos 2017). This revived interest in solidarity, located mostly in the fields of gender and politics, development studies, and political sociology, comes from an urge to bring back the issue of “difference” to the feminist agenda while addressing the shortcomings of previous approaches to and praxes of solidarity that flattened differences and overlooked structural inequalities in the name of establishing horizontal relationships (Mendoza 2002; Birey et al. 2019). In Rai’s account, “a ‘hands

off' approach to otherness (...) meant that most dialogue across cultural boundaries ceased to animate feminist work. (...) we have not yet been able to develop the vocabularies that would allow us to speak confidently and respectfully across (...) borders of difference" (2018, 13). Calls for a "new politics of solidarity" (Ibid.; Keskinen et al. 2019) thus contend that solidarity "requires *intentionally* confronting power; seeking to dismantle privilege and reducing its role in corrupting (...) discussions" (Einwohner et al. 2021, 706, emphasis original). For instance, Emejulu's (2018) differentiation between "care-full" and "care-less" solidarity draws attention to the favorable and less desirable outcomes of activist practices, especially when mutual empathy and solidarity is presumed rather than fought for between hierarchically positioned individuals and groups involved. Similarly, considering the difficulties of achieving mutuality and reciprocity in solidarity action in an unequal world, Weldon (2018) challenges the insistence on symmetry between different constituents of solidarity projects and points at the necessity of solidarity between unequals for social and political change.

While these contributions are helpful in thinking in terms of the everyday, mundane, minute experiences of feminist and LGBTI+ activists that build up solidarities from below, they place little focus on face-to-face encounters between people with differential belongings and the role of affects that are produced in these encounters in shaping the outcomes of solidarity practices. Yet, at the time of writing, we observe an emerging body of literature that draws attention to everyday practices of activists that lie at the core of solidarities yet fall outside the scope of more programmatic understandings of solidarity across difference. Rooted in feminist and queer theorizations as well as historical and ethnographic accounts of the role of affects in solidarity practices, this literature offers a lens through which to discuss the contextually contingent dynamics of community- and coalition-building from a transnational perspective (Ahmed 2014; Butler 2018; Chowdhury and Philipose 2016; Connections 2020; Hemmings 2012; Salem 2017; Pedwell 2012; Wiedlack et al. 2019). In our view, the most significant feature of this new literature is its effort to go beyond dichotomous understandings of success and failure, consensus and conflict, harmony

and dissonance, and pleasure and pain when discussing solidarity practices and their outcomes. For example, Hemmings' conceptualization of "affective solidarity" considers the role of affects "as necessary for a sustainable feminist politics of transformation, but that does not root these in identity or other group characteristics" (2012, 148). Rather than viewing negative emotions involved in solidarity practices in terms of failure, Hemmings argues for the significance of affective dissonance in the development of one's engagement with feminist politics. In Salem's view, it is exactly "when mistakes are made, limits are pushed, lines are crossed, and feelings are hurt" the exercise of self-reflexivity and the productive use of difference becomes possible (2017, 259). In a similar vein, Wiedlack (2019) calls for the recognition of emotions such as frustration and disappointment and the feeling of failure as intrinsic to solidarity-building. Conceptualizing solidarity as "working together," Wiedlack argues that the collective recognition of negative feelings enables parties to critically address the "assumption of a shared identity" (Wiedlack 2019, 37; see also Pedwell 2012).

Drawing inspiration from the work of these scholars, we contribute to this emerging literature by bringing in ethnographic examples to the discussion on transnational solidarities and its role in the making of spaces of resistance. As Dufour et al. (2010) argue, solidarities are always-already transnational in that they are produced, on an everyday basis, within and between organizations, networks, events, and movements that cannot be contained within the borders of one locale. This calls for simultaneous attention to multiple scales when discussing activist discourses and practices in our ethnographies. Transnationalization of solidarities refers not only to processes "by which solidarities travel beyond established national borders, but also by which they are deepened among women or among feminists. The deepening of solidarities involves mutual recognition and the constitution of stronger ties among activists" (Dufour et al. 2010, 4). It is these processes, their favorable outcomes and failures, and the affects involved in them, that we are interested in unraveling throughout the book. In Chapter 4, we attend to the recent calls for a "[n]ew politics of solidarity" (Keskinen et al. 2019, 1; Rai 2018, 13) in the light of current global shifts toward demands of cultural homogeneity and neo-assimilatory politics. We also

examine notions and practices of solidarity that go beyond the particularities of individual actors or groups, and explore solidarities across differences situated within contexts of national assimilationist projects and demarcations of borders infused by ideas of homogeneity/sameness. Shedding light on the histories and presents of colonialism and on the sustained production of geopolitical hierarchies, such as those between the West/North and East/South, we address a politics of solidarity that goes beyond naturalized forms of belonging (i.e., familial, ethnic, national) (Yuval-Davis 2011) and propose practices of solidarity that are infused by understandings of social justice which incorporate and seek to repair experiences of cultural and economic injustices embedded in particular historical and societal landscapes (Keskinen et al. 2019).

In this book, we also regard religiosity as of significance in linking solidarity practices to quests for social justice and repair. Situating religion and religious practice in a broader genealogy of struggles for solidarity and justice, we aspire to question and problematize the oft-repeated narrative in feminist and queer theory of religion as by definition harmful or oppressive for women and LGBTI+ people. Instead of locating the socialist project entirely in secular culture and in strivings for emancipation from nature and society, as is canonically the case, a branch of critical scholars have traced the material and spiritual roots of the socialist project to the popular democratic and religious traditions of the poor, such as for example, in the liberation theologies of Latin America (Gorringe 2017; Gutiérrez 1974; Kelliher 2018; Mansueto 1988). Similar connections between solidarity, justice, and religious practice are made in post/de-colonial scholarship, illuminating how indigenous communities engaged in anti-colonial struggles sustain community and struggle through spiritual cosmology and religious ritual (MacKenzie 2017; Wane et al. 2019). These contributions show how religion can take shape as a binding glue in the heterogeneous contexts of organic solidarities and struggles for justice. Indeed, despite the deep investment in secular forms of feminist and queer critique and analytic approaches (Appelros 2005; Comas-Diaz 2008; Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2015; Watson 1993), there is today a growing number of studies located at the intersection of religion and queer and gendered life (Brintnall 2013; Daly 2010; Taylor et al. 2014). In this emergent tradition,

scholars intervene into the assumption of a dichotomous divide between religious feelings and secular reason, and between practices of faith and worldly practices (Evans 2014; Harris and Ott 2011; Scott 2009; van den Brandt 2014). Feminist scholars have provided important insights into why and how feminists appropriate seemingly secular and liberal political standpoints and agendas in the encounter with expanding misogynistic religious movements or institutions, recognizing significant geopolitical specificities in the particular ways in which a revival of religiosity in alliance with national projects have marginalized women in contemporary political and social life (Braidotti 2011; Grabowska 2012; Watson 1993). Nonetheless, despite this burgeoning interest for explorations of religiosity in the study of gender and sexuality, scholars argue that relatively little attention has been paid to the ethnocentrism of secular feminist paradigms, or to the intersection of gender, religion, and post-coloniality (Hawthorne 2017; Mahmood 2005). Navigating through the complex, and varied, role of religiosity and secularity in feminist, queer, and anti-colonial forms of resistance against national assimilationist politics, in Chapter 4 we attend to how practices of faith can shape a framework for the shared labor of renegotiating and reclaiming pasts erased, silenced, or forgotten.

Conceptualizing various kinds of solidarity practices as forms of resistance, in this book we build on the revived interest in conceptualizing solidarity across difference by showing the co-construction of and the fluidity between community- and coalition-building action on multiple scales. The two ways of understanding resistance, as contentious politics in the public sphere and as subtle, everyday forms of action through which the resistant subject emerges, overlap with the two main trends in solidarity research; one that looks into co-ordinated struggles for sharing resources, engaging in symbolic action, and organizing mutually beneficial programs, campaigns, and advocacy coalitions (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Weldon 2018), the other into small-scale, mundane acts of affinity and friendship (Ahmed 2014; Chowdhury and Philipose 2016; Hemmings 2012; Wiedlack et al. 2019). Similar to our engagement with resistance, we are interested in the “grey zone” that lies between and connects these two mutually determining modes of solidarity. Attention

to this grey zone, we assert, gives us an insight into the processes by which individual bodies and their “minor” practices add up to collective struggles for social justice.

From Individual Bodies to Transnational Organizing: Beyond the Dichotomy of Visibility–Invisibility

The third scale in which we explore resistance is through the body. By scrutinizing embodied struggles as spaces of resistance in an analysis of the International Women’s Day (Chapter 5), our discussion reveals relationalities between places and struggles, as locally embedded feminist and trans struggles carry references to similar resistances in other places. We build further on our approach to resistance in the grey zone, focusing both on visible struggles of feminist and LGBTI+ activists in public spaces as well as the small-scale, hidden, or in/visible tactics of resistance among activists to redefine existing relations of power. The attention to bodily practices in this book allows us to trace core questions in feminist and LGBTI+ struggles, such as exclusion/inclusion, invisibility/visibility, silence/speech, and examine their multiple layers across time and space, often carrying a transnational point of reference. Rooted in our interest in reaching deeper insights into the multi-scalar relationship of resistance and the fluid relationship between individual and collective forms of protest and claiming of space, Chapter 5 is devoted to examining bodily assemblies in public spaces. Bringing together themes stretching across the whole book, we hope to demonstrate in this chapter the significance of embodied forms of resistance for the (re)making of space. As we elaborate how such a focus on the body allows for questions of materiality and affect to appear as key aspects in feminism and LGBTI+ action, we approach the International Women’s Day as a prism for the analyses of activities in various sites in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries, and trace routes for coalitional frameworks and solidarity expressions which are less often considered in activism or scholarship through a multi-scalar discussion around corporeality and embodiment.

We show that corporeality, as a condition for action, is shared across contexts and we pay attention to the ways in which corporeality reveals itself differently in different contexts.

March 8 represents a history of struggles built around an explicit wish to exchange experiences, strengths, and vulnerabilities across national borders and against multiple injustices—which also travel across national borders. In this book, we are influenced by theorizations in which the body has been understood as not only a site of control but also a site of resistance (Alcoff 2006; Cuesta and Mulinari 2018; Sutton 2007), and we examine the embodied nature of struggles against attempts at policing or controlling bodies and their movements, as we inquire into how vulnerability can be mobilized as a form of resistance (Butler 2015). By focusing on questions of materiality in feminist and LGBTI+ struggles, we illuminate the broad socioeconomic agenda that characterizes present-day resistances, recognize the long genealogies in struggles for gender equality and sexual rights and show how actors embedded in particular sites bring new dimensions to these genealogies.

Bringing forth the ambiguity with which the body can appear both as an object of social control and as a site of agency, the discussions in this book highlight the relationship between power and bodies. We build further on the insights of queer and anti-racist feminist researchers, who have theorized dynamics of in/visibility in explorations of queer and/or feminist struggles in various, postcolonial and postsocialist, contexts (Alcoff 2006; Loftsdottír and Jensen 2012; Mayerchik and Plakhotnik 2021; Stella 2012), and we recognize the tension between visibility as a way to achieve autonomy versus as a measure of control (Luibhéid 2020; Sager 2018). Our multi-scalar approach to resistance allows us to move beyond the dichotomy of visible and invisible forms and to recognize the fluid relations that determine resistance at various scales. Resistance, we show, can start with one individual body and incite collective practices which may result in social change in the long run (Butler 2015; Pile 1997). Engaging with tensions between invisibility/visibility and silence/speech, several scholars have recognized how actors located at the intersection of multiple non-dominant positionalities in particular contexts, such as trans, Black and Muslim and feminist women or LGBTI+ migrants in the global North, East and South carry a

positionality whose “very nature resists the telling” since these positionalities lack or have weaker access to available broadly comprehended narratives with which to share the reality of one’s experiences to the world (Luibhéid 2020: 57; Liinason 2020; Story 2017). In order to change these dynamics, scholars argue for the need to work toward transforming knowledge production, because research and researchers frequently violate, silence, or erase the experiences of marginalized populations (Luibhéid 2020), and propose the usefulness of fostering forms of telling that may allow marginalized actors to share their experiences. Yet, as we argue, our focus on embodied or corporeal resistance does not privilege or put heavier weight on a politics of visibility or contentious forms of public action. Rather, as the discussions in this book emphasize, it is the fluidity between various scales of resistance—individually/collectively, on micro/meso/macro level—that carry a significant potential for developing forms of resistance which may build more open-ended futures, as it incites and inspires new practices of resistance on various levels.

While politics of visibility and rights struggles are oftentimes taken for granted as the dominant mode of resistance in academic circles as well as in NGOs, feminist and queer scholars have scrutinized the binaries between visible and invisible struggles. Claiming that “being out and proud is not a choice equally available to all queers” Francesca Stella (2012, 1841) argues that invisibility can take shape as both accommodation and resistance. Influenced by these critical insights, researchers find that there is no necessary correlation between increased visibility and strengthened rights and search for the possibility of modes of invisibility to work as a form of power that could interfere with, and potentially transform, power hegemonies.

Paying attention to the ambiguities of in/visibility and to the porous and fluid borders of various spaces and scales, this book examines the simultaneous exposure and agency of the body and highlights the various ways in which spaces of resistance take shape through bodily assemblies (Browne et al. 2017; Pile 1997). Bringing forth important dimensions to the contestations around modes of in/visibility, we emphasize the importance of complicating the debate within which visibility is equated with expanded rights, and to bring nuance to various, fluctuating or

hybrid, modes of in/visibility in discussions about rights and representation. Building further on this theoretical understandings, in Chapter 5, we illuminate how embodied struggles for the right to appear, through a mixed use of tactics of visibility, invisibility, and anonymity, opens up a possibility for a coalitional framework in the struggle, where linkages between different positionalities can be established. By addressing the interactive functions of the individual as well as the collective body in public assemblies, highlighting their political aspects and illuminating the variegated roles of anonymity, respectively, visibility in these struggles, we demonstrate how embodied struggles express a protest against exclusion and relations of domination. In these struggles, we show, the body takes shape as a site of agency and takes part in co-creating space. As spaces of resistance, we conclude, these struggles have the potential to shape other spatialities instead of those defined through relations of domination.

From our understanding of resistance in the grey zone, oscillating in multi-scalar fashion between barely perceptible, hidden, or covert micro-movements and highly visible events or street protests gathering large crowds, the approaches to feminist and LGBTI+ struggles presented in this chapter serve to recognize the rich tradition of feminist and queer thought within which the discussions of the book are situated and to which it seeks to contribute. Bringing together various strands of feminist and queer research, these theorizations allow us to study, in the chapters ahead, the possibilities of feminist and LGBTI+ activists to resist and negotiate material conditions of struggle, the ambivalences of transnational solidarity-building, and the coeval exposure and agency of the body. As we devote our attention to explore spaces of resistance in transnational feminist and LGBTI+ struggles across Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries, in the pages that follow, we scrutinize these enactments and their movements across various scales, over state-market-civil society relations and solidarity struggles in local and transnational contexts, to the multifaceted potential of the body in individual and collective forms of resistance. Next, Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the material conditions of feminist and LGBTI+ activism in the contexts of our research, aspiring to unpack the complexity of these relations beyond

dichotomous divides of East/West-South/North, local versus global, and passionate versus professional.

References

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1990. "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women." *American Ethnologist* 17 (1): 41–55.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.
- Alcoff, Linda. 2006. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender and the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alexander, Jacqui, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds. 1997. *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Ålund, Aleksandra. 1995. "Alterity in Modernity." *Acta Sociologica*, no. 38: 311–22.
- Alvarez, Sonia E. 1999. "Advocating Feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO 'Boom'." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1 (2): 181–209.
- . 2014. "Beyond NGOization? Reflections from Latin America." In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal, 285–300. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Alvarez, Sonia E., Claudia de Lima Costa, Veronica Feliu, Rebecca Hester, Norma Klahn, and Millie Thayer, eds. 2014. *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Americas*. Bilingual edition. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Anderson, Perry. 1976. "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci." *New Left Review* 1 (100): 5–78.
- Appelros, Erika. 2005. "Religion Och Intersektionalitet." *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift*, nos. 2–3: 69–80.
- Arik, Hülya, Selin Çağatay, Mia Liinason, and Olga Sasunkevich. Forthcoming. "Unsettling Political: Conceptualizing the Political in Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism Across Russia, Scandinavian Countries and Turkey." *International Journal of Feminist Politics*. Online First.
- Baaz, Mikael, Mona Lilja, and Stellan Vinthagen. 2017a. *Researching Resistance and Social Change: A Critical Approach to Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- . 2017b. “Resistance Studies as an Academic Pursuit.” *Journal of Resistance Studies* 3 (1): 10–28.
- Babül, Elif M. 2015. “The Paradox of Protection: Human Rights, the Masculinist State, and the Moral Economy of Gratitude in Turkey.” *American Ethnologist* 42 (1): 116–30.
- Bagić, Aida. 2006. “Women’s Organizing in Post-Yugoslav Countries: Talking about ‘Donors.’” In *Global Feminism: Transnational Women’s Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, edited by Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp, 141–65. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Basu, Amrita. 2016. *Women’s Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms*. 2nd edition. Boulder: Routledge.
- Bernal, Victoria, and Inderpal Grewal. 2014. “Introduction. The NGO Form: Feminist Struggles, States, and Neoliberalism.” In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal, 1–18. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Birey, Tegiye, Celine Cantat, Ewa Mączyńska, and Eda Sevinin. 2019. *Challenging the Political across Borders: Migrants’ and Solidarity Struggles*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Bobbio, Norberto. 1979. “Gramsci and the Conception of Civil Society.” In *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, edited by Chantal Mouffe, 21–47. London: Routledge & Keagan Paul.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2011. “Postsecular Paradoxes.” In *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*, 170–206. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Brandt, Nella van den. 2014. “Secular Feminisms and Attitudes towards Religion in the Context of a West-European Society—Flanders, Belgium.” *Women’s Studies International Forum*, no. 44: 35–45.
- Brintnall, Kent L. 2013. “Queer Studies and Religion.” *Critical Research on Religion* 1 (1): 51–61.
- Brock, Maria, and Emil Edenborg. 2021. “‘You Cannot Oppress Those Who Do Not Exist’: Gay Persecution in Chechnya and the Politics of In/Visibility.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 26 (4): 673–700.
- Browne, Kath, Niharika Banerjee, Nick McGlynn, B. Sumita, Leela Bakshi, Rukmini Banerjee, and Ranjita Biswas. 2017. “Towards Transnational Feminist Queer Methodologies.” *Gender, Place & Culture* 24 (10): 1376–97.
- Butler, Judith. 1993. “Critically Queer.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1 (1): 17–32.
- . 2015. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 2018. “Solidarity/Susceptibility.” *Social Text* 36 (4 (137)): 1–20.

- de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chowdhury, Elora, and Liz Philipose, eds. 2016. *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism, and Transnational Solidarity*. Reprint edition. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press.
- Comas-Díaz, Lillian. 2008. "Carolyn Sherif Award Address: Spiritas: Reclaiming Womanist Sacredness into Feminism." *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, no. 32: 13–21.
- Combahee River Collective. 1986. *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties*. Boston: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.
- Connections. 2020. "Disappointed Hopes: Reclaiming the Promise of Resistance. Workshop Organized by University of Edinburgh, Centre for Ethics and Critical Thought, 07.12.2020 - 09.12.2020." Connections. A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists. December 11, 2020. <http://www.connections.clio-online.net/event/id/event-94561>.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241–99.
- Cuesta, Marta, and Diana Mulinari. 2018. "The Bodies of Others in Swedish Feminism." *Gender, Place & Culture* 25 (7): 978–93.
- Daly, Sunny. 2010. "Young Women as Activists in Contemporary Egypt: Anxiety, Leadership, and the Next Generation: Winner of the Biannual JMEWS Award for Best Graduate Student Paper." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6 (2): 59–85.
- Dean, Jodi. 1996. *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Della Porta, Donatella. 2014. *Mobilizing for Democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dhawan, Nikita. 2013. "Coercive Cosmopolitanism and Impossible Solidarities." *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences. Special Issue: Human Rights between Past and Future* 22 (1): 139–66.
- Doyle, Jessica Leigh. 2018. "Government Co-Option of Civil Society: Exploring the AKP's Role within Turkish Women's CSOs." *Democratization* 25 (3): 445–63.
- Dufour, Pascale, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, eds. 2010. *Solidarities beyond Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

- Echagüe, Richard, and Ana Youngs. 2017. "Shrinking Space for Civil Society: The EU Response." European Parliament: Directorate-General for External Policies. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/04/21/shrinking-space-for-civil-society-eu-response-pub-68743>.
- Eder, Klaus. 2009. "The Making of a European Civil Society: 'Imagined', 'Practised' and 'Staged'." *Policy and Society* 28 (1): 23–33.
- Edwards, Michael. 2011. "Introduction: Civil Society and the Geometry of Human Relations." *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. August 29, 2011.
- Einwohner, Rachel L., Kaitlin Kelly-Thompson, Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, Fernando Tormos-Aponte, S. Laurel Weldon, Jared M. Wright, and Charles Wu. 2021. "Active Solidarity: Intersectional Solidarity in Action." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 28 (3): 704–29.
- Eldén, Åsa, and Paul T. Levin. 2018. "Swedish Aid in the Era of Shrinking Space—The Case of Turkey." 2018: 06. EBA Rapport. Stockholm: Expert Group for Aid Studies.
- Emejulu, Akwugo. 2018. "Crisis Politics and the Challenge of Intersectional Solidarity." Public lecture presented at the LSE events, London, February 2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVL_8497-co.
- Erensi, Sinan, and Ayça Alemdaroğlu. 2018. Dialectics of Reform and Repression: Unpacking Turkey's Authoritarian "Turn." *Review of Middle East Studies* 52 (1): 16–28.
- Eschle, Catherine, and Bice Maiguashca. 2018. "Theorising Feminist Organising in and against Neoliberalism: Beyond Co-Optation and Resistance?" *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 1 (1–2): 223–39.
- Evans, Mary. 2014. "Religion, Feminist Theory and Epistemology." In *Handbook of Feminist Theory*, edited by Ania Plomien, Clare Hemmings, Marsha Henry, Mary Evans, Sadie Wearing, and Sumi Madhok, 131–42. London: SAGE.
- Fahlgren, Siv, Anders Johansson, and Diana Mulinari. 2011. "Introduction: Challenging Normalization Processes in a Neoliberal Welfare State." In *Normalization and Outsiderhood: Feminist Readings of a Neoliberal Welfare State*, edited by Siv Fahlgren, Anders Johansson, and Diana Mulinari, 2–16. Dubai: Bentham Science E-book.
- Farris, Sara R. 2017. *In the Name of Women's Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Fink, Janet, and Åsa Lundqvist, eds. 2010. *Changing Relations of Welfare*. London: Ashgate.
- Fraser, Nancy. 2009. "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History." *New Left Review*, no. 56: 97–117.

- García-Del Moral, Paulina, Di Wang, Myra Marx Ferree, and Thomas Davies. 2019. "Feminist Politics and NGO Mobilization: Can NGOs Degender Global Governance?" In *Routledge Handbook of NGOs and International Relations*, 223–36. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2004. "Feminism-by-Design: Emerging Capitalisms, Cultural Feminism, and Women's Nongovernmental Organizations in Post-socialist Eastern Europe." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29 (3): 727–53.
- Gorringe, Tim. 2017. "Cult Books Revisited: Gustavo Gutierrez's a Theology of Liberation." *Theology* 120 (4): 246–52.
- Gorski, Paul C. 2019. "Racial Battle Fatigue and Activist Burnout in Racial Justice Activists of Color at Predominately White Colleges and Universities." *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 22 (1): 1–20.
- Gorski, Paul C., and Cher Chen. 2015. "'Frayed All Over': The Causes and Consequences of Activist Burnout Among Social Justice Education Activists." *Educational Studies* 51 (5): 385–405.
- Grabowska, Magdalena. 2012. "Bringing the Second World In: Conservative Revolution(s), Socialist Legacies, and Transnational Silences in the Trajectories of Polish Feminism Unfinished." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37 (2): 385–411.
- Gradskova, Yulia. 2019. "Gender Equality as a Declaration: The Changing Environment of Nordic-Russian Cooperation." In *Rethinking Gender Equality in Global Governance: The Delusion of Norm Diffusion*, edited by Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Adam Fejerskov, and Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde, 169–90. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1999 (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Elec Book.
- Grewal, Inderpal. 2005. *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 1994. *Scattered Hegemonies. Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Guenther, Katja M. 2011. "The Possibilities and Pitfalls of NGO Feminism: Insights from Postsocialist Eastern Europe." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (4): 863–87.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. 1974. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. London: SCM Press.
- Hagemann, Karen, Sonya Michel, and Gunilla-Friederike Budde. 2011. *Civil Society and Gender Justice: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

- Harris, Melaine, and Katie Ott. 2011. *Faith, Feminism, and Scholarship: The Next Generation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hawkesworth, M. E. 2006. *Globalization and Feminist Activism*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hawthorne, Sían Melvill. 2017. "Inhospitable Landscapes: Disciplinary Territories and the Feminist 'Paradigm Shift'." *Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions*, no. 19: 36–55.
- Helms, Elissa. 2014. "The Movementization of NOGs? Women's Organizing in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina." In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Inderpal Grewal and Elissa Bernal, 21–49. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hemment, Julie. 2007. *Empowering Women in Russia: Activism, Aid, and NGOs*. Illustrated edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hemmings, Clare. 2005. "Invoking Affect." *Cultural Studies* 19 (5): 548–67.
- . 2012. "Affective Solidarity: Feminist Reflexivity and Political Transformation." *Feminist Theory* 13 (2): 147–61.
- Hodžić, Saida. 2014. "Feminist Bastards: Toward a Posthumanist Critique of NGOization." In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal, 221–47. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hodžić, Saida. 2016. *The Twilight of Cutting: African Activism and Life after NGOs*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Hollander, Jocelyn A., and Rachel L. Einwohner. 2004. "Conceptualizing Resistance." *Sociological Forum* 19 (4): 533–54.
- hooks, bell. 1984. *From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End.
- Humphrys, Elizabeth. 2018. "Anti-Politics, the Early Marx and Gramsci's 'Integral State'." *Thesis Eleven* 147 (1): 29–44.
- INCITE! 2007. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Jabri, Vivienne. 2007. "Solidarity and Spheres of Culture: The Cosmopolitan and the Postcolonial." *Review of International Studies* 33 (4): 715–28.
- Jong, Sara de. 2017. *Complicit Sisters: Gender and Women's Issues across North-South Divides*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Katz, Hagai. 2009. "Civil Society Theory: Gramsci." In *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, edited by Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler, 1:408–12. New York: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Kaya, Özlem, and Pınar Ögünç. 2020. *Chess, Hide-and-Seek and Determination: Civil Society in Difficult Times*. Istanbul: Anadolu Kültür.

- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kelliher, Diarmaid. 2018. "Historicising Geographies of Solidarity." *Geography Compass*, no. 12: 1–12.
- Keskinen, Sui, Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir, and Mari Toivanen, eds. 2019. *Undoing Homogeneity in the Nordic Region: Migration, Difference and the Politics of Solidarity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kirey-Sitnikova, Yana. 2020. "Borrowing and Imitation in Post-Soviet Trans Activisms." In *The SAGE Handbook of Global Sexualities*, edited by Zowie Davy, Ana Cristina Santos, Chiara Bertone, Ryan Thoreson, and Saskia E. Wieringa, 774–97. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Lang, Sabine. 1997. "The NGOization of Feminism: Institutionalization and Institution Buidling within the German Women's Movements." In *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminisms in International Politics*, edited by Joan W. Scott, Cora Kaplan, and Debra Keates, 101–20. New York: Routledge.
- . 2012. *NGOs, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere*. Illustrated edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Liinason, Mia. 2017. *Equality Struggles: Womens Movements, Neoliberal Markets and State Political Agendas in Scandinavia*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2020. "Multiplicities of Power—Multiplicities of Struggle. Intersectional Movements and Feminist and Queer Grassroots Activism." In *Handbuch Intersektionalitätsforschung*, edited by Astrid Biele Mefebue, Andrea D. Bührmann, and Sabine Grenz, 1–14. SpringerLink Online Source: Springer.
- . 2021. "'Drawing the Line' and Other Small-Scale Resistances: Exploring Agency and Ambiguity in Transnational Feminist and Queer NGOs." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 23 (1): 102–24.
- Liinason, Mia, and Marta Cuesta. 2016. *Hoppets politik: feministisk aktivism i Sverige idag*. Göteborg: Makadam.
- Loftsdottir, Kristín, and Lars Jensen. 2012. *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Lorde, Audre. 1984. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 110–13. Trumansburg: Crossing Press.
- Lorenz-Meyer, Dagmar. 2013. "Timescapes of Activism: Trajectories, Encounters and Timings of Czech Women's NGOs." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 20 (4): 408–24.

- Lugones, María. 2003. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Luibhéid, Eithne. 2020. "Migrant and Refugee Lesbians: Lives That Resist the Telling." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 24 (2): 57–76.
- MacKenzie, James C. 2017. "Politics and Pluralism in the Círculo Sagrado: The Scope and Limits of Pan-Indigenous Spirituality in Guatemala and Beyond." *International Journal of Latin American Religions* 1 (2): 353–75.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mansueto, Anthony. 1988. "Religion, Solidarity and Class Struggle: Marx, Durkheim and Gramsci on the Religion Question." *Social Compass* XXXC (2–3): 261–77.
- Martinsson, Lena, and Diana Mulinari, eds. 2018. *Dreaming Global Change, Doing Local Feminisms: Visions of Feminism: Global North/Global South Encounters, Conversations and Disagreements*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mason-Deese, Liz. 2016. "Unemployed Workers' Movements and the Territory of Social Reproduction." *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2 (2): 65–99.
- Massey, Doreen. 2005. *For Space*. London: SAGE.
- Mayerchyk, Maria, and Olga Plakhotnik. 2021. "Uneventful Feminist Protest in Post-Maidan Ukraine: Nation and Coloniality Revisited." In *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues, Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice*, edited by Redi Koobak, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, 121–37. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mendoza, Breny. 2002. "Transnational Feminisms in Question." *Feminist Theory* 3 (3): 295–314.
- Meyer, Mary K., and Elisabeth Prügl, eds. 1999. *Gender Politics in Global Governance*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1984. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2* 12/13 (3/1): 333–58.
- . 2003a. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- . 2003b. "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (2): 499–535.
- Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. 2015. *This Bridge Called My Back, Fourth Edition: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Morgan, Robin, ed. 1984. *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY.

- Motta, Sara C., and Tiina Seppälä. 2016. "Editorial: Feminized Resistance." *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2 (2): 5–32.
- Murru, Sarah. 2020. "Drawing from Feminist Epistemologies to Research Resistance: The Case of Single Moms in Hanoi." In *Resistances: Between Theories and the Field*, edited by Sarah Murru and Abel Polese, 169–87. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Murru, Sarah, and Abel Polese, eds. 2020. *Resistances: Between Theories and the Field*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Narayan, Uma. 1997. *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism*. New York: Routledge.
- Paley, Julia. 2001. "The Paradox of Participation: Civil Society and Democracy in Chile." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 24 (1): 1–12.
- Pedwell, Carolyn. 2012. "Affective (Self-) Transformations: Empathy, Neoliberalism and International Development." *Feminist Theory* 13 (2): 163–79.
- Pile, Steve. 1997. "Introduction." In *Geographies of Resistance*, edited by Steve Pile and Michael Keith, 1–32. London and New York: Routledge.
- Rai, Shirin M. 2018. "The Good Life and the Bad: Dialectics of Solidarity." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (1): 1–19.
- Räthzel, Nora, David Uzzell, Ragnar Lundström, and Beatriz Leandro. 2015. "The Space of Civil Society and the Practices of Resistance and Subordination." *Journal of Civil Society* 11 (2): 154–69.
- Ritchie, Jason. 2010. "How Do You Say 'Come Out of the Closet' in Arabic? Queer Activism and the Politics of Visibility in Israel-Palestine." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16 (4): 557–75.
- Robinson, William I. 2005. "Gramsci and Globalisation: From Nation-State to Transnational Hegemony." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 8 (4): 559–74.
- Roy, Srila. 2011. "Politics, Passion and Professionalization in Contemporary Indian Feminism." *Sociology* 45 (4): 587–602.
- . 2016. "Women's Movements in the Global South: Towards a Scalar Analysis." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29 (3): 289–306.
- Sager, Maja. 2018. "Struggles around Representation and In/Visibility in Everyday Migrant Irregularity in Sweden." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 8 (3): 175–82.
- Salem, Sara. 2017. "On Transnational Feminist Solidarity: The Case of Angela Davis in Egypt." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43 (2): 245–67.

- Salmenniemi, Suvi. 2008. *Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Schild, Verónica. 2015. "Feminism and Neoliberalism in Latin America." *New Left Review*, no. 96 (December): 59–74.
- Schultz, Susanne. 2010. "Redefining and Medicalizing Population Policies: NGOs and Their Innovative Contributions to the Post-Cairo Agenda." In *Markets and Malthus: Population, Gender and Health in Neo-Liberal Times*, edited by Mohan Rao and Sarah Sexton. SAGE.
- Scott, James C. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, Joan. 2009. "Sexularism. RSCAS Distinguished Lectures, Robert Schumann Centre for Advanced Studies, Florence." Written report, European University Institute Florence, April 23. https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/11553/RSCAS_DL_2009_01.pdf.
- Silliman, Jael. 1999. "Expanding Civil Society: Shrinking Political Spaces—The Case of Women's Nongovernmental Organizations." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 6 (1): 23–53.
- Skokova, Yulia, Ulla Pape, and Irina Krasnopolskaya. 2018. "The Non-Profit Sector in Today's Russia: Between Confrontation and Co-Optation." *Europe-Asia Studies* 70 (4): 531–63.
- Spade, Dean. 2015. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1996. "'Woman' as Theatre." *Radical Philosophy*, no. 75 (February): 2–4.
- Stella, Francesca. 2012. "The Politics of In/Visibility: Carving Out Queer Space in Ul'yanovsk." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 (10): 1822–46.
- . 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Story, Kaila Adia. 2017. "Fear of a Black Femme: The Existential Conundrum of Embodying a Black Femme Identity While Being a Professor of Black, Queer, and Feminist Studies." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 21 (4): 407–19.
- Suchland, Jennifer. 2015. *Economies of Violence: Transnational Feminism, Post-socialism, and the Politics of Sex Trafficking*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Sundstrom, Lisa McIntosh. 2006. *Funding Civil Society: Foreign Assistance and NGO Development in Russia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Sutton, Barbara. 2007. "Poner El Cuerpo: Women's Embodiment and Political Resistance in Argentina." *Latin American Politics and Society* 49 (3): 129–62.

- Tadros, Mariz. 2010. "Between the Elusive and the Illusionary: Donors' Empowerment Agendas in the Middle East in Perspective." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30 (2): 224–37.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 2001. "Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics: Introduction." In *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, edited by Charles Tilley, Doug McAdam, Elizabeth J. Perry, Jack A. Goldstone, Ronald R. Aminzade, Sidney Tarrow, and William H. Sewell, 1–13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, Yvette, Emily Falconer, and Emily Snowdon. 2014. "Queer Youth, Facebook and Faith: Facebook Methodologies and Online Identities." *New Media & Society* 16 (7): 1138–53.
- Texier, Jacques. 1979. "Gramsci, Theoretician of the Superstructures: On the Concept of Civil Society." In *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, edited by Chantal Mouffe, 48–79. London: Routledge & Keagan Paul.
- Thayer, Millie. 2009. *Making Transnational Feminism: Rural Women, NGO Activists, and Northern Donors in Brazil*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Thomas, Peter D. 2009a. "Gramsci and the Political: From the State as 'Metaphysical Event' to Hegemony as 'Philosophical Fact'." *Radical Philosophy* 153: 27–36.
- . 2009b. *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Tilly, Charles. 2008. *Contentious Performances*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tormos, Fernando. 2017. "Intersectional Solidarity." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5 (4): 707–20.
- Vaccaro, Annemarie, and Jasmine A. Mena. 2011. "It's Not Burnout, It's More: Queer College Activists of Color and Mental Health." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* 15 (4): 339–67.
- Valkonen, Sanna, and Sandra Wallenius-Korkalo. 2015. "Embodying Religious Control: An Intersectional Approach to Sámi Women in Laestadianism." *Culture and Religion* 16 (1): 1–16.
- Wane, Nioki Nathani, Miglena Todorova, and Kimberly L. Tood. 2019. *Decolonizing the Spirit in Education and beyond: Resistance and Solidarity*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Warren, Mark E. 2011. "Civil Society and Democracy." In *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, edited by Michael Edwards. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Watson, Peggy. 1993. "Eastern Europe's Silent Revolution: Gender." *Sociology* 27 (3): 471–87.

- Weldon, S. Laurel. 2018. "Some Complexities of Solidarity: A Commentary on Shirin Rai's 'The Good Life and the Bad: Dialectics of Solidarity'." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (1): 34–43.
- Wiedlack, Katharina. 2019. "Fucking Solidarity." In *Queer-Feminist Solidarity and the East/West Divide*, edited by Katharina Wiedlack, Saltanat Shoshanova, and Masha Godovannaya, 21–50. Oxford and New York: Peter Lang.
- Wiedlack, Katharina, Saltanat Shoshanova, and Masha Godovannaya, eds. 2019. *Queer-Feminist Solidarity and the East/West Divide*. Oxford and New York: Peter Lang.
- Wilson, Kalpana. 2015. "Towards a Radical Re-Appropriation: Gender, Development and Neoliberal Feminism." *Development and Change* 46 (4): 803–32.
- Yabancı, Bilge. 2016. "Populism as the Problem Child of Democracy: The AKP's Enduring Appeal and the Use of Meso-Level Actors." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16 (4): 591–617.
- Young, Iris Marion. 2002. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2011. *Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging*. London: SAGE.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.





3

Transforming Conditions of Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism

In this chapter we analyze the material conditions of activist work in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries. We understand material in a broad sense—as a legislative frame of activist practices, access to resources including funding, employment conditions, geographical, and geopolitical locality. The chapter traces differences and similarities between different groups of feminist and LGBTI+ activists across the three contexts. We analyze how material conditions affect activist practices and activists' everyday lives and how activists navigate, adapt to, and resist hegemonic relations emerging at the intersection of strategies of the powerful (de Certeau 1984) such as the state, civil society, transnational actors, and the market.

The empirical investigation of material conditions of feminist and LGBTI+ activism draws on a theoretical foundation laid in the previous chapter. Engaging there with literature on civil society, the state and the NGOization paradigm (Alvarez 1999, 2014; Bernal and Grewal 2014; Hemment 2007), we have argued that the relations between civil society, the state, and the market depend on the positionality of transnational, national, and local actors in terms of their belonging to hegemonic or

counter-hegemonic struggles. In this chapter we animate our theoretical point of departure with empirically based arguments.

In the first section, we look at the relations between activists and the state in each of the contexts. As opposed to the tendency to perceive civil society in authoritarian contexts such as Turkey and Russia as shrinking under state pressure (Eldén and Levin 2018; Gradskova 2019) and counterpositioning them against liberal democracies such as Scandinavia, we suggest a more nuanced and cross-national understanding of relations between the state and civil society in all countries we analyze. The relations between feminist and LGBTI+ organizations/activists and states in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries certainly differ. As we show in Chapter 1, activism in these contexts has developed under varied historical circumstances, which shape the role and status of civil society in the three contexts today. However, gender equality and sexual rights are salient issues for domestic and international politics across Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries. The instrumentalization of gender and sexuality in political debates sets the frame for the functioning of civil society across our research contexts and directly shapes activist lives and practices. *In the second section*, we analyze tensions within civil society, namely among activists and organizations on multiple levels. We attend to frictions that emerge in international collaborations (between East and West), along the province/metropolia axis and between activists from minority and mainstream organizations. As we highlight, multiplicity and multi-scalarity of tensions in activist work is informed by the transnational framing of activism through neoliberal marketization. These transnational tensions extend beyond the North–South geopolitical divide that is more often acknowledged in studies of transnational feminist and LGBTI+ activism (Dufour et al. 2010; Rao 2020). We continue interrogating the influence of marketization on the activist work *in the third section*. There we unpack how donor politics influences activists' mundane operations. We also provide an account of activists' resistant tactics which vary from small-scale adjustments and navigation to complete withdrawal from donor funding in favor of more independent and sustainable strategies.

Contextualizing Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism: State–Civil Society Contestations

Russia: Activists' Mobilization in Response to Repressive State Practices

When Olga started her fieldwork, gender equality and sexuality rights in Russia were in the spotlight. On March 8, 2017, the feminist rally in St. Petersburg was brutally suppressed by the police (Klochkova 2017; see also Chapter 5). Later in April, *Novaya Gazeta*, the anti-Kremlin Russian newspaper, uncovered the persecution of homosexual people in Chechnya, the federal subject of the Russian Federation (Brock and Edenberg 2020; see also Chapter 4). The situation attracted enormous attention in international media (e.g., Deutsche Welle 2017; Walker 2017) and among transnational organizations and political bodies (e.g., OHCHR: Chechnya 2019; PACE 2018). Planning one of the first fieldwork trips to Russia we were provided with very rigorous security instructions by a Swedish-based NGO working with Russian LGBTI+ and women's organizations. We were advised to encrypt our fieldwork notes and interviews and to avoid carrying them on laptops when we were entering or leaving the country. Taken together, the atmosphere did not promise much enthusiasm. Yet, as we discovered, grassroots feminist initiatives and LGBTI+ NGOs were thriving in the country. Several large queer events such as *Kvirfest* and LGBT International Film Festival *Bok o bok* have been organized in St. Petersburg annually since the late 2000s. On March 8, the International Women's Day, multiple feminist events occurred in Moscow and St. Petersburg but also across the vast geography of Russia including but not limited to Kazan, Novosibirsk, Perm, and Ufa. Certainly, some of these events underwent municipality limitations such as denial of space for gathering (Activatica 2020) and security threats (Rosbalt 2018). Others, such as the LGBTIQIAPP+ Family conference in Moscow, or the annual Forum of the Russian LGBT Network, required rigorous security protocols and the presence of a security agency. Nonetheless, the atmosphere of hate and aversion in relation to LGBTI+ and feminist agendas largely maintained by the Russian state paradoxically contributed to the visibility

of the LGBTI+ agenda, rising awareness about LGBTI+ and feminist issues among general public, more tolerant and enlightened attitude of independent media and local human rights organizations (Fig. 3.1).

The rise of anti-gender and homophobic political sentiments in Russia dates back to the 2000s when Vladimir Putin, the second and current Russian president, came to power. After a decade of democratization and freedom accompanied by economic and social turmoil of the 1990s, Russia turned toward “managed democracy” (Salmenniemi 2008; Tsygankov 2014) that has gradually developed into (semi-)authoritarianism (Sperling 2015). Civil society including women’s and LGBTI+ organizations that blossomed in Russia in the 1990s–the mid-2000s has become one of the most proclaimed objects of state repression. Civil society in post-Soviet Russia has been strongly associated with foreign interventions and the presence of Western experts, organizations, and funds (Gradszkova 2019; Hemment 2007; Johnson 2009; Sperling 2015; Sundstrom 2006). The regime’s ideology of traditional values (Moss 2017; Muravyeva 2014) and Russia’s “special [non-Western] path” (Umland 2012) developed through legislative, discursive, and, in extreme cases, physical attacks on “foreign agents” embodied by civil society organizations and individual activists. Importantly, the relations between the state and civil society in Russia, as elsewhere, are not univocal. As Skokova et al. (2018, 532) argue, the Russian state targets mostly the activities and organizations operating in contested political areas such as human rights, including gender equality and sexual rights, and environmental protection. Organizations that align with state interests, for example, in covering social needs, on the contrary, enjoy some level of state support (Skokova et al. 2018).

Within the last two decades the Russian government adopted three pieces of restrictive legislation regulating the work of NGOs—“2006 NGO law” (Russian Federal Law 1996), the “foreign agent” law of 2012 (Russian Federal Law 2012), and the law on “undesirable organizations” (Russian Federal Law 2015). The law of 2006 introduced restrictions on foreign funding and toughened conditions for NGOs’ registration and annual reporting for the first time (Salmenniemi 2008, 2; Skokova et al. 2018, 541). The “foreign agent” law targeted organizations that received foreign funding and simultaneously participated in political



Fig. 3.1 “Russia aiming towards the future.” The photo captures feminist intervention during Women’s Historical Night in May 2018 in Kaliningrad. The photo contains the portrait of Hannah Arendt in black-and-white on the building colored in the tricolor of the Russian flag with the text “Russia aiming towards the future.” Arendt spent her childhood in Königsberg, today’s Kaliningrad, that was a German city until 1945. Creators: Maria Kokhanovskaya and Alexandra Solodovnikova (Photo Credit: Olga Sasunkevich)

activities broadly defined (Skokova et al. 2018). In 2020, new legislative changes allowed for labeling individual activists as “foreign agents” (Russian Federal Law 2020). The law on “undesirable organizations” illegalized the activities of certain international NGOs including the Open Society Institute that is well known for promoting gender equality and sexual rights issues in the postsocialist region (Cope et al. 2017).

In 2013, the Russian government passed the notorious “gay-propaganda” law forbidding the popularization of “non-traditional sexual relations” among minors (Russian Federal Law 2013; see also Johnson 2015; Kondakov 2019; Zhabenko 2019). According to some

commentators, taken together, the “anti-propaganda” law and the “foreign agent” law of 2012 specifically targeted LGBTI+ activism as it predominantly relies on foreign funding (Kahlina and Ristivojević 2015). On the one hand, these legislative changes could be seen as an attempt by Putin’s regime to solidify its legitimacy at home (Soboleva and Bakhmetjev 2015); and on the other, they send an important geopolitical message about Russia’s refusal to obey Western standards of human rights and civilization (Edenborg 2017). Below we analyze various tactics of (dis)engagement with the state employed by Russian LGBTI+ activists in response to these developments.

One noticeable side effect of the repressive legislation targeting LGBTI+ people is *mobilization* of LGBTI+ organizations and grassroots initiatives. While Moscow and St. Petersburg had a vivid LGBTI+ activist scene already since the mid-2000s, regional activist initiatives and organizations blossomed in the mid-2010s as a response to “foreign agent” and “anti-propaganda” laws. Expectedly, political homophobia increased the level of homophobic violence and hate speech (Kondakov 2017, 2019) as well as insecurity and anxiety among queer people in Russia (Zhabenko 2019). However, it also stimulated mobilization among people and activists, as the quotes below suggest.

Quote 1:

The law about propaganda came true in 2012. And at first we were laughing at it, it was such a stupid law, how are they going to implement it? In 2013 it became less funny. And then in 2015 there was the most extensive rise of violence. It was just impossible because every two months our office was attacked and activists were regularly beaten. (...) So, in 2012 and even in 2013 we had some illusions. (...) But in 2014 it became clear that we need to change something and we need to do something. And I became a volunteer of a psychological service [in a regional LGBTI+ organization].

Quote 2:

Research Partner (RP) 1: People don’t have an idea about activism, that people can be creators of their own future and present. In order for

something to happen, it is necessary to do something. And many don't think this way. They feel it as uncomfortable to live in a hostile environment, to hide [their identity] at the workplace, in the family, but they get used to it, they are ready to accept this. But here are people who won't accept this (...).

Olga: You said there was no [LGBTI+] activism in [city]. Is this a common situation for all Russian cities or is [city] specific?

RP 1: I talked to people from other cities, they also confirmed the tendency that mostly youth visits their community centers or attends events.

RP 2: All got scared by the “propaganda law.”

RP 1: Yes, many got scared, therefore, many decide not to come.

RP 2: And this is why the youth is more active, they are more maximalists.

The first quote is from the interview with Natalia from the organization Forward in the northwest part of Russia. Forward emerged in 2007 as an initiative of six people who, according to another interview with the organization's founder, “wanted to diversify the life of the community with thematic events, picnics, or movie screenings.” Eventually, the initiative turned into a more established community-oriented organization, and got the “foreign agent” label in 2015. This and the increasing level of homophobic violence in the region under the influence of the “anti-propaganda” law made the organization to shift its focus to human rights agenda, which was automatically deemed as political by the Russian state. The circumstances also influenced individuals. As fragments from Natalia's interview show, her urge for activism was a reaction to the “gay propaganda” law. She and her friends did not take the law seriously at first but the increased level of violence in relation to LGBTI+ people made them reconsider this decision. Natalia joined Forward as a volunteer of a psychological service for LGBTI+ people. Later she became a coordinator of a human rights project in the organization.

The second quote is from a collective interview with the grassroots initiative, ROR, located in a large regional city in southern Russia. Established in 2017, ROR is positioned as a group of like-minded people who try to create a safe space for sharing their experience, finding new acquaintances, and exchanging useful information, e.g., about a medical commission for transgender people or human rights aspects of LGBTI+

activism. ROR's activities remind those of Forward before the legislative repressions; they include picnics, flashmobs, dissemination of information, and a psychological support to community members. However, since ROR has emerged in a context where the LGBTI+ agenda is already politicized, its members explicitly acknowledge their aim at societal change. Opposing those LGBTI+ people who are not ready to work for a change, ROR's activists recognize that the inspiration of their work comes from their willingness to create their own "future and present" in a hostile environment.

Unlike Forward, ROR does not have any funding for their work; their activities are mostly volunteer-based. The resource they consider most essential is experience exchange with other Russian LGBTI+ organizations and initiatives through events organized by the Russian LGBT Network they are part of, or, in case of other initiatives, through digital exchanges. The lack of funding allows ROR and multiple other feminist and LGBTI+ initiatives across Russian regions to keep a low profile—their activities remain largely unnoticed by the homophobic and anti-gender state apparatus.¹ This allows ROR and other similar initiatives to continue their community-oriented work in unfavorable circumstances. Being a non-registered and non-financed initiative, or *being invisible to the state* is a tactic to avoid unnecessary state attention and, consequently, resist the homophobic and anti-gender state.

Furthermore, some established and resourceful organizations, such as the service-oriented Perspective in Moscow, consciously avoid any relations with the state. They partially rely on foreign funding and engage in various transnational exchanges. While donors try to push these organizations in the direction of advocacy work, i.e., engagement with the state, organizations choose to keep a strategic distance to the state. Irina, the head of Perspective, considers advocacy aimed at the state as senseless under the current circumstances. Irina comes from a northern region in Russia where she established an LGBTI+ organization in the 2000s. When the organization was recognized as a "foreign agent," Irina paused the work of the organization and moved to Moscow where she founded

¹ This can change though with a new legislation targeting individuals as "foreign agents" (Russian Federal Law 2020).

the community center Perspective. She sees the aim of her current activism as “developing and strengthening networks among organizations that share [their] agenda” (including some feminist organizations) and at occupying a proper place among human rights organizations who used to perceive feminist and LGBTI+ initiatives with suspicion and even contempt (“as freaks who dance naked”). At the same time, when we discuss the relations between LGBTI+ activism and the Russian state, Irina says,

People who are more or less intelligent understand that we do not have enough resources to resist this propaganda machine, it will anyway win over. Therefore, among those who work [in activism] are mostly people who rather see the sense [of work] in helping other people.

[According to donors], service is to “give fish” and advocacy is to provide “fishing rod,” to achieve [broader] social changes or changes in legislation. When we write the project, we have to show that we will not merely organize psychological consultations but that there will also be changes in life conditions after that. I don’t know—should Putin tear out his hair and admit that he was a jerk, a homophobe? What kind of legislative changes one can achieve in a dictatorship?

Irina, whose activist experience tells her that the state is unchangeable at the current stage (she gives bitter accounts of the failed collaborations with state actors during her more than 10-year experience of activist work in other fragments of the interview), thinks that contribution to community is the most important work Russian LGBTI+ activists and initiatives can do. Thus, Irina *strategically (dis)engages from the state* while she also refuses to abandon her activist work. Instead, she prefers contributing to the development and strengthening of civil society which, in her view, is being enhanced in the country, state repressions notwithstanding.

Simultaneously, some degree of collaboration between feminist activists and the state should be also acknowledged. One example is the development of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence in Russia that was initially implemented in collaboration between feminist activists from the nongovernmental sector and the Russian Ministry of Labor (Khodyreva 2020). On the federal level, the law also gained the support of Oksana Pushkina, a member of the Russian Duma and a deputy

of United Russia, the pro-presidential “party of power” that mainly consists of politicians loyal to the federal executive (Konitzer and Wegren 2006). There is a noticeable resistance to the Law among the majority of the Duma members, which is in the spirit of the conservative turn in Russian state politics in relation to gender equality and women’s rights (Khodyreva 2020). Yet, as activists admit, this resistance also makes the problem of gender-based violence more visible and politically relevant in the public sphere (Artem’ev 2020).

Turkey: Coping with the State Through In/Formal Organizing

Resonating with the Russian case, participants in Selin’s research in Turkey oscillated between feelings of anxiety and disheartenment on the one hand, and anger and frustration on the other. Gender equality and sexual rights were attacked on a daily basis, and activists faced marginalization and various forms of state violence. In the past few years, state policies as well as popular mobilizations against feminist and LGBTI+ activism grew, and their transnational dynamics and ties became increasingly visible (Çağatay 2019; Özkazanç 2020a; Özkazanç et al. 2020). Mass public protests such as those on March 8 (International Women’s Day) and November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and the Pride Parade now faced prohibition and/or police intervention; strategizing around police violence became a primary concern for activists organizing these events. In line with the ruling Justice and Development Party’s (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, hereafter AKP) pursuit of a neoliberal, Sunni Islamist, and Turkish nationalist agenda (Akçay 2018; Esen and Gümüüşcü 2016; Güneş 2017) and—therefore—staunch positioning against secularist and pro-Kurdish politics, activists involved in or in solidarity with pro-Kurdish politics as well as those who publicly defended secularism were criminalized and punished with random court cases, detentions, and arrests with the accusation of promoting or engaging in terrorism.² Previously ignored by

² Turkey’s anti-terror law, the Act No. 3713 on the Fight Against Terrorism (1991), “[a]ims to aggravate the terms of imprisonment and punishments applicable to terrorists, to journalists

the state, LGBTI+ activism was now openly targeted as perversion, a threat to “public morality.” Feminists were portrayed as marginal women, acting against the Turkish-Muslim nation, offending motherhood and family values. Vigilante groups in Istanbul and Ankara took the streets several times on the occasion of March 8 and Pride events, threatening sometimes with fundamentalist chants and with small arms at others. Once participating in decision-making processes at the state level as legitimate constituents of a democratic society (see Chapter 1), both groups were seen as Western agents, not belonging to Turkey’s new nation-building project (Chatterjee 2019). The relationship between activists and the state was now characterized by “arbitrariness” where state intervention in civil society led to “a pervasive sense of uncertainty and fear” on the side of activists (Eldén and Levin 2018, 13).

Throughout the 2000s, Turkey’s commitment to mechanisms of global governance (e.g., UN processes like CEDAW) and Europeanization granted feminist and LGBTI+ organizations access to a wider range of funding and possibilities to participate in decision-making processes. Although governance and funding processes had ambiguous effects in the activist field, organizations were able to successfully press their demands on the state especially with regard to anti-discrimination laws in line with the EU human rights framework (Aldikacti Marshall 2013; Çağatay 2018; Kardam 2005; Müftüler-Baç 2012; Muehlenhoff 2019). The political environment for feminist and queer struggles changed dramatically in the 2010s. In power since 2002, the AKP gradually switched from a moderate Islamist outlook that was in line with Turkey’s prospect for EU accession to an inegalitarian program, characterized by scholars as “authoritarian populist” (Adaman et al. 2019; Özkazanç 2020b), “neoliberal populist” (Akçay 2018), “authoritarian neoliberal” (Tansel 2018), and “competitive authoritarian” (Esen and Gümüüşçü 2016), and developed tension-driven relations with not only feminist and LGBTI+ activism but all social and political groups that were not aligned with

who publish declarations emanating from terrorist organizations, to people who propagate against the unity of the state and to people and institutions that provide assistance to terrorist organizations” (ILO, n.d.). Amended several times over the course of AKP’s rule, this law has been used systematically to prosecute non-violent acts and opinions that challenged the interests of the ruling elite such as those of Kurds, socialists, Alevis, and non-Muslims (Yonucu 2018).

AKP governments' pro-Sunni Islamist and Turkish nationalist agenda.³ Yet, attacks on gender equality and sexual rights are specific in that they delineate the boundaries between AKP supporters cast as local and national, Turkish and Sunni Muslim at once; and others who are labeled as “treasonous and immoral” agents whose inauthentic claims are backed by the West (Kandiyoti 2016, 105; Özkazanç 2020a).

Unlike in the Russian case, the Turkish state did not target feminist and LGBTI+ CSOs by passing new laws but marginalized them within civil society through policy shifts and institutional change (Doyle 2018; Yabancı 2016). Starting with the renaming of the Ministry of Women and the Family as the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs in 2011, AKP governments embraced policies that gave up on gender equality as the desired outcome of policy-making and promoted women's role as mothers and wives together with neoliberal ways of including them in the labor market (Alniaçık et al. 2017; Akkan 2018; Coşar and Özkan-Kerestecioglu 2017; KEIG 2017). Feminist, LGBTI+, and human rights organizations were excluded from cooperation with state institutions for policy implementation (Doyle 2018; Koyuncu and Özman 2019; Özgür Keysan 2019). Furthermore, random attacks on gender equality and sexual rights by the state and in society put activists in a defensive position where they respond to attacks but found it difficult to raise an agenda of their own. For example, instead of campaigning for progressive legislation, feminist and LGBTI+ groups canalized their efforts for the preservation and implementation of the Istanbul Convention (2014) and its domestic counterpart, the Law no. 6284 (Law to Protect Family and Prevent Violence against Women, 2012), as these documents, the two last legal gains in gender equality, are now under threat.⁴

³ Among the milestones in this direction were: Gezi Park-inspired anti-government protests of 2013, changing dynamics of the Syrian civil war and the termination of the peace process with Kurds (2015), the failed coup d'état of 2016 and the state of emergency that succeeded it (2016–2018), and, last but not least, the regime change in Turkey through a 2017 referendum that perpetuated Erdoğan's rule as head of republic with a cabinet of his own and a dysfunctional parliament. See, for example, Doyle (2018), Eldén and Levin (2018), and Kaya and Ögünç (2020) for violations of human rights, media freedom, and political violence targeting the social opposition as a whole, including human rights INGOs such as Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Amnesty International, and Open Society Institute.

⁴ As of 1 July 2021, Turkey has withdrawn from the Istanbul Convention by a midnight decree issued by Erdoğan.

As in the case of Russia, however, the state–civil society relations are ambivalent and cannot be reduced to an absolute crackdown. This is because, first of all, pro-AKP actors gained power in civil society and established what scholars in Turkey and beyond refer to as “GONGOs,” i.e., government-organized nongovernmental organizations (Yabancı 2016; Koyuncu and Özman 2019). In organizations such as the Women and Democracy Association (*Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği*, KADEM), pro-AKP women mobilized for replacing gender equality with gender complementarity in the official framing of women’s rights, while at the same time siding with feminists on issues such as the defense of the Istanbul Convention. Such organizations promote the notion of “gender justice” based on the idea that Islamic norms regarding social rights and responsibilities transcend the universalist notion of equality (*Hürriyet* 2015); yet, they also appropriate local and global tools developed by feminists such as celebrating March 8. Collaborating in high-budget projects with state institutions, these organizations “swallow up” the resources that were previously available for feminist CSOs (Eldén and Levin 2018, 14).⁵

Another dimension of the ambivalence in state–civil society relations is, as we detail in the following, that feminist and queer struggles also expanded during this period, but they relocated squarely outside the integral state, occupying the realm of counter-hegemonic struggles. Radicalized by the salience of gender-based violence, brutal murders of women, trans, and queer people, and state responses failing to address these issues, together with the adverse effects of neoliberalism, Turkish-Sunni nationalism, sexism, trans- and homophobia, and environmental destruction on marginalized groups, activists, especially from a younger generation, organized to address their increasingly precarious conditions of livability. New forms of organizing and political strategies appeared; small-scale, informal initiatives popularized; social media became an

⁵ There is also a growing number of anti-feminist, pro-family, and men’s rights organizations such as the Platform for Suffering Fathers (*Mağdur Babalar Derneği*) and the Turkish Family Council (*Türkiye Aile Meclisi*) that run systematic smear campaigns against feminist and LGBTI+ politics and align the anti-gender agenda in Turkey with that of those abroad (Hünler 2020; Özkazanç 2020a; Özkazanç et al. 2020). Hate speech promoted by these groups is considered by the state “within the scope of freedom of expression” (Kaya and Öğünç 2020, 25).

important space of resistance (Göker 2019; Polatdemir, forthcoming); and politics leaked into previously “apolitical” spaces such as sports, arts, and entertainment with a burgeoning of summer camps, sports teams, feminist and queer parties, and art festivals (Arik et al., 2022). In the 2010s, struggles for gender equality and sexual rights became more popular than ever before, with tens of thousands marching on March 8 and Pride demonstrations, alongside an increasing identification with feminism and support for LGBTI+ rights (KONDA 2019; KHU 2019). These struggles are a significant part of civil society, as they are differently related to the state but continue addressing the state (Asen and Brouwer 2001).

Similar to the mobilization of LGBTI+ activists in Russia under state pressure, thousands of women in Turkey joined the ranks of feminist activism in the 2010s. For many, AKP’s attempt to ban abortion in 2012 was when body politics became a major line of contention. Others mobilized during the Gezi-inspired protests in 2013, and yet others in 2015 upon the nation-wide protests against sexual assault and femicide following the murder of Özgecan Aslan, a young university student in the city of Mersin (Polatdemir and Binder 2015). For the newly mobilized, establishing a CSO did not seem like a viable strategy; CSOs seemed to have little room for maneuver and no hope for influencing legal and governance processes. In order to avoid state intervention, feminist and LGBTI+ CSOs “stayed under the radar” by choosing themes that the government did not pay attention to, and applied strict auto-censorship by avoiding controversial topics such as human rights violations and peace (Eldén and Levin 2018; Kaya and Ögünç 2020). At the same time, operating outside of institutionalized structures, through small-scale, horizontal, informal organizing offered activists some degree of avoiding state surveillance. The newly mobilized activists thus turned toward grassroots organizing, mobilizing communities, building networks of support, solidarity, and self-defense, and reacting instantly to violations of gender equality at the local level through informal means such as street protest and agitation in the digital sphere. In contrast with the often futile efforts to engender legal change at the national level, this way activists could attract the attention of local authorities and institutions, resulting sporadically in desired legal action.

While these developments resonate with what Sonia Alvarez (2014) has signaled a decade ago for the Latin American context as “going beyond NGOization,” in the Turkish context grassroots organizing and CSO organizing are not seen as mutually exclusive alternatives. This is because, first, being a registered CSO has the advantage of collaborating with other structures such as local municipalities that are run by political parties with pro-gender equality stands.⁶ It also provides activists with a degree of financial stability and enables them to invest in awareness raising and outreach activities. Second, many activists, including some research participants featured in this book, are employed in CSOs. Active both in grassroots politics in the informal sphere and in the formal sphere in CSOs, these activists bridge two realms of activism. They are also continuously reflecting on and problematizing, individually and collectively, the perks and pitfalls of the “NGO form” for feminist and queer struggles. Some of them do not consider their employment as (a significant) part of their activism but others do, especially if their employer pays for their involvement in grassroots matters (i.e., counting it as part of work hours) such as organizing the Feminist Night March on March 8 (see Chapter 5) or participating in networks for rights-oriented campaigns. In such cases, working at a CSO becomes an advantage for grassroots activists since otherwise they might not find enough time for politics.

Cansu, who became an activist in Ankara where she moved for university education, provides an example of such a case. Initially politicized in anarchist circles, in 2007 she started volunteering for KAOS GL, an Ankara-based LGBTI+ CSO founded in 1994 and rooted in anarchist politics (Çetin 2016; Muehlenhoff 2019). KAOS became an official CSO in 2005 as part of EU-oriented democratization. It then started employing people and developed an institutional, professional profile, together with a wide web of volunteers and a network for local organizations in Turkey. While volunteering for KAOS, Cansu decided to

⁶ The two parties that are represented in the Parliament and have integrated gender equality in their political program are the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and the People’s Democratic Party (HDP). For a review of gender equality in party programs in Turkey, see Kabasakal Arat (2017). Recent research shows that international donors have also started collaborating with the local state with similar motivations (Kaya and Ögünç 2020, 32).

become an editor because this was a way for her to make her activism sustainable, i.e., by editing activist texts as a paid job. At the time of interview, she was a professional CSO worker for seven years and had added to her portfolio skills like academic teaching and editing, as well as art curating, all connected to her activist work. She attended transnational gatherings and served as a board member for local and international CSOs. She felt lucky about being a CSO worker: “Had I done any other profession I would inevitably move away [from activism].” Having collaborated with many local, formal, and informal LGBTI+ and feminist and other organizations, and heard from experiences of others at transnational meetings, Cansu came to an understanding that informal and formal organizing do not work at each other’s disadvantage. Comparing these two forms, she comments:

Honestly, both offer different opportunities. I don’t think we can view one as superior over the other in all instances. When you have an issue at hand, you consider your options. You pick the viable option accordingly. It doesn’t make sense to discuss formal vs. informal in an abstract fashion. Let’s assume, for example, that a high school student is facing violence and torture in their family for being homosexual. And let’s say [we are a bunch of informally organized activists; (...)] can we afford rescuing this child from their home? Let’s assume that we did; where do we take them? To the police station? (...) Or, do we provide them with a shelter; and then how will we afford it financially? (...) There are many [things to consider], this child might need a lawyer, perhaps will need to talk to a social worker (...) Now, a group of five-ten activists might not be able to organize all of this. In fact, they often cannot.

With these words, Cansu underlines the different orientations in activist work that correspond to different preferences over organizational form. In cases where a variety of state institutions might be involved (police, hospital, and social services), activists cannot operate without a legal existence and they would be ineligible to take part in formal procedures.

In fact, in many cases, activists find it meaningful to combine formal and informal forms of organizing, either by engaging with activism beyond their CSO employment, such as in the case of Cansu, or by establishing a CSO for strategic purposes but remaining an informal

network in practice. Informal organizations need a space where they can have internal meetings and hold public events. Oftentimes they borrow spaces from allies such as feminist and LGBTI+ CSOs, labor unions, or political parties, but this is never the same as having “a room of one’s own.” Motivated by such logistical concerns, for example, the Woman Defense Network (*Kadın Savunma Ağı*) established their Purple Space (*Mor Mekan*) in Istanbul (2018) and Ankara (2019). As a feminist organization active in a number of cities in Turkey, and with organic ties to the left-wing organization Folk Centers (*Halkevleri*), the Woman Defense Network had to establish a CSO in order to legally rent their space. Yet, as Funda, an active member of the organization in Mersin, was telling Selin about her impressions from the Purple Space, she did not even remember the name of the CSO: “We have a CSO in Istanbul, but we are not in the CSO business,” she said, “it is just for the legal status for having a space.”

A similar example of strategic CSO establishment comes from Diyarbakır, the metropole of the Kurdish-majority southeast Turkey but emerges from different political dynamics and relations with the state. Berivan and Dicle became members of the Kurdish feminist organization Rosa, the newly established women’s CSO in Diyarbakır (2018). For Berivan and Dicle, similar to others involved in or siding with the Kurdish liberation movement, the end of the peace process in 2015 marked the beginning of a new wave of state violence and oppression. In many Kurdish-majority cities and towns, including in Diyarbakır where Rosa is based, government-appointed trustees took over the administration of municipalities that were run by popularly elected pro-Kurdish People’s Democracy Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, hereafter HDP) candidates. More than fifty women’s organizations were shut down in the region, alongside gender equality offices of municipalities, hotlines established for addressing gender-based violence, and women’s shelters and information centers (Baysal 2017). Spaces for these services were taken over by Quran courses, Mufti offices, or turned into family-oriented activity areas. In some cities, pro-AKP women’s organizations replaced Kurdish feminist organizing. At first, Kurdish feminists found no point in establishing new CSOs—they would be closed, thus they organized in informal platforms. In 2016, many platforms of this kind

appeared in Kurdish-majority towns. Women who were active in these platforms still received investigations that resulted in custody or imprisonment; platforms did not serve as a way of escaping state surveillance, but at least they could not be shut down because formally they did not exist. However, echoing Cansu's reflections above, Kurdish feminists soon enough realized that they could not address the issue of gender-based violence when organized informally; they needed a formal body for women to reach out to them and for establishing mechanisms to meet their needs. This is how Rosa came about. When the CSO opened, the number of women who reached out to them was way more than Berivan and Dicle expected, women even came from the neighboring towns. With the local state infrastructure addressing gender-based violence destroyed by the trustees appointed by the central state, Kurdish feminists were still struggling to direct the survivors of violence to relevant state institutions. Yet, thanks to Rosa, they established the Network Against Violence in Diyarbakır, which brought together various formal organizations such as women's sections of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, Human Rights Association, Chamber of Medicine, and Social Workers Association, that then enabled access to state services beyond Rosa's immediate reach. When talking about Rosa, Berivan and Dicle emphasized that its members all worked on a voluntary basis, i.e., none of them were employed. Similar to Funda, they did not want to be misunderstood; they were not interested in the "CSO business" (they expressed dislike toward it), but this was necessary for pursuing their agenda.

Examples like these (Cansu, Woman Defense Network, and Rosa) profoundly shape grassroots activists' approach to CSOs in Turkey. Being targeted by pro-AKP actors and marginalized by the state have put feminist and LGBTI+ CSOs under different light; because they cannot influence legal and governance processes, they are less considered as co-opted or as handmaidens of neoliberal governance. Instead of having a blanket view of CSOs, activists look at what CSOs do and how they do it. The "NGO form" is not necessarily seen as an obstacle to autonomy or a sign of being co-opted by the state, donors, corporations, or different kinds of elites. At the same time, establishing or working at a CSO does not necessarily put one at more or less risk of state oppression. Activists' preference for formal or informal organizing thus depends on their access

to material resources and the alliances they are able to cultivate with other political actors based on their agendas and relations with the state.

Scandinavian Countries: Civil Society as Extended Arm of State and the Invisibility of Marginalized Actors

Fieldwork in the Scandinavian countries was characterized by tensions emerging between well-established, large women's and LGBTI+ organizations, obtaining state funding and developing a mainstream agenda, and smaller, younger organizations, which were struggling to achieve funding for their activities and to have their issues recognized as important in society and policy. Since the early 2000s, governments in all these countries have reconfigured their policies toward civil society in line with the neoliberal "New Policy Agenda," with a stronger presence of neoliberal ideas of outsourcing state functions to organizations seen as being located closer to the citizens, such as CSOs (McIlwane 2009). During the first decade of the 2000s, the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian governments shaped policies based on the idea of civil society as an important actor in relation to local democracy (i.e., active citizenship), seen as a social resource and a carrier of core societal values (i.e., gender equality, homotolerance, democracy). Civil society policies of these countries relate to the assumed independence of the civil society sector from the state. They draw explicitly (in the case of Norway and Denmark) and implicitly (in the case of Sweden) on discourses that perceive the state as "inefficient and unresponsive to particular, contextually specific and localized user needs" (Birch and Siemiatycki 2016, 13) while market-based instruments or activities in civil society are understood as liberating and responsive (Birch and Siemiatycki 2016; Regeringen 2009, 2010; Selle and Strømsnes 2012). In all the Scandinavian countries, civil society policies are built to support the development of technologies which seek to produce civil society and market actors as "legitimate mechanisms for the delivery of public goods" (Birch and Siemiatycki 2016, 18). This has enabled a transfer of responsible action and initiative to local actors, while the state is released from having to bear the direct political costs.

In Sweden, governments have introduced market mechanisms and competition-based funding to secure the independent role of CSOs. In 2009, it was decided that the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) would administer state funding distributed to civil society through introducing measurable objectives and evaluation of results. In Norway, the state introduced in the late 1990s a new system which centers on the number of members of the organizations and planned activities of women's and LGBTI+ organizations when distributing funding, seeking to realize its ambition to “increase participation, local activities in associations, democratic decision-making and possibilities for the articulation of interests of different groups” (Eimhjellen 2012, 16). Toward the end of the 2000s, governments started to conceive civil society as one of the fundamental pillars of a democratic welfare society and, as a result of their assumed access to the local community, CSOs became important tools for protecting vulnerable groups and shaping active citizenship. In Denmark in 2010, the idea of “active citizenship” was launched by the government. Key motives that shaped the basis for their wish to secure a well-functioning interplay between civil society, the business community, and the public sector was that civil society was seen as independent in relation to central regulation and having a freedom of action, assuming that civil society actors had a closer connection to local relationships and ideas. The Danish government provides state funding for CSOs and can also directly fund projects which CSOs are invited to take part in, for example, aid projects administered by the Foreign ministry.

These neoliberal reconfigurations of state–civil society relations in the Scandinavian countries involve bureaucratic and/or competitive procedures and audit control systems that shape the conditions of CSOs in specific ways. On the one hand, these developments stand in stark contrast with direct repressions imposed on civil society by the Turkish and Russian states. On the other hand, they also mark a mechanism of state control over civil society. For example, the increased audit control involves a more rigid standardization that reduces flexibility and the autonomy of CSOs. Furthermore, since these audits put the focus on how the money has been used rather than whether or in what ways the funding has contributed to the aims of the organization, these audits

also modify the contents and formats of the work in the organizations. With these dynamics, CSOs in the Scandinavian countries are pushed to focus on short-term goals rather than long-term objectives. In addition, these policies have reshaped the relations between the state and civil society. Here, civil society is expected to carry the core values of society and act as a social resource by providing counseling services, creating social cohesion, and strengthening democracy (active participation) or the local community in collaboration with municipalities and local business. In this way, civil society is used as a policy tool and CSOs are easily exploited as a form of social capital, used by states to achieve smoother acceptance for their policies when channeled through civil society actors. These changes harmonize with ongoing transformations of state–civil society relations on a broader global arena, described as the result of two factors: first, they reflect demands for self-determination expressed by local and regional CSOs; and second, they respond to the immensely popular idea among both state and civil society actors that local decision-making increases the efficiency of decisions taken. With this, since the 1990s, the idea of “strengthening civil society” has been promoted to achieve sustainable development through free market reforms, modernized states, and strengthened democracy. Yet, scholars hold, the consequences of these recent policy changes may risk undermining the “effectiveness of civil society and the [...] goals of promoting democracy and participation” since these changes have essentially transformed the conditions of democratic exchange (McIlwane 2009, 138). These changes suggest that, rather than reinforcing the autonomy of civil society, states have introduced a structure in which funding is distributed to CSOs under the precondition that they contribute to the implementation of political decisions taken around issues such as, for example, gender equality, same-sex rights, or human values in local communities. Since the governments of the Scandinavian countries distribute funding for organizations based on certain predefined goals and set themes, these dynamics suggest that civil society in these contexts works as an extended arm of the state. During fieldwork, CSOs which were successful in achieving state funding did not complain about these expectations from the state but, as will be discussed below, rather contributed to strengthen this image, seeing themselves as partners to the governments, appointed

to help achieve certain political goals and strengthen democracy. Alternative organizations, however, such as small or less institutionalized, experienced a more marginalized position in civil society and difficulties in receiving recognition for their work, both in terms of governmental funding and media attention. Illuminating civil society as a contradictory and power-filled space, in our fieldwork with mainstream and alternative women's and LGBTI+ organizations in the Scandinavian countries, tensions around these dynamics were brought forth. These tensions highlighted the various ways in which the current structures of state funding condition feminist and queer civil society engagement (Liinason 2018; Rai 1996; Sharma 2014; Rätzzel et al. 2015). While researchers point at the co-opted role of NGOs in these dynamics (Spade 2015; INCITE! 2007), we want to illuminate the ambiguities that characterize these struggles in civil society, and bring to light the contradictory effects of the different positionings of NGOs in relation to funders and to the political conditions that structure their work.

As the discussion below will highlight, historically close relationships and the membership-based structure of funding imply that some organizations are more easily recognized as eligible to receive funding from the state, typically larger organizations with a longer history in the country, while others reside in the margins, with low or no access to state funding and less attention in media and public debate. In addition, CSO actors express that they experience multiple difficulties due to narrow funding schemes, such as top-down determinations, short-term measurable goals, and resource competition. During Mia's ethnography, it soon became clear that domains which typically have been seen as resolutely anti-market, such as social movements or CSOs, now are deeply informed by market logics, modes of entrepreneurialism, and anti-state sentiment (Dhawan 2013). Such anti-state sentiment is embedded in broader market-liberalization/neoliberal discourses around a minimized state and expressed by CSO actors who find states to be ineffective and lacking responsibility in relation to localized needs. By contrast, they regard themselves as having close connections to local communities and thus better suited at working with people belonging to such local communities. This stance reflects the policy change of the early 2000s in these countries, described above, and is a state-initiated discourse, which also

carries all contradictions of neoliberalism (Fraser 2009; Newman 2014; Spade 2015; INCITE! 2007).

In contemporary Scandinavian countries, civil society is structured around one main, national, umbrella organization for women's, respectively, LGBTI+ people's rights.⁷ These umbrella organizations have a large pool of members, among them also other civil society organizations, which can make these umbrella organizations huge constructs.⁸ The umbrella organizations have either existed for a long time in the countries or were themselves initiated by the state as in the case of Swedish Women's Lobby (1999). Over the years, these organizations have developed close, personal relationships with politicians which today allow them quick access to key political actors (Liinason 2018). In addition to these umbrella organizations, independent organizations exist, which often have a special focus area of their organization such as minority LGBTI+ people or migrant women. These can apply for state funding and receive funding for projects which mainly are short term (e.g., stretching across one year). With a smaller pool of members, they receive less money in membership/organizational support than the large, umbrella organizations.

In her encounters with nation-wide, mainstream women's and LGBTI+ organizations, Mia found that the funding situation was an issue for all organizations. Her research participants explained that writing applications and funding reports took a lot of resources; that the competitive funding schemes created tensions between organizations and obstructed collaboration; that thematic calls restricted the organizations as to what they could focus on; and the short time frames made it difficult to achieve more broad-based change in society. These restrictions forced organizations to become more innovative, as one member of staff in LGBT Denmark, the nation-wide organization for gays, lesbian, bisexual, and trans people in Denmark, described: "Can we make [the

⁷ These organizations are: Sveriges kvinnolobby (*Swedish Women's Lobby*), Norges kvinnelobby (*Norwegian Women's Lobby*), RFSL in Sweden, LGBT Denmark, FRI in Norway, and Kvinderådet i Danmark (*Danish Women's Council*).

⁸ For example, the Danish Women's Council has a membership base of 1,143,000 individual members (1.1 million) since they have the trade union members as their members. Swedish Women's Lobby has approximately 40 member. The members of these organizations, in turn, amount to a total number of around 40,000 individual members.

things we want to do] fit into these boxes?"; "Can we split this in different boxes?" Yet, these limitations also meant that state authorities decided the frames for project goals, time schedules, and structures, which one member of staff in FRI, a Norwegian nation-wide LGBTI+ organization found problematic: "Although we receive much funding, we do not receive much funding for things we decide over." When state authorities decide on what goals projects should have, instead of letting activist groups decide this, her stance was that in the long run this could risk to affect democracy negatively.

In Mia's conversations with staff and board members of mainstream organizations, a relatively coherent narrative around how their successes could be seen as a result of their expertise and skills manifested. This expertise, according to members, was partly a result of a careful gathering of existing information and partly an effect of experience-based knowledge. Moreover, they put forth that a relation of mutual trust existed between the organizations and the politicians, which had been developing over a long time. Niels, member of staff in LGBT Denmark, said that: "Over the years we have had successes [in achieving legislative change]. (...) Now this year, we are the first country in the world to de-pathologize trans identities... The way we do that is by having a very close relationship to the politicians, to the parliament."

Niels explained that the government not always was supportive of their ideas but LGBT Denmark obtained a successful outcome also in cases where the government was initially negative to the proposal of the organization, because, according to Niels: "we are keen to be very correct. We always go to [the politicians] with correct information, based on the experiences we have (...) [we are always] very thorough (...) that's a lot of documentation." He continued to explain that the politicians have a close relationship with the staff members of LGBT Denmark, which is a relationship based on mutual trust:

They know us really. When I call, they know they can trust me. And we never ever stab them in the back if they decide to do something else. Okay, we do it again next year. Of course, they remember. We understand the political game. It's quite complex (...). But sometimes there are opportunities, and sometimes there are not. You have to work the system.

However, in conversation with actors of less institutionalized LGBTI+ organizations in Denmark, members expressed a criticism against approaches such as the one presented by Niels above, a contestation which also has been brought up by scholars conducting research in the area (Friborg 2020), and that points at power asymmetries in civil society.

While Niels recognized that politicians did not always accept the proposals of the organization, he maintained that good relations were shaped through expertise and patience. This means that LGBT Denmark primarily works in a “dull and professional” way and doesn’t exercise public protests: “We have not always been welcomed. It has been complex. [For example] we wanted trans health issues very much. [The politicians] were very reluctant, thus it took a long time. We had to be exceptionally thorough. But we can do it by being very persistent and annoying. [We do it in] a very dull and professional way...”. The more reluctant the politicians are, the more emphasis is put on expertise and documentation in the organization, Niels explained. In similarity with this, other nation-wide or umbrella organizations highlighted that their successes were linked to their expertise and skills, shaped by thorough documentation and experience-based knowledge. The idea that “you have to work the system,” presented by Niels, functioned to justify the successes of mainstream organizations in negotiations with politicians, as if the system would be equal for all involved.

Staff members of mainstream women’s and LGBTI+ organizations described personal contacts with politicians as crucial for political impact. For example, one board member of Sweden’s Women’s Lobby explained that the success factor for influencing gender equality policy was to establish alliances with people in influential positions: “There are a lot of (...) informal contacts. We have a very good relationship with [the then present and the previous gender equality minister].” Moreover, at a seminar arranged by Sweden’s Women’s Lobby, one previous board member explained that “The state feminists in the governmental office are our best friends. [We] have been to informal meetings with groups that discuss all kinds of solutions. You won’t find a note about this anywhere.” This emphasis on the importance of good personal contacts to influential policy-makers echoed in Mia’s conversation with Niels from

LGBT Denmark, who distinguished between state-oriented politics and protest activism: “(...) none of the results we have here, from registered partnership to de-pathologization [of trans people], is obtained by any means of demonstration (...) that doesn’t [work]. You have to work with those who make the decisions, the politicians, and those who work in the authorities. You don’t do this in the street.” According to Niels, demonstrations don’t work because, “politicians don’t need opinions. They have their opinions themselves.” Instead, he argues, civil society organizations should help the politicians to develop solutions, “make the legislation, show how to make progress”:

We all have the same opinion. ... Everybody agrees, but what can we do about that? Who has a mandate to do what? Who can go in and make a change... you have to go into the engine room, and you have to have a very close relation to the engineer.

The approach to advocacy and work for change presented in the quotes above reflects a specific understanding of the state, which radically differs from the understanding of the state in Russian and Turkish contexts. In Scandinavia, the relations between the state, civil society, and the citizens are characterized by a mutual trust and trustworthiness. This trust is linked to the historical legacies of close relations between state actors and members in voluntary organizations, or CSOs, in these countries. It is also, as the quotes above indicate, based on personal contacts. Simultaneously, the trust is contingent on the position of actors in relation to the state, i.e., whether or not an actor belongs to a community that can attract the interest of politicians or is recognized as a legitimate claim-maker. Using the metaphor of “the engine room” and “the engineer” to talk about politics and politicians, Niels offered an image of political work that was similar to bureaucratic management, serving politicians a ready-made package of goals and action points to tick off. In order to retain their access to the “engine room,” this organization withdrew from any collaboration or alliance with other LGBTI+ organizations, to provide an image of their organization as neutral, as Niels says: “No, we never [collaborate with other LGBT organizations] because our organization has a very very very (...) eh (...) people trust us.”

Yet, when Mia talked with representatives of minority LGBTI+ organizations, the question of how to become a “trusted” partner or how to use your knowledge and skills to build close contacts with politicians, was presented in a different light. From her location in Norway, Nikita in Queer World, an organization for LGBTI+ people with minority background, said that:

...there is something old-fashioned about the political structures in Norway, where social movements are led by people who are tied to the big parties. There is a clear alliance. We [people of color, minorities and migrants] are not the first-hand choice for the politicians. It is the white gay men who have been active in the big LGBTI organizations. Who of course always make sure that they are mentioned [in political proposals]. They have been engaged in their political lobby work for 40 years. We are quite far away from being there. We have had one staff member since 6 years ago.

This quote brings to light political conflicts concealed behind the civil society agenda of these countries and the depoliticized attitudes of the nation-wide organizations, indicating that the political channels are dominated by mainstream, institutionalized organizations and that alternative organizations, typically younger, representing issues, which have more recently arrived to the political agenda of these countries, are excluded from the established political channels. With this, intersecting questions of women’s rights and migration, LGBTI+, asylum, race and racialization, and religion and so on, receive less attention in policy and public debate as well as, in Denmark and Norway, less funding.

Marketization and Tensions Within Transnational Civil Society

In the previous section we discussed how the work of LGBTI+ and feminist activists and organizations is shaped by broader relations *between* the state and civil society in respective geopolitical contexts—Russia, the Scandinavian countries, and Turkey. Here we focus on relations *within*

civil society on international, national, and regional levels in the light of the transnational tendency of activism's marketization. By doing this, we argue that the material trajectories of activist organizing, including access to resources, employment strategies, and geographical locality, should be investigated beyond state-centered approaches where the state or national boundaries are considered as a primary or exclusive analytical unit. Such "state-centric ontology" (Rao 2020, 36), we hold, obstructs the understanding of the role of transnational and local actors in shaping activist practices.

International Collaborations Beyond the East–West Divide

The first assumption we want to problematize is that feminist and LGBTI+ activists from the South/East are always inferior, less resourceful, and less privileged than activists from the North/West; in practice, the relations and inequalities among activists are more complex. The following example problematizes the relations between activists from Western countries and the postsocialist East, a region that has long been "forgotten" in transnational feminist studies where North–South or First-Third world tensions have been more salient (Bonfiglioli and Ghodsee 2020; Ghodsee 2019; Koobak and Marling 2014; Suchland 2011; Tlostanova et al. 2019).

When the independent women's movement emerged in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Nadezhda, one of the protagonists of the story below, joined it immediately. In the early 1990s, Nadezhda established Russian Women against War (RWW), the organization in her native town of around 200,000 inhabitants in the Russian south that she has led ever since. Since the mid-1990s, the RWW engaged in national and transnational peacebuilding activities to tackle the consequences of military conflicts with Russian involvement (foremost, the two Chechen Wars [1994–1996; 1999–2000] and the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine [from 2014]). When Olga reached the RWW in May 2017, it struck her as a well-established and resourceful nongovernmental organization with seven full-time employees and rich activist

networks, within and outside of the country. Besides peacebuilding, the RWW worked with questions of human and women's rights on national and international levels and provided legal advice to the local inhabitants, operating on multiple scales—international, national, and local.

The prominence of the RWW on the human rights arena and especially in peace activist circles attracted the attention of the Russian state. The RWW was included in the list of “foreign agents” and Nadezhda herself was under criminal investigation for intending to avoid obeying the “foreign agent” law. Nadezhda's colleagues from other civil society organizations believed that these criminal charges were politically motivated and, among others, related to Nadezhda's active involvement in peace activism against the war in Eastern Ukraine.⁹ When Olga and Nadezhda met, the RWW was a partner in an all-women Dialogue Project related to the war in Donbas in Ukraine. The dialogue was financially supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-ordinated by the German feminist organization East–West Bridge/Gender Democracy (EWB).

The EWB was a small organization which occupied a specific niche in the German nongovernmental sector; they positioned themselves as a feminist, peacebuilding organization with expertise on Russia, Eastern Europe, and the North and South Caucasus. It was established in 1992, two years after German reunification. Olga got acquainted with the EWB in 2017 upon Nadezhda's invitation to join the aforementioned Dialogue Project as a volunteering protocolist and translator. Then she visited the organization in 2018 in Berlin and interviewed Gudrun, the founder and the life-long member of the organization, and Stefanie, one of the two permanent EWB employees. Gudrun and Stefanie were from two different generations. Stefanie was born in the 1980s in Western Germany. She started working in the EWB while writing her Ph.D. dissertation in Political Sciences. She spoke fluent Russian and spent a year in St. Petersburg during her studies. For her, to work with the EWB and its Russian and East European partners was a way to combine her interest in the post-Soviet developments and professional employment in a non-profit organization. Gudrun, born in 1950, lived a significant

⁹ The reference to this information is intentionally omitted to preserve anonymity.

part of her life in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). As a GDR citizen, she learnt Russian at school but did not speak the language as fluently as Stefanie. Gudrun defended her Ph.D. dissertation in Natural Sciences shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. She was also part of the peace movement in the GDR. When the Berlin Wall fell and Germany reunited, Gudrun, and some other women from East German peace activism, established the EWB. Their initial idea was to build a bridge between women from the west and the east of Germany and between Western and Eastern (postsocialist) Europe.

Gudrun and Nadezhda met each other in the early 1990s at one of the transnational women's gatherings that blossomed in the postsocialist region after the end of the Cold War. Gudrun and Nadezhda had many things in common—they were of the same generation of politically engaged and concerned women whose professional and political commitments formed under socialism. Both entered the independent women's movement after the dissolution of the socialist system, trying to pursue their political ideals under new circumstances. In the beginning, the RWW and the EWB belonged to geographies of postsocialism (Suchland 2015; Stella 2015). Yet, their positionality gradually changed with the EWB symbolically floating toward the West through engagement in the Western schemes of activist funding. At first, the EWB enjoyed the flow of funding from the reunited German government and independent funders. This framed the EWB as a Western partner in the eyes of their collaborators from the former Soviet republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Ukraine) who were invited by the EWB in pre-designed projects with available funds. As a result, the relations with partners became more hierarchical and less personalized.

The second change occurred in the mid-2000s when, in the course of transitioning to more competitive and market-based ways of funding, the EWB found itself in crisis, running out of all project-related money. At that point, EWB's long-term partner Nadezhda "came to rescue" the organization, as both Stefanie and Tanja, the second employee of the EWB, unequivocally acknowledged. Nadezhda applied for EU funding including the EWB as a partner. This challenged the hierarchy between

the EWB and their “Eastern” partner; now it was Nadezhda and her organization who initiated the project and made principal decisions about its budget.

According to Stefanie, this change was a significant symbolic act that allowed the EWB to reconsider their relations with “Eastern” partners. Yet, a new problem had emerged—Stefanie’s salary in the project initiated by the Russian side was not sufficient to cover the “Western” living costs in Berlin. Reflecting on this, Stefanie acknowledged that material inequalities were the biggest challenge she encountered in transnational collaboration with their “Eastern” partners. No matter how good your intentions and friendly your relations with partners from less affluent contexts were, the difference in material conditions between activists always cast shadows on these relations:

Foremost, partnership is about people. We build our partnerships through human interactions. But this does not change the structure. When I write the project, I can do everything very participatory on the paper, and to ask partners to agree on every word. But what to do about salaries? I have no power over the salary budget and in our Ukrainian-Russian-German-Swiss project this [the difference] is catastrophic. This is one moment. But it also shows that this is not only about budget but also about your life and the possibilities you have. We work hard and then [I] go home, take vacation and go to France to relax while our partners [from Russia and Ukraine including the military zone] are glad to be in Germany for the first time or to have a couple of free hours from the project to see a new city.

Two aspects in this interview are important to unpack. First, in her talk about salary inequalities Stefanie refers to donor politics in accordance to which salaries within a project depend on the country of registration of an organization rather than on the amount or quality of work that project partners do. This structural constraint is beyond Stefanie’s or Nadezhda’s control, but it jeopardizes ideals of collaborative and ethical activist work. Second, Stefanie talks about inequalities in conditions of activist livability, such as access to geographical mobility or leisure time. On another occasion, she also mentions that when the EWB runs out of project money, she can rely on the unemployment support from the

German state, a chance that partners from Eastern Europe may not have. In Stefanie's view, the difference in activists' livability is foremost geopolitical; Western activists are more privileged in comparison with project participants from the East. Yet, she also acknowledges later in the interview that life conditions of project participants from Eastern Europe also vary depending on their work conditions, access to resources, place of residence (province/metropole), and family-related arrangements. As Olga noticed through her engagement in the EWB-RWW Dialogue Project, the material differences, for example, travel experience, were not as significant between professional NGO workers from Western and Eastern Europe as they were between NGO professionals and women from other sectors such as small business, local media, or the healthcare system who were also among project participants.

As this example of collaboration between the RWW and the EWB reveals, relations between activists from unequally positioned geopolitical regions are more complex than the West–East and North–South dichotomies suggest (see also Chapter 4). Transnationalization of activist spaces, which presupposes international mobility, adherence to global feminist and LGBTI+ agendas, and knowledge of “the language of rights” (Molyneux and Razavi 2002), including linguistic proficiency in English but also understanding of a particular professional jargon of Western-based donors and organizations, produce middle-class professionalized and educated civil society subjects (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Conway 2010). In turn, through their exposure to similar professional experiences, these activists acquire more things in common with each other, their geopolitical belongings notwithstanding, than with locally oriented activists or communities from their respective nations or regions (Desai 2005; Lyons 2010). The nuanced elaboration on the relations between two organizations from Russia and Germany shows that, while the geopolitical belonging of organizations and people does matter, the scale of operation and the area of expertise are also important. The German EWB is a small-scale organization with an agenda that is unusual, “exotic,” according to Stefanie, for civil society in Germany. The Russian RWW appears as more resourceful in terms of recognition within and outside Russia, access to networks and possession of human and material assets. For example, while EWB's two employers,

Stefanie and Tanja, work in a coworking space in Kreuzberg (Berlin), the RWW employs seven people on a regular basis and has its own spacious office with several separate rooms, including a private office for Nadezhda. The themes that the RWW covers—peacebuilding and human rights in Russia—resonate with many donors as a part of security concerns in relation to the Russian aggressive geopolitical positionality. In their long-term relations, neither Stefanie nor Gudrun are in the position to determine the scope and conditions of their collaboration with the RWW. In the Dialogue Project, the EWB relies extensively on Nadezhda's networks, authority, and expertise in the post-Soviet region.¹⁰ While Gudrun and Nadezhda are from the same generation in a broad sense (including their socialization during socialism), there is a significant generational difference between Nadezhda and Stefanie, who is in charge of their collaboration ever since Gudrun stepped away from daily operation of the EWB. As Stefanie admits in the interview, it took time before Nadezhda started perceiving her as an equal partner, not a young project assistant. Finally, Nadezhda is not as fluent in English, as Stefanie in Russian, and communication between the two of them occurs in Russian. Thus, as we also discuss below, a multi-scalar approach, where nation or geopolitical region is not the only analytical lens, equips us with a better understanding of transnational tensions in feminist and LGBTI+ activism.

¹⁰ As Stefanie also admitted in her feedback to the suggested analysis of the relations between the RWW and the EWB, in recent years the mutual dependency between the two organizations has only increased. While the EWB benefits from the RWW's name recognition, the RWW relies on the infrastructural support from the EWB in receiving and handling the foreign funding, which they cannot receive on their own account under "the foreign agent" legislation in Russia. As a result, the EWB has to put much of its limited resources into the administrative support of the Russian partner. A side effect of such dependency is that the EWB has less capacity to implement its own projects or to set its own priorities. Their partnership again becomes more technical with only limited space for in-depth discussions of how both organizations are getting instrumentalized in the geopolitical contestation between the West and Russia.

Majority/Minority Divides

Turning to the Scandinavian countries, we unpack another dichotomy, the divide between the notions of majority/minority organizations.¹¹ We begin by discussing the examples of FRI, a nation-wide, majority LGBTI+ organization and the Norwegian minority LGBTI+ organization Queer World. In Scandinavia, questions of racism and experiences of migration are issues which both nation-wide and minority organizations want to engage in. However, in our conversation with representatives of LGBTI+ minority organizations and staff members of nation-wide LGBTI+ organizations, it became clear that “being a migrant,” did not qualify as a basis for expertise in negotiations with politicians. Instead, in Norway, the nation-wide organization FRI encourages members of Queer World to describe for them how to “solve challenges [related to people with minority background].” According to Pi in Queer World, this is how mainstream LGBTI+ organizations take advantage of migrants and minority people without acknowledging their expertise. Such dynamics can to a certain extent be conceptualized as a response to the large funds available in the area. Anya, who is a staff member in the MiRA Centre for women with migrant background in Norway, highlights the problematic effects of the millions of funds that go into integration. As she explains, while these funds rarely reach any minority women’s organization, they are distributed to the big, nation-wide women’s organizations:

Immigrant women, especially immigrant women without resources, poor immigrant women, violated immigrant women, it sells, it is a hot potato (...) But we cannot sell ourselves. We say: ‘Look, we can do it.’ But no,

¹¹ The uses of the terms majority/minority organization are commonly accepted and frequently used in the Norwegian and Danish contexts. The designations refer to majoritized parts of the population (e.g., nation-born, White, middle-class, etc.), respectively, minoritized groups, such as migrants, ethnic minorities, racialized populations (Predelli and Halsaa 2012). A similar divide is not reflected in the Swedish context, where there is no term that formally distinguishes organizations depending on issues or the locations of people they gather, but activists use the designation mainstream organization or hegemonic feminism/LGBTI+ vis-à-vis intersectional, alternative, or radical (Liinason and Cuesta 2016).

then they say you are not competent. You have to have white women in your organization, and then it's integration.

Anya found this disempowering for the minority community. She also found it distressing because migrant and ethnic minority women are not benefitting from the money distributed, but only being "objectified again and again."

These tensions, illuminated by representatives of minority organizations, reveal that the role of an expert is not equally available to all. While staff members of nation-wide organizations such as LGBT Denmark and FRI in the previous section emphasized their thorough processes of gathering knowledge and skills in "working the system," members of staff in minority organizations maintained that they experienced difficulties in being recognized as experts because their experiences of migration and racism in LGBTI+ minority communities were extracted from them without acknowledging them as the source of the knowledge. Moreover, as highlighted by Anya, minority organizations seemed to be not trusted with their competence to run integration projects, which meant that such funds more readily were distributed to big, nation-wide organizations.

As these discussions highlight, power struggles in civil society hampers younger, or non-mainstream/minority CSOs from attracting the interest of states, funders, or media attention. The geopolitical positioning of the Scandinavian countries as being explicitly pro-women's and LGBTI+ rights, and the open dialogic atmosphere that allegedly characterizes relations between civil society and the state in this context, as the quotes from LGBT Denmark and FRI in the previous section suggest, give an image of feminism and LGBTI+ activism in these countries as well-functioning, resourceful, and privileged. Nonetheless, we argue, this image is made possible only when the voices of actors with other positionings in relation to the integral state remain absent.

When listening to the quotes by members of non-mainstream CSOs above, this dynamic is challenged in two important ways. First, by illuminating the conflicts and tensions that characterize work in civil society, these narratives question the notion of a homogenous civil society, instead highlighting civil society as a terrain comprising a diversity of struggles, shaping the space of civil society as a place of resistance and

conflict. Second, and following from the first, by illuminating such heterogeneity within civil society, these quotes reveal the relationships between the state and civil society as fluid and heterogeneous, rather than hierarchical and stable, bringing to light the existence of multiple positions and relationships between actors in civil society and the state. Indeed, as we highlighted in the previous section, civil society actors took up a range of positions, from being in close collaboration with state actors, such as being “best friends,” to being in opposition to the state, around issues of funding, for example, as highlighted by one spokesperson of FRI. Yet, the variety and fluidity that characterized the relationships between civil society and the state in this context also disclosed that certain organizations were left with low or no access to state channels or funding opportunities. According to our research partners, these exclusions were contingent on the degree of institutionalization of the organization in civil society, that is, if it was an old or young organization. They were also determined by whether the CSO represented the mainstream/majority, in contrast to alternative/minority organizations, or if the funding available represented a “hot topic” with big funds. These findings challenge taken-for-granted notions of the quality of state–civil society relations in the global North/West, illuminating that there are more issues at stake than a geopolitical region when determining material conditions of activism, revealing tensions around organizational age/degree of institutionalization as well as of race, ethnicity, and national belonging in feminist and LGBTI+ civil society organizing on a sub-national level.

Regional/Metropolitan Belongings

In Turkey, interviews with activists who received foreign funding either directly or through a local intermediary, as well as the profile of activists who worked in CSOs, implied that the perspective of donors had changed in the past decade in two significant ways. First, local and international CSOs increasingly hired staff from among grassroots activists who helped them navigate the diversity of forms of organizing and constantly shifting political and material conditions. In job ads it was

common to come across “commitment to grassroots activism” as a desired criterion. Employing people who knew the field from below helped CSOs to manage their budgets effectively and have a stronger profile of supporting grassroots activism. Second, when it came to giving grants, local as well as foreign donors did not anymore look for formally existing activist groups but would support informal organizing even when activists operated underground, i.e., they could not be located physically or in social media. In fact, international donor institutions showed an interest in becoming part of informal platforms and coalitions as a “method of struggle along with the narrowing in the field of civil society in the recent period” (Kaya and Ögünç 2020, 32). As a result, boundaries between formal and informal organizing and professional and grassroots activists blurred, reversing the top-down approach that previously had been characteristic, according to many studies on NGOs (Bernal and Grewal 2014; Thayer 2009).

Increased state oppression and violence against feminist and queer struggles created new opportunities of foreign funding as “leader” countries in gender equality and democracy such as Sweden and Germany invested more in supporting activists in Turkey (Eldén and Levin 2018, 66). The negative atmosphere around feminist and LGBTI+ activism and human rights-oriented CSOs, however, made grassroots activists selective when appealing to a donor to get financial support. Emre, an activist from the informal LGBTI+ collective *Keskesor* (“rainbow” in Kurdish) in Diyarbakır (2012), explains why this would be the case. Since the end of the peace process in 2015, there has been heavy state surveillance on Kurdish civil society. *Keskesor* activists have also been attacked by fundamentalist formations in Diyarbakır,¹² and received little support from other local human rights actors in the region. For safety reasons they thus remain mostly underground; there is only a low-key (not very active) Twitter profile associated with this collective. In Emre’s account, *Keskesor* activists have no dispute over receiving donor funds and no difficulty of finding CSOs that support their activities. Yet, they are very

¹² The specific attack Emre referred to during the interview was performed by the Free Cause Party (*Hür Dava Partisi*, Hüdapar) in the form of a campaign on social media threatening *Keskesor* with physical assault for organizing a public event on LGBTI+ issues in Diyarbakır. Upon this campaign, *Keskesor* activists had to cancel their event.

careful about picking a donor, not so much due to a fear of agenda imposition and co-optation but because some countries such as the USA or Germany are notorious for supporting the Kurdish cause, and receiving funds from donors who have ties in these countries might put *Keskesor* in a vulnerable position before the state and pro-AKP, anti-gender actors. *Keskesor* therefore receives funds only informally, making sure that their donors are not known to the public. *Keskesor's* concerns were not specific to Kurdish civil society actors but applied to any activist formation that could be associated with pro-Kurdish politics. Moreover, attacks on human rights-oriented foreign donors sometimes resulted in the finalization of support programs for local activists in Turkey or the complete withdrawal of CSOs from the field, such as in the case of Open Society Institute (Kaya and Ögünç 2020). All in all, the pressure on foreign donors and the mutual “risk of being targeted as having links to a terrorist/terrorist organization” (Eldén and Levin 2018, 64) created an insecure and precarious environment for grassroots activists.

At the same time, activists are differently influenced by this unfavorable environment based on the agendas they pursue and their position within metropole-province relations. In the 2010s, because of the pressures and bans on the public visibility of queer people, some significant part of activism went underground and others withdrew into auto-censorship. Small-scale initiatives (e.g., university clubs, informal initiatives, small collectives) especially those in small provinces and towns dissolved. This, together with the internal migration of LGBTI+ peoples toward metropolises for more favorable conditions of livability, limited LGBTI+ activism in the public sphere to urban areas where activists could afford being anonymous.¹³ Ilke, a queer feminist and a social worker based in Antakya near Turkey's border with Syria, gave an overview of the experience with funding in the province. In recent years there had been an LGBTI+ formation in Antakya (Kaws Kuzah, “rainbow” in Arabic) but it dissolved when activists, who were mostly

¹³ For example: “Kaos GL has for a long time received support from the Sweden International Development Collaboration Agency and from various EU funds. In the past, the institution used to organize activities in more than 40 cities, but now the number has dropped to 15–16. However, this is not because of financial difficulties but rather because of the unsuitability of political and social conditions” (Kaya and Ögünç 2020, 27).

university students, graduated and left for other, bigger cities. Neither women's organizations had a pro-LGBTI+ agenda, nor left-wing organizations supported queer struggles. Compared to the metropole, Ilke argued, the availability of funds made a greater difference in this "highly provincial context." She did not fully approve of the way foreign funding shaped the activist field; she disliked the trainings on different human rights issues that took place in expensive hotels, and criticized the opaqueness of how the money was spent by metropolitan CSOs. But she added, "I cannot fully provide a grounded critique," and gave two reasons for this. First, she saw that those trainings profoundly transformed some activist lives and recruited new people to feminist and queer struggles. Second, activists around her struggled economically; they were oftentimes unemployed, could not even pay membership fees in the organizations they belonged to. Organizations themselves were struggling too, they could not afford the travel costs of activists coming from the metropole for giving trainings. "I think activism is a matter of intention," Ilke concluded. For her, "CSO-ism" did not happen because activists did not care about the processes of co-optation by donors; some activists were in fact quite revolutionary even though they depended on donor money to pursue politics.

CSO-ism has become a similar contentious topic of discussion in LGBTI+ activism in Turkey, as elsewhere (Muehlenhoff 2019). The criticism has been that the project-oriented logic and the skills, often imposed as a requirement by donors, such as speaking foreign languages or computer literacy required to work (or even volunteer) in CSOs, led to a series of exclusions. For example, transwomen, often excluded from higher education, were ineligible to work in CSOs (Savcı et al. 2019). Drawing on the examples provided here, however, we argue that co-optation arguments overlook the context-based complexities of the field in which feminist and queer struggles take place. As marginalized groups, feminist and LGBTI+ activists grapple with economic conditions that make them reliant on ally organizations financially as well as logistically. Depending on the context and time period, an ally organization can be central or local states, political institutions, crowd-sourcing, or international CSOs and foreign donors. Especially in the case of LGBTI+ activism, the latter has been the most accessible of

those. In the co-optation argument the lack of financial support for gender equality and sexual rights by local actors who discursively embrace human rights discourses is often a missing discussion. Yet, without taking into account this dimension, it is difficult to understand whether feminist and LGBTI+ activists opt for foreign allies because of an overlap in their agendas or solely for financial concerns, or both. Since locally available funds for feminist and queer struggles are all the more scarce in provincial places, scholarly interventions to complicate and destabilize the North–South and East–West dichotomies would benefit from including the scale of metropolitan versus. provincial locales in their analytical toolbox.

(Un)doing Donor Politics

While in the previous section we analyze how marketization of activist work incites multiple tensions within civil society on international, regional, and local levels across the West–East and North–South divides, in this final part we investigate how donor politics influence the work within activist groups and organizations including its formal aspects such as employment strategies or specificities of organizing as well as its content. We also reveal activists’ tactics of (un)doing and subverting donor politics. We consider donor politics as one of the major channels through which hegemonic discourses of transnational feminist and LGBTI+ organizing travel across and within our respective contexts. As Thayer argues in relation to the travel of feminist discourses between the North and South, discourse “is not only intangible concepts or words that are transferred between sites in feminist counterpublic but also the concrete activity through which ideologies are materialized” (2010, 215). We attend to donor politics as the most salient aspect of this process. Yet, unlike Thayer and other scholars who predominantly focus on the transnational dimension of donor politics (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Kulpa 2014; Rao 2020), we include in our analysis also national donors who play a remarkable role in the Scandinavian context.

Funding Policies and the Agenda of Activist Work

We start with the example of Queer World, one of our partner organizations in Norway. As mentioned previously in this chapter, Queer World is a small organization working with community support to minority LGBTI+ people. They have a headquarter located in Oslo and three local offices in regional cities. This organization was established around ten years ago and lacked long-term relationships to politicians, which older organizations have been able to develop over the years. In conversation with staff members of the organization, they explain that they find it difficult to receive funding because of the existing discourses which expect refugees to tell stories of victimization and violence. They experience challenges to raise knowledge and change the expectations because of difficulties of attracting the interest of journalists and news outlets without such a victimization narrative (see Chapter 4). Lone, one staff member in the organization, explains why they are reluctant to appear in the news:

I don't want a 16-year old [person who we work with] to appear in the news with the story 'my mom and dad tried to cut me with a knife but Queer World helped me...' Most likely, it would be efficient [and give us attention and funding] but it breaches the integrity of the person. This is not my decision to take. It is difficult (...). Minority organizations need to spread much more 'social pornography' than majority organizations for their message to appear in media. If I want to have a story published in the news, I need to have a case, a personal narrative, whereas others have their privileges and can present a report which states facts. The others are allowed to appear in the force of their competence, their professional occupation.

Lone finds this expectation in discourse on victims very problematic to deal with. While refusing to create victims and heroes of that sort, she is simultaneously aware that this renders the organization more vulnerable. It means that they receive less attention and as a result of that, less funding. Lone finds that they should be able to receive more funding on a project basis, but that politicians often devalue the cases that the

organization has presented for them, because these cases do not fulfill the expectation of the victimization narrative.

As this example demonstrates, material conditions (access to funding) influence and determine activist work. Donors have the power to decide what themes deserve to be funded and how, and how much funding an organization can be granted. The example also reveals colonial contestations between the majority (middle-class white Norwegians represented by majority organizations) and the minority, the racialized Other in the Norwegian society whose victimized status is the only way to become an eligible subject for donor funding. Thus, the example shows that West/North-based minority organizations can be subject to mechanisms of power similar to those applied in relation to activists from the East and South. This example also underlines that material conditions and discursive hegemony co-constitute each other. As we notice across all our research sites, established, visible organizations or organizations with recognizable stories/narratives (e.g., victimization of queer people with a migrant background) have more chances to access the continuous flow of funding. Similarly to Lone's quote above, several regional LGBTI+ initiatives in Russia complained that donors preferred the same, already known, organizations which were usually located in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The visibility/invisibility of an organization could also depend on its location within the same country. Activists from Siberia, a large but remote region of Russia, mentioned that their location was a significant disadvantage—neither Western partners wanted to travel as far to establish new contacts nor activists were invited to transnational gatherings since the costs of travel were too high. In Turkey, by contrast, donors have adapted to the changes in state–civil society relations and, albeit through local intermediary CSOs, increased their financial and logistic support for grassroots activists. They have also dropped the expectation of sustainability and long-term commitment from local partners as they understood that the activist field had become highly volatile (Kaya and Ögünç 2020). All in all, however, grassroots activists have significantly less possibilities for financial support than nongovernmental or institutionalized civil society organizations.

Another aspect of the co-construction of material conditions and discursive hegemonies is what themes donors expect activists to cover

and what expenses they are ready to support. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in Russia, funders prioritize projects aimed at societal and political changes and advocacy at the expense of community services (see also Kirey-Sitnikova 2020). As a result, some Russian LGBTI+ community centers that Olga visited struggled to cover the rent for their community spaces because their donors did not want to pay for these expenses. In Turkey, donor priorities change depending on the activist agenda. Whereas for activists pursuing gender equality, sexual rights, and other social justice agendas funding is most widely available for human rights advocacy (Muehlenhoff 2019), service provision is the priority agenda to fund when it comes to refugees' and migrants' issues. In the Scandinavian countries, state funding prioritizes short-term projects with well-defined goals and agendas. In Norway and Denmark, well-established, majority organizations often win the greatest bids of project funding. In Sweden, organizations are not allowed to apply for the same project twice, which results in difficulties for feminist and LGBTI+ activists who usually are involved in activities that are not able to reach a goal within the scope of one year, such as for example, activities for asylum-seeking LGBTI+s.

Salaries: Between Passion and Profession

Salaries and other types of remuneration for activist work is another important dimension of material conditions of activism across the three contexts. The issue of salaries is proclaimed in the reflections of the German East–West Bridge/Gender Democracy (EWB) organization on their cooperation with partners in Eastern Europe discussed previously. It is also an important point of critique among Turkish activists. The problem has several dimensions. On the one hand, as Roy (2011) admits, remuneration for activist work is criticized in the literature on NGOization as a sign of co-optation and depoliticization of activist work. Activists are expected to be driven by passion (Roy 2011), to contribute their personal resources to societal changes. Indeed, many of our research partners in Russia, Turkey, and Scandinavia do work on a volunteer basis relying on other sources of income such as waged

employment in the private sector or academia or even running their own businesses. Yet, as Roy (2011) points out in her analysis of feminist queer activism in India, the idea of activism as passion is often expressed from the position of privilege by those other activists or community members whose class belonging allows them not to care so much about income. Depending on the context, a voluntary mode of activism, “activism for passion,” can be unsustainable and even exploitative (Roy 2011, 594). In India (Ibid.), but also in Central and Eastern Europe (Guenther 2011), NGOs are sometimes the only way to combine political commitments with relatively stable employment. Above, we have seen the example of Cansu who became a CSO worker in order to continue her activism. Merging full-time activism with full-time employment is one way of funding activism. Yet, although CSO jobs in Turkey are not that well paid or prestigious (except for high-rank managerial positions), getting a position still requires one to have relevant education, degrees, linguistic skills; it is not accessible to everybody. For activists who want to invest more time in politics than a regular employment allows, there are two other options. First, and most common, is having part time, flexible jobs or self-employment where one earns money enough for a living, albeit under precarious conditions, and can decide on the time they allocate to activism. As a second option, there are activists who rely on their organizations (mostly left-socialist political structures) for a living by receiving from them a sum of money on a monthly basis, not as a salary that comes with social security and is subject to taxation but rather as an informal support mechanism where small radical groups gather money among themselves and from their supporters in order for some members to engage in politics in an unlimited way. During fieldwork, Selin had several research partners who chose this option and quit their full-time employment to devote themselves to politics in times of great turmoil.

The question of salaries also raises the problem of inequalities between activists from different geopolitical locations. Although, admittedly, many organizations and initiatives in Turkey, Scandinavia, and Russia alike do experience the problem of short-term and project-based funding that causes precarity, we still think it is important to distinguish between different modes of livability. As we know from the example of the German organization EWB, the level of remuneration varies depending

on the organization's or initiative's geopolitical location. An interview with Elena who used to work as a project manager for different transnational donors shows that salaries of Western/Northern-based activists working in intermediary organizations or as project evaluators take a significant share of the funding allocated for the projects implemented in the East/South. Hence, even though money is planned for activities in Russia, for example, their significant share remains in Western organizations distributing funds. The lack of funding and donors' reluctance to finance the salaries of people working on the ground also result in social insecurity among activists whose psychological health is often fragile due to stress and burnout (Chen and Gorski 2015; Vaccaro and Mena 2011). Elena, a project manager mentioned above, tries to encourage activists from Russia to press donors to take such aspects of activist work into regard.

Resisting Donor Hegemonies

According to our research material, the tendency to settle a top-down agenda from donors to recipients is changing and more space for negotiations between donors and recipients is allowed. Donor organizations become more aware of local activist agendas and more trustful to activists' competence and agency. Activists themselves play a significant role in this process. Some activists from Russia and Turkey choose to migrate and pursue university education in gender studies or development in Western countries acquiring necessary skills and language to pursue their political goals afterward. Some of them then enter the ranks of transnational feminist and LGBTI+ organizations as regional coordinators acting as mediators between activists from their native regions and large transnational organizations. In turn, they help local activists to navigate the peculiarities and requirements of donor funding. Elena, who is mentioned above, helps grassroots initiatives appear more institutionalized in their applications for funding. In one case, she wanted to support a transgender grassroots initiative from Russia. A transnational donor organization where she worked at that time financed only established NGOs with members and a board. Under Elena's guidance

the initiative created the board on paper to fulfill this requirement. In the end, they managed to acquire funding. Yet, dependence on educated intermediaries creates other types of problems such as producing inequalities between activists or homogenizing the activist agenda in favor of recognizable themes and strategies.

Activists on the ground also take an active stand in communication with donors. As the example of Queer World at the beginning of this section reveals, the organization refuses to fulfill the expectation to produce a narrative of victimization in dominant discourses, however, at the expense of less funding for activities and staff members. The Turkish organization KAOS GL implements a more developed tactic. KAOS started receiving foreign funding after becoming an official CSO in 2005. Cansu, a KAOS worker, explains that every year KAOS holds a summer camp where employees gather and assess the previous year's program, and decide on their next future action plan. Based on the decisions, they then start looking for suitable sources of funding, i.e., they never prepare projects in response to donor calls. Moreover, instead of short-term, result-oriented projects, KAOS prioritizes long-term engagements that help building relationships between different activist groups. Annual events such as the "Feminist Forum" and "Gathering against Homophobia" are prioritized when looking for funding. Cansu asserts that KAOS receives funding as long as the funder supports their agenda and not the other way around. Responding to criticisms of co-optation, she emphasizes two points. First, it is very recent that KAOS as an LGBTI+ organization receives some sort of support from the broader social opposition. Labor Unions, political parties, even human rights organizations have previously excluded them; therefore they have developed structures where they rely on foreign funds. Second, unlike some other CSOs, KAOS does not have an income from individual donations. Cansu says it is widespread in Turkey that individuals do not donate to LGBTI+ organizations, regardless of whether those CSOs rely on donor funds or not. "Thus," Cansu continues, "if KAOS has formed a network of lawyers [who addressed LGBTI+ issues], trained hundreds of teachers and social workers, followed up on LGBTI+ refugees court cases, developed relations with the UNHCR, these all happened thanks to those funds." While the ways in which KAOS relates to foreign funding cannot

be generalized to LGBTI+ activism, Cansu's take on the lack of financial support from individual allies or the broader social opposition is shared by most other LGBTI+ activists involved in the Turkish study.

Another prominent approach to organizing finances in Turkey is what we can call "hybrid funding." Similar to the strategic use of the "NGO form" we discussed above, in several examples, donor funding serves as a financial resource used for singular purposes, or combined with other sources of funding. In the case of the Izmir Association for Women's Advancement,¹⁴ for instance, activists are self-funded volunteers but they use additional funding for expenses that go beyond their budget. An active member of the association, Yaprak, explains how they once applied for EU money through an Ankara-based intermediary for their community work of raising awareness on gender-based violence in poor neighborhoods of Izmir. Although Yaprak and her fellow activists were engaged in this type of work for many years, they framed it as a short-term project and received a grant for covering the salary of one personnel to administer their "project." During this time, however, it was in fact four volunteers involved in community work with women in poor neighborhoods. All of them were retired women with no source of income other than their minimal pensions. As Yaprak says, they divided one salary in four and used it for covering public transportation costs, and some additional money remained, if at all. They considered this money as income "to support their children studying at the university," not as a primary salary.

Some activists and organizations decide to withdraw from donor funding entirely. In the Russian case, foreign funds attract unnecessary attention to an initiative or organization. They also limit the scope of organizational work and require too much energy for reporting results. To conclude, we give an example of a Moscow-based LGBTI+ organization that initially started collecting donations to cover rent expenses for psychological meetings for LGBTI+ people and later integrated crowd-funding and donations in their sustainable financial strategy. What may seem as a widespread strategy for Western organizations, appears to

¹⁴ Unlike other organizations that participated in the Turkish study, the name of this organization is anonymized for safety reasons.

be an innovative move in Russia, where, as in postsocialist Eastern Europe more broadly, there is no contemporary tradition of philanthropic support of civil society (Guenther 2011). The organization charges participants with a modest fee of maximum 5 EUR for their various events such as conferences about LGBTI+ families, language courses, or movie screenings. There is an unspoken rule that a person who cannot afford the fee can be exempt from paying. When Olga discussed this strategy with Evgenia, the co-founder of the organization, she said:

All our activities are financially self-sustainable. We are a grassroots organization, and I think it is important that the community is capable of self-sustaining (*okupat' sebja*). Innovative projects, yes, we can apply for grants. But this should be a bonus. The basis should be self-sustainability. I think it says something about our dignity, it shows that we are self-capable and that we have an active position. It is not easy to convince the team in this position because there is an assumption in this activist milieu that we do not have the right to charge for our work. (...) And we have something to teach others - because not with the Western support, it is a small part; but with our own enthusiasm we are doing a great job.

Evgenia's quote underlines the importance of community independence from foreign funds. For her, self-sustainability is a sign of an organization's grassroots commitment. As it appears in another part of this interview, when Olga asks Evgenia about their attempt to become ILGA-Europe's member, the organization prioritizes their work on the local level over transnational exchanges. Moreover, independence from donor support has an important symbolic meaning for Evgenia—the fact that the community agrees to invest in the organization financially is, in Evgenia's eyes, an implicit acknowledgment that their work and efforts, even being underpaid, do not go to waste.

Conclusion

This chapter elaborates on the material conditions of activist work across Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey. We consider how feminist and LGBTI+ activists' relations with the state, transnational donor organizations, and with each other influence their resistant tactics. With this chapter, we animate with detailed examples theoretical discussions of relations between the state, civil society and the market, the NGOization paradigm, and the West–East/North–South tensions in transnational activist collaborations.

As our analysis reveals, relations between the state and civil society are more complex than the normative ideal of civil society autonomy in liberal democracy suggests (Chapter 2). As we show through our examples, neither authoritarian and repressive political regimes exclude relations between activists and the state, nor civil society is entirely autonomous in liberal democratic contexts. In Russia and Turkey, the state targets only particular civil society actors including feminist and LGBTI+ activists whose struggles and values, framed as non-national and Western, are in conflict with Russia's and Turkey's current political agenda. Organizations or initiatives that align with states such as pro-AKP women's organizations in Turkey or providers of social services in Russia are part of the integral state and benefit from the civil society–state relations. In Scandinavia, harmonious relations between the state and civil society describe the situation for large-scale mainstream women's and LGBTI+ organizations which appear as an extended arm of the state assisting national governments in implementing neoliberal societal transformations. At the same time, minority or newly established organizations often carrying a more radical political agenda are sidelined from these relations and, in turn, from state finances.

As we show, relations between the state and civil society vary based on a number of factors such as the scale of states (national or local) and civil society organizations (NGO/CSO or grassroots initiative), the activist agenda, positionality in relation to the state and to other civil society actors. While providing a state-centered contextual frame of our analysis, we also depart from the ontology of state-centrism

and investigate the conditions of feminist and LGBTI+ activist organizing across our three contexts within a multi-scalar frame. By revealing tensions that occur between organizations and initiatives on international (West–East), national (minority/majority), and regional (provincial/metropolitan) levels, we emphasize that the political regime—either liberal or authoritarian—is important but yet not the single most decisive ground for investigating feminist and LGBTI+ resistant strategies, which occur within global neoliberal conditions framing transnational activism.

In our investigation of donor politics we focus on market mechanisms of regulating feminist and LGBTI+ activism. The fact that the navigation of donor politics and funding strategies takes such a prominent space in our discussions with activists and in their routine work signifies that global governance embodied by supra- and international organizations (EU, World Bank, UN) weakens the authority of national states, which are not an exclusive source of activist determination any longer. As the chapter affirms, struggles for funding and a fragile balance between co-optative and resistant politics are a universal denominator of feminist and LGBTI+ activist work across Russia, the Scandinavian countries, and Turkey. In this sense, the similarities and overlaps across the West–East and North–South as well as across our contexts are more salient than we would initially anticipate. Yet, these similarities do not exclude embedded inequalities when work conditions and the degree of activist political, economic, and personal exposure varies depending on geopolitical belonging. In the next chapter, we analyze how these material inequalities of activist work affect transnational solidarity.

References

- Activatica. 2020. “Mesto mitinga 8 marta v Peterburge zaimet prazdnik ‘Sil’noe plecho.” April 3, 2020. <http://activatica.org/blogs/view/id/9425/title/mitingu-feminizm-protiv-nasiliya-otkazali-v-ploshchadke>.
- Adaman, Fikret, Murat Arsel, and Bengi Akbulut. 2019. “Neoliberal Developmentalism, Authoritarian Populism, and Extractivism in the Countryside:

- The Soma Mining Disaster in Turkey.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46 (3): 514–36.
- Akçay, Ümit. 2018. “Neoliberal Populism in Turkey and Its Crisis.” Institute for International Political Economy Berlin Working Paper, No. 100/2018: 1–31.
- Akkan, Başak. 2018. “The Politics of Care in Turkey: Sacred Familialism in a Changing Political Context.” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (1): 72–91.
- Aldıkaçtı Marshall, Gül. 2013. *Shaping Gender Policy in Turkey: Grassroots Women Activists, the European Union, and the Turkish State*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Alnaçık, Ayşe, Özlem Altan-Olcay, Ceren Deniz, and Fatoş Gökşen. 2017. “Gender Policy Architecture in Turkey: Localizing Transnational Discourses of Women’s Employment.” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 24 (3): 298–323.
- Alvarez, Sonia E. 1999. “Advocating Feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO ‘Boom.’” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1 (2): 181–209.
- . 2014. “Beyond NGOization? Reflections from Latin America.” In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Viktoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal, 285–300. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Arik, Hülya, Selin Çağatay, Mia Liinason, and Olga Sasunkevich. 2022. “Unsettling Political: Conceptualizing the Political in Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavian Countries and Turkey.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Online first.
- Artem’ev, Aleksandr. 2020. “‘Solidarnost’ - nash obshchii put’ k svobode’: so-avtorka knigi o domashnem nasilii Ol’ga Razmakhova o zhenskom dvizhenii v Rossii, ego soiuznikakh i ego iazyke.” Amnesty International. December 8, 2020. <https://eurasia.amnesty.org/2020/12/08/solidarnost-nash-obshhij-put-k-svobode-soavtorka-knigi-o-domashnem-nasilii-olga-razmahova-o-zhenskom-dvizhenii-ego-soyuznikah-i-ego-azyke/>.
- Asen, Robert, and Daniel C. Brouwer. 2001. *Counterpublics and the State*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Ayoub, Phillip, and David Paternotte. 2014. “Introduction.” In *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe: A Rainbow Europe?*, edited by Phillip Ayoub and David Paternotte, 1–25. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baysal, Nurcan. 2017. “The Kurdish Region since the Coup Attempt.” OpenDemocracy. February 2, 2017. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/nurcan-baysal/kurdish-region-since-coup-attempt>.
- Bernal, Victoria, and Inderpal Grewal. 2014. *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Birch, Kean, and Matti Siemiatycki. 2016. "Neoliberalism and the Geographies of Marketization: The Entangling of State and Markets." *Progress in Human Geography* 40 (2): 177–98.
- Bonfiglioli, Chiara, and Kristen Ghodsee. 2020. "Vanishing Act: Global Socialist Feminism as the 'Missing Other' of Transnational Feminism—A Response to Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert and Koobak (2019)." *Feminist Review* 126 (1): 168–72.
- Brock, Maria, and Emil Edenborg. 2020. "You Cannot Oppress Those Who Do Not Exist: Gay Persecution in Chechnya and the Politics of In/Visibility." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 26 (4): 673–700.
- Çağatay, Selin. 2018. "Women's Coalitions beyond the Laicism–Islamism Divide in Turkey: Towards an Inclusive Struggle for Gender Equality?" *Social Inclusion* 6 (4): 48–58.
- . 2019. "Varieties of Anti-Gender Mobilizations: Is Turkey a Case?" *Engenderings* (blog). January 9, 2019. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/gender/2019/01/09/varieties-of-anti-gender-mobilizations-is-turkey-a-case/>.
- Certeau, Michel de. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Çetin, Zülfikar. 2016. "The Dynamics of the Queer Movement in Turkey before and during the Conservative AKP Government." Working Paper 2016/1. Research Group EU/Europe. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik/German Institute for International and Security Affairs. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/the-dynamics-of-the-queer-movement-in-turkey-before-and-during-the-conservative-akp-government/>.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 2019. *I Am the People: Reflections on Popular Sovereignty Today*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chen, Cher Weixia, and Paul C. Gorski. 2015. "Burnout in Social Justice and Human Rights Activists: Symptoms, Causes and Implications." *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 7 (3): 366–90.
- Conway, Janet M. 2010. "Troubling Transnational Feminism(s) at the World Social Forum." In *Solidarities Without Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*, edited by Pascale Dufour, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, 139–59. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Cope, Ben, Lena Minchenia, and Olga Sasunkevich. 2017. "Post-Socialist Anxiety: Gender Studies in Eastern Europe in the Context of the Conservative Backlash (Special Issue for the 20th anniversary of the Centre for Gender Studies at EHU)." *Perekrestki*, nos. 1–2. https://ru.ehu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CrossRoad_2017_1_2.pdf.

- Coşar, Simten, and Inci Özkan-Kerestecioğlu. 2017. "Feminist Politics in Contemporary Turkey: Neoliberal Attacks, Feminist Claims to the Public." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 38 (2): 151–74.
- Desai, Manisha. 2005. "Transnationalism: The Face of Feminist Politics Post-Beijing." *International Social Science Journal* 57 (184): 319–30.
- Deutsche, Welle. 2017. "Gay Men Flee Persecution and Honor Killings in Chechnya." *DW.COM* (blog). April 17, 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/gay-men-flee-persecution-and-honor-killings-in-chechnya/a-38457383>.
- Dhawan, Nikita. 2013. "Coercive Cosmopolitanism and Impossible Solidarities." *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences. Special Issue: Human Rights between Past and Future* 22 (1): 139–66.
- Doyle, Jessica Leigh. 2018. "Government Co-Option of Civil Society: Exploring the AKP's Role Within Turkish Women's CSOs." *Democratization* 25 (3): 445–63.
- Dufour, Pascale, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, eds. 2010. *Solidarities beyond Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Edenborg, Emil. 2017. *Politics of Visibility and Belonging: From Russia's "Homosexual Propaganda" Laws to the Ukraine War*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Eimhjellen, Ivar. 2012. "Statlig Politikutforming for Frivillig Sektor Etter 1970." In *Organisasjonene Og Det Offentlige: Har vi Fått En Ny Frivillighetsspolitikk?*, edited by Per Selle and Kristin Strømsnes. Organisasjonene Og Det Offentlige: Har vi Fått En Ny Frivillighetsspolitikk? 9–22. Bergen and Oslo: Senter for forskning på sivilsamfunn og frivillig sektor.
- Eldén, Åsa, and Paul T. Levin. 2018. "Swedish Aid in the Era of Shrinking Space—The Case of Turkey." 2018: 06. EBA Rapport. Stockholm: Expert Group for Aid Studies.
- Esen, Berk, and Şebnem Gümüüşçü. 2016. "Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey." *Third World Quarterly* 37 (9): 1581–606.
- Fraser, Nancy. 2009. "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History." *New Left Review*, no. 56 (March/April) : 97–117.
- Friberg, Nico. 2020. "(Re)Configurations of Transness." Presented at the Be(com)ing Human? Thinking Across Theories and Politics of Difference and Colonial Legacies, Stavanger, October 29.
- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2019. *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War*. Illustrated edition. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Göker, Zeynep Gülru. 2019. "Memories, Stories and Deliberation: Digital Sisterhood on Feminist Websites in Turkey." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 26 (3): 313–28.
- Gradskova, Yulia. 2019. "Gender Equality as a Declaration: The Changing Environment of Nordic-Russian Cooperation." In *Rethinking Gender Equality in Global Governance: The Delusion of Norm Diffusion*, edited by Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Adam Fejerskov, and Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde, 169–90. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Guenther, Katja M. 2011. "The Possibilities and Pitfalls of NGO Feminism: Insights from Postsocialist Eastern Europe." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (4): 863–87.
- Güneş, Cengiz. 2017. "Turkey's New Left." *New Left Review*, no. 107 (October): 9–30.
- Hemment, Julie. 2007. *Empowering Women in Russia: Activism, Aid, and NGOs*. Illustrated edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hünler, Olga Selin. 2020. "Angry Fathers: Populist and Masculinist Twitter Campaigns in Turkey." In *Online International Conference Hosted by the Faculty of Political and Social Science*. Florence: Scuola Normale Superiore.
- Hürriyet. 2015. "KADEM Başkan Yardımcısı Sümeyye Erdoğan: Dünya Tarihinde Kadını Ezen Uygulamaları En Çok Batı'da Görürsünüz." *Hürriyet*. March 30, 2015. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kadem-baskan-yardimcisi-sumeyye-erdogan-dunya-tarihinde-kadini-ezen-uygulamalari-en-cok-batida-gorursunuz-28591556>.
- ILO. n.d. "Turkey—Act No. 3713 on the Fight Against Terrorism." NATLEX Database of National Labour, Social Security and Related Human Rights Legislation. International Labor Organization. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=22104.
- INCITE!. 2007. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Johnson, Janet Elise. 2009. *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention*. Illustrated edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Johnson, Paul. 2015. "'Homosexual Propaganda' Laws in the Russian Federation: Are They in Violation of the European Convention on Human Rights?" *Russian Law Journal* 3 (2): 37–61.
- Kabasakal Arat, Zehra F. 2017. "Political Parties and Women's Rights in Turkey." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44 (2): 240–54.
- Kahlina, Katja, and Dušica Ristivojević. 2015. "LGBT Rights, Standards of 'Civilisation' and the Multipolar World Order." *E-International Relations*

- (blog). September 10, 2015. <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/09/10/lgbt-rights-standards-of-civilisation-and-the-multipolar-world-order/>.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. 2016. "Locating the Politics of Gender: Patriarchy, Neo-Liberal Governance and Violence in Turkey." *Research and Policy on Turkey* 1 (2): 103–18.
- Kardam, Nüket. 2005. *Turkey's Engagement with Global Women's Human Rights*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate.
- Kaya, Özlem, and Pınar Ögünç. 2020. *Chess, Hide-and-Seek and Determination Civil Society in Difficult Times*. Istanbul: Anadolu Kültür.
- KEIG. 2017. "Kadın İstihdamının Artırılması ve Fırsat Eşitliğinin Sağlanması Genelgesi'ndeki Değişiklikler: Güncelleme Değil, Eşitsizliği Artırma." November 19, 2017. <http://www.keig.org/?p=3559>.
- Khodyreva, Ananastasiia. 2020. "Desiat' let v pravozashchitnom feminisme. Bol'shoe interv'iu s Mari Davtian." Colta. June 26, 2020. <https://www.colta.ru/articles/she/24766-mari-davtyan-bolshoe-intervyu>.
- KHU. 2019. "Türkiye'de Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Algısı Araştırması 2019." Istanbul: Kadir Has Üniversitesi, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Araştırma Merkezi.
- Kirey-Sitnikova, Yana. 2020. "Borrowing and Imitation in Post-Soviet Trans Activisms." In *The SAGE Handbook of Global Sexualities*, edited by Zowie Davy, Ana Cristina Santos, Chiara Bertone, Ryan Thoreson, and Saskia E. Wieringa. 1st edition, 774–97. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Klochkova, Ksenia. 2017. "Kak Feministki Vernuli Sebe 8 Marta." Fontanka.Ru. Accessed March 5, 2021. <https://www.fontanka.ru/2017/03/09/001/>.
- KONDA. 2019. "Türkiye'de Toplumsal Cinsiyet Raporu Hayat Tarzları 2018 Araştırması." Istanbul: KONDA.
- Kondakov, Alexander. 2017. *Prestupleniia na pochve nenavisti protiv LGBT v Rossii*. The Centre for Independent Social Research.
- . 2019. "The Influence of the 'Gay-Propaganda' Law on Violence against LGBTIQ People in Russia: Evidence from Criminal Court Rulings." *European Journal of Criminology*, Online first. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1477370819887511>.
- Konitzer, Andrew, and Stephen K. Wegren. 2006. "Federalism and Political Recentralization in the Russian Federation: United Russia as the Party of Power." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 36 (4): 503–22.
- Koobak, Redi, and Raili Marling. 2014. "The Decolonial Challenge: Framing Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe Within Transnational Feminist Studies." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21 (4): 330–43.

- Koyuncu, Berrin, and Aylin Özman. 2019. "Women's Rights Organizations and Turkish State in the Post-2011 Era: Ideological Disengagement versus Conservative Alignment." *Turkish Studies* 20 (5): 728–53.
- Kulpa, Robert. 2014. "Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21 (4): 431–48.
- Liinason, Mia. 2018. *Equality Struggles: Womens Movements, Neoliberal Markets and State Political Agendas in Scandinavia*. 1st edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Liinason, Mia, and Marta Cuesta. 2016. *Hoppets politik: feministisk aktivism i Sverige idag*. Göteborg: Makadam.
- Lyons, Lenore. 2010. "Framing Transnational Feminism: Examining Migrant Worker Organizing in Singapore." In *Solidarities Without Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*, edited by Pascale Dufour, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, 89–107. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- McIlwane, Cathy. 2009. "Civil Society." In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by R. Kitchin and N. Thrift. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science.
- Molyneux, Maxine, and Shahra Razavi, eds. 2002. *Gender Justice, Development, and Rights*. Oxford: OUP.
- Moss, Kevin. 2017. "Russia as the Saviour of European Civilization: Gender and the Geopolitics of Traditional Values." In *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*, edited by Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte, 195–214. New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Muehlenhoff, Hanna L. 2019. "Neoliberal Governmentality and the (de)Politicisation of LGBT Rights: The Case of the European Union in Turkey." *Politics* 39 (2): 202–17.
- Müftüler-Baç, Meltem. 2012. "Gender Equality in Turkey." European Parliament's Committee on Gender Equality. Brussels: European Parliament. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201204/20120424ATT43808/20120424ATT43808EN.pdf>.
- Muravyeva, Marianna. 2014. "Traditional Values and Modern Families: Legal Understanding of Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Russia." *Zhurnal Issledovaniï Sotsialnoi Politiki = The Journal of Social Policy Studies* 12 (4): 625–38.
- Newman, Janet. 2014. "Landscapes of Antagonism: Local Governance, Neoliberalism and Austerity." *Urban Studies* 51 (15): 3290–305.

- OHCHR: Chechnya. 2019. "UN Experts Urge Action after Reports of Renewed Persecution of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People." February 13, 2019. Accessed September 28, 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24162&LangID=E>.
- Özgür Keysan, Asuman. 2019. *Activism and Women's NGOs in Turkey: Civil Society, Feminism and Politics*. London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, and Sydney: I.B. Tauris.
- Özkazaç, Alev. 2020a. "Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the Case of Turkey." *Baltic Worlds: A Scholarly Journal and News Magazine* 13 (1): 45–53.
- . 2020b. "Gender and Authoritarian Populism in Turkey: The Two Phases of AKP Rule." *OpenDemocracy*. February 3, 2020. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/rethinking-populism/gender-and-authoritarian-populism-turkey-two-phases-akp-rule/>.
- Özkazaç, Alev, Ayça Günaydın, and Esra Aşan. 2020. "Avrupa'da ve Türkiye'de Yükselen Toplumsal Cinsiyet Karşıtı Hareketler Üzerine. Alev Özkazaç ile Söyleşi." *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, no. 41 (Fall): 30–45.
- PACE. 2018. Doc. 14572. "Persecution of LGBTI People in the Chechen Republic (Russian Federation)." n.d. Accessed September 28, 2020. <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=24805&lang=en>.
- Polatdemir, Asli. Forthcoming. "Empowerment Concepts of Women's Movements in Turkey: A Foucauldian Analysis of Subjectification through Websites." PhD thesis, Bremen University.
- Polatdemir, Asli, and Charlotte Binder. 2015. "Can All Women Fight Together? A Discussion between Ideals and Realities: Alliances and Diversity in Women's Movements in Turkey." Ankara: Middle East Technical University.
- Predelli, Line Nyhagen, and Beatrice Halsaa. 2012. *Majority-Minority Relations in Contemporary Women's Movements: Strategic Sisterhood*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rai, Shirin. 1996. *Women and the State: International Perspectives*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Rao, Rahul. 2020. *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Räthzel, Nora, David Uzzell, Ragnar Lundström, and Beatriz Leandro. 2015. "The Space of Civil Society and the Practices of Resistance and Subordination." *Journal of Civil Society* 11 (2): 154–69.
- Regeringen. 2009. "En Politik För Det Civila Samhället. Prop. 2009/10: 55." Stockholm: Kulturdepartementet.

- . 2010. “National Civilsamfundsstrategi: En Styrket Inddragelse Af Civilsamfundet Og Frivillige Organisationer i Den Sociala Indsats.” Købenaavn: Socialministeriet.
- Rosbalt. 2018. “Gostei LGBT-festivalia ‘Kvirfest’ evakuirovali iz ‘Artmuzy’ iz-za soobshchenia o minirovanii.” «Bumaga». September 27, 2018. <https://paperpaper.ru/papernews/2018/09/27/gostej-lgbt-festivalya-kvirfest-eva/>.
- Roy, Srila. 2011. “Politics, Passion and Professionalization in Contemporary Indian Feminism.” *Sociology* 45 (4): 587–602.
- Russian Federal Law. 1996. “Federal’nyi Zakon No 7 ‘O Nekommercheskikh Organizatsiakh.’” http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_8824/.
- . 2012. “Federal’nyi Zakon N 121-FZ ‘O Vnesenii Izmenenii v Otdel’nye Zakonodatel’nye Akty Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Chasti Regulirovaniya Deyatel’nosti Nekommercheskikh Organizatsii, Vypolnyayushchikh Funktsii Inostrannogo Agenta.’” https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_132900/.
- . 2013. “Federal’nyi Zakon N 135-FZ ”O Vnesenii Izmenenii v Stat’iu 5 Federal’nogo Zakona ”O Zashchite Prav Detei Ot Informatsii, Prichini-aiushchei Vred Ikh Zdorov’iu i Razvitiuu” i Otdel’nye Zakonodatel’nye Akty Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Tseliakh Zashchity Detei Ot Informatsii, Propagandiruushchei Otritsanie Traditsionnykh Semeinykh Tsennosti.’” http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_148269/.
- . 2015. “Federal’nyi Zakon N 129-FZ ‘O Vnesenii Izmenenii v Otdel’nye Zakonodatel’nye Akty Rossiiskoi Federatsii.’” https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_179979/.
- . 2020. “Federal’nyi Zakon N 481-FZ ‘O Vnesenii Izmenenii v Otdel’nye Zakonodatel’nye Akty Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Chasti Ustanovleniia Dopolnitel’nykh Mer Protivodeistviia Ugrozam Natsional’noi Bezopasnosti.’” https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_179979/.
- Salmenniemi, Sivi. 2008. *Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Savcı, Evren, Şebnem Keniş, and Ipek Tabur. 2019. “The LGBTI+ Movement.” In *Authoritarianism and Resistance in Turkey: Conversations on Democratic and Social Challenges*, edited by Esra Özyürek, Gaye Özpınar, and Emrah Altındış, 125–32. New York: Springer.
- Selle, Per, and Kristin Strømsnes. 2012. “Organisajonene Og Det Offentlige: Har vi Fått En Ny Frivillighetspolitikk?” Bergen and Oslo: Senter for forskning på sivilsamfunn og frivillig sektor.

- Sharma, Aradhana. 2014. "The State and Women's Empowerment in India." In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal, 93–113. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Skokova, Yulia, Ulla Pape, and Irina Krasnopolskaya. 2018. "The Non-Profit Sector in Today's Russia: Between Confrontation and Co-Optation." *Europe-Asia Studies* 70 (4): 531–63.
- Soboleva, Irina V., and Yaroslav A. Bakhmetjev. 2015. "Political Awareness and Self-Blame in the Explanatory Narratives of LGBT People amid the Anti-LGBT Campaign in Russia." *Sexuality & Culture* 19 (2): 275–96.
- Spade, Dean. 2015. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Sperling, Valerie. 2015. *Sex, Politics, and Putin: Political Legitimacy in Russia. Sex, Politics, and Putin*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stella, Francesca. 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Suchland, Jennifer. 2011. "Is Postsocialism Transnational?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (4): 837–62.
- . 2015. *Economies of Violence: Transnational Feminism, Postsocialism, and the Politics of Sex Trafficking*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Sundstrom, Lisa McIntosh. 2006. *Funding Civil Society: Foreign Assistance and NGO Development in Russia*. 1st edition. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Tansel, Cemal Burak, ed. 2018. "Special Issue: Decoding the Repertoires of Authoritarian Neoliberalism in Turkey." *South European Society and Politics* 23 (2): 197–302.
- Thayer, Millie. 2009. *Making Transnational Feminism: Rural Women, NGO Activists, and Northern Donors in Brazil*. New York and London: Routledge.
- . 2010. "Translations and Refusals: Resignifying Meanings as Feminist Political Practice." *Feminist Studies* 36 (1): 200–30.
- Tlostanova, Madina, Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, and Redi Koobak. 2019. "The Postsocialist 'Missing Other' of Transnational Feminism?" *Feminist Review* 121 (1): 81–87.
- Tsygankov, Andrei P. 2014. *The Managed Democracy: The Strong State in Russia*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Umland, Andreas. 2012. "Russia's New 'Special Path' after the Orange Revolution." *Russian Politics & Law* 50 (6): 19–40.
- Vaccaro, Annemarie, and Jasmine A. Mena. 2011. "It's Not Burnout, It's More: Queer College Activists of Color and Mental Health." *Journal of Gay &*

- Lesbian Mental Health: Mental Health Issues in LGBT Seniors* 15 (4): 339–67.
- Walker, Shaun. 2017. “Russia Investigates ‘Gay Purge’ in Chechnya.” *The Guardian*, May 26, 2017, sec. World News. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/26/russia-investigates-gay-purge-in-chechnya>.
- Yabancı, Bilge. 2016. “Populism as the Problem Child of Democracy: The AKP’s Enduring Appeal and the Use of Meso-Level Actors.” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16 (4): 591–617.
- Yonucu, Deniz. 2018. “The Absent Present Law: An Ethnographic Study of Legal Violence in Turkey.” *Social & Legal Studies* 27 (6): 716–33.
- Zhabenko, Alisa. 2019. “Russian Lesbian Mothers: Between ‘Traditional Values’ and Human Rights.” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 23 (3): 321–35.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.





4

Solidarities Across: Borders, Belongings, Movements

One way to illuminate the ways in which spaces of resistance are enabled, transformed, or restrained is by focusing on solidarity practices. In Chapter 2, we argued for the centrality of solidarity practices in the making and expansion of spaces of resistance. We also discussed, from the perspective of transnational feminism, that the differential positioning of feminist and LGBTI+ activists in terms of political agendas and geographical location highlights the significance of activist efforts to recognize differences based on class, race, ethnicity, and religion when building transnational solidarities (Baksh and Harcourt 2015; Bassel and Emejulu 2017; Gender & Development 2013; Irvine et al. 2019; Martinsson and Mulinari 2018; Salem 2017; Scholz 2014; Social Politics 2018; Wiedlack et al. 2019). In this chapter, we take a closer look into practices of solidarity across borders, belongings, and movements. Building on the notion of solidarity across difference developed by Jodi Dean (1996) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), we offer ethnographic accounts of activist work oriented to recognizing and challenging inequalities and relations of oppression based on race,

ethnicity, religion, and class, alongside gender and sexuality. As we draw on an emerging body of literature that highlight everyday practices of solidarity (Ahmed 2014; Butler 2018; Chowdhury and Philipose 2016; Connections 2020; Hemmings 2012; Salem 2017; Pedwell 2012; Wiedlack et al. 2019), our aim is to expose the embodied and affective processes involved in community- and coalition-building transnationally, that is on local, national, regional, and global levels simultaneously. In doing so, we wish to foster conceptualizations of solidarity beyond, or against, nation-bound, rights-oriented frameworks, as this would advance scholarly imaginations of solidarity across difference.

The chapter rests on a definition of solidarity as practices of community- and coalition-building that are embedded in imagined and concrete relationships and take place on multiple scales, in multiple life fields, and between as well as within borders, belongings, and movements. Practices of solidarity include co-ordinated struggles for sharing resources, engaging in symbolic actions, and organizing mutually beneficial programs, campaigns, and advocacy coalitions (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Weldon 2018) as well as small-scale, mundane acts of affinity and friendship (Ahmed 2014; Chowdhury and Philipose 2016; Hemmings 2012; Wiedlack et al. 2019). Whether in the form of informal, small-scale action or more co-ordinated, institutionalized organizing, we consider solidarity practices as political work. This is to clarify a blurred understanding of solidarity as scholars use the concept to refer to “external identity, shared experience, shared consciousness, and political resistance separately and simultaneously” (Scholz 2008, 3). We certainly believe that studying coalition- and community-building efforts based on shared identities, experiences, and consciousness are very important for making sense of feminist and queer struggles. Yet, in this chapter, we focus more on the role of solidarity in the making of collective resilience, resistance, and repair. Rather than having a normative status, practices of solidarity can reproduce or subvert imperialist or nationalist/assimilationist projects and inequalities on different levels (Berger and Scalmer 2018; de Jong 2017; Maiguashca 2016; Pedwell 2012). Regardless of activists’ intentions, community- and coalition-building might be hampered by cultural and political diversity, class inequalities

and economic barriers, and physical distance between activists (Dufour et al. 2010, 9). Greater availability of digital technologies and affordable means of transportation, together with the processes of NGOization we discussed in Chapter 3, facilitate the proliferation of transnational solidarities in many parts of the world. However, the continuation—if not deepening—of existing global and local asymmetries of power, organized violence and war, and shifts in gender and sexual politics that jeopardize women's and LGBTI+ lives make solidarities difficult to maintain and often susceptible to contention and conflict. Our interest thus lies in tracing the processes of inclusion and exclusion produced by solidarity practices in order to draw attention to the tensions, challenges, and dilemmas inscribed in transnational solidarities, alongside their emancipatory potential.

What is the role of affinity, friendship, and care, as well as of conflict and dissonance, in creating possibilities of and hindrances to solidarities across borders, belongings, and movements? How do shifts in broader political, social, and economic environments impact on activist understandings of solidarity across difference? How do globally salient binaries such as North/West vs. South/East, religious vs. secular, and liberal/democratic vs. conservative/authoritarian play out in activists' imaginaries and embodied encounters? What are the conditions and effects of their maintenance and/or destabilization? What is the role of history and temporality in contemporary politics and practices of solidarity? What kind of affects are involved in face-to-face and faraway solidarity projects? How do feelings of affection, connection, desire, and pleasure, together with those of anger, pain, frustration, and disappointment, shape the relations among and between different groups of activists? These are the questions that are of relevance to our endeavor in this chapter. As we analyze how terms and relations of solidarity are negotiated by feminist and LGBTI+ activists in the respective contexts of the book, we also bring to light the linkages and mutuality—or their lack thereof—within and across feminist and queer struggles.

In the following sections, we engage a variety of material from feminist and LGBTI+ activisms, including organizations, events, campaigns, and everyday encounters and ongoing struggles. Working through our material, we elaborate on different aspects of conceptualizing practices

of solidarity across difference. The *first* section presents two instances of face-to-face encounters where activists address their differential belongings and relations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class through deliberation: the 1st European Lesbian* Conference and the conference Fucking Solidarity: Queering Concepts on/from a Post-Soviet Perspective. Both conferences took place in 2017 in Vienna, Austria. Drawing on activists' accounts of these gatherings as well as our own observations, the section problematizes activist efforts to build solidarity across geographic and contextual divides. It highlights tensions arising from activists' conflicting ideas around solidarity and homogenizing categorizations of geographic and contextual difference, and suggests a more nuanced approach to identity that takes into account complexities and overlapping belongings. In the *second* section, we turn to anti-colonial struggles in Sápmi¹ through practices pertaining to ethnic, religious, and sexual belongings. Developing an understanding of solidarity as shared labor, this section puts on center stage the ritual of hymn singing in Kirkenes, Norway, and emphasizes the importance of a long-term commitment to working together in addressing and challenging violent assimilatory ambitions of state actors and institutions and reversing colonial processes. The section takes its starting point in a rainbow mass during a transnational Pride event organized in Kirkenes and shines a light on solidarities across ethnic, religious, and sexual differences. The *third* section unpacks the implications of transnational solidarity campaigns for feminist and queer struggles in different locales by analyzing activist mobilizations around two events: The Turkey

¹ In Sami language, Sami people refer to themselves as Sámit (the Samis) or Sápmelaš (of Sami kin). The English spelling of Sami varies between Sámi and Sami, of which Sami is most frequently used. Further, Sami language can be spelt Saami or Sami. The most common usage is Sami. In the book, we follow the most common practice and use Sami for the people and for the language. The territory of the Sami people is called Sápmi (<http://www.samer.se/2137>, 16/11–20). There is no census for the Sami people but estimations amount to around 80,000 people. The people is situated across four national borders with approximately 20,000 in Sweden, 50,000 in Norway, 8000 in Finland, and 2000 in Russia (<https://sweden.se/society/sami-in-sweden/#>, 16/11–20). As of today, nine Sami languages exist, a division based on linguistic and geographical differences, connecting features of culture, tradition, and place (Hämäläinen et al. 2018). The most common religious belongings of the Sami people are Christianity (Lutheranism including Laestadianism), Eastern Orthodoxy, and Sami Shamanism. The analysis in this chapter focuses on Sami people living in Norway and on usages of the North Sami language.

Women's Gathering in 2019 and the transnational response to state-initiated homophobic persecutions of LGBTI+ people in Chechnya in 2017. By linking these events to the International Women's Strike (2017–) and the (I)NGO practices of forging global action for LGBTI+ rights, respectively, we show the ambiguities inscribed in transnational solidarity campaigns that serve as a source of inspiration but do not necessarily lead to desirable or intended outcomes. We conclude the chapter with a discussion on the implications of our ethnographic examples for conceptualizing transnational solidarities.

De/stabilizing Divides Through Transnational Solidarities

Feminist and queer struggles transform locally and globally through transnational encounters that serve as arenas where shared agendas and identities as well as differential belongings are cherished, challenged, and negotiated. Following the Cold War period where the different approaches to gender equality upheld by the First and Second Worlds became markers of their competition in the international arena (de Haan 2018; Popa 2009; see also Chapter 1), the past three decades saw the consolidation of the global North/West as a locus for feminist and LGBTI+ activism claiming financial and moral leadership over the rest of the world that was “unable to govern itself” in terms of gender equality and sexual rights (Spivak 1996, 2; Grewal 2005; Puar 2007). Global governance institutions such as the UN and the World Bank and INGOs that adopted global governance agendas mediated international gatherings of activists across the North–South and East–West despite their different histories of engaging and dis/identifying with the West (Antrobus 2004; Benería et al. 2015; Devaki 2005; Meyer and Prügl 1999; Winslow 1995). At the same time, transnational feminist scholarship and activism widely contested the discursive construction of the South/East by dominant groups and their institutions in the North/West (Mohanty 1984; Spivak 1996), pointed at “Western leveraged pedagogies” as part of Western/European politics of expansion (Kulpa 2014; Wiedlack et al. 2019), and brought into discussion possibilities as well

as histories of South–South and South–East solidarities (Fernandes 2013; Ghodsee 2019; Roy 2016). Still, asymmetric power relations between the West and the rest, especially in terms of financial and logistic resources (see Chapter 3), maintain the position of Western states and West/North-based INGOs as the main funder of many transnational encounters. As the below examples show, these power relations overlap with activists' national and/or regional dis/identifications and differential class positions, as well as professional divisions such as academia vs. activism within and between contexts. Thus, attempts to build solidarity across difference through face-to-face encounters can have the ambiguous result of destabilizing certain binaries and identifications in the activist field while reproducing and reinforcing others.

Dissonances Across the (Imagined) West and Non-West

An example of such ambiguity happened on the occasion of the 1st European Lesbian* Conference (EL*C) on October 6–8, 2017 in Vienna, Austria, when a group of LB+² feminists from Turkey attended this conference. The idea of organizing this gathering emerged during the 2016 ILGA Europe Conference in Cyprus, when the need for the empowerment of lesbians and visibility of their struggles surfaced at a lesbian workshop (EL*C n.d.). In order to garner the funding necessary to host the conference, the international group of activists who came up with the conference idea had to register the EL*C as an Austria-based NGO. Call for participation in this conference was widely circulated in feminist and LGBTI+ listservs in Turkey. This was a time when *Lezbifem* (*Lezbiyen Biseksüel Feministler*), an Istanbul-based informal initiative of LB+ feminists (2015–2018), was most active and having a significant impact on feminist and queer struggles in Istanbul and beyond (*Lezbifem* n.d.). A number of activists from *Lezbifem* applied to give a paper presentation at the conference about *Lezbifem*'s activities.

² LB+ feminists refer to women and non-binary feminists who identify as lesbian, bisexual, pan- or polysexual, or queer.

Individual activists from Istanbul and Ankara who attended the EL*C without presenting a paper joined them.

Yonca, who back then was organized in Lezbifem and became one of the paper presenters at the EL*C, provided us with an account of the experience of participants from Turkey. Besides being a member of Lezbifem, Yonca participated in numerous wildcat actions against multiple systems of oppression, acted as a committee member for the Feminist Night March organization (see Chapter 5), and was affiliated with a web-based feminist news site known for its investment in transnational and intersectional feminism. Talking about the EL*C, Yonca reflected on her experience as one about the realization of whiteness, class-blindness, and trans-exclusionary attitudes on the side of European activists that disappointed but also gave her and her friends a more realistic understanding of the inner workings of LB+ activism in the West. The first instance of disappointment happened prior to their arrival to Austria, when those of them who wanted to attend the conference without presenting a paper were offered a place to sleep in Vienna for free. This was a big, collectively run squat in the city, and attendees' accommodation there would be organized by feminists in Vienna. Yonca did not know which group of feminists specifically, but her friends were told that the space would not be available for transwomen. This raised questions and sparked a discussion in Yonca's and her fellows' minds about the salience of transphobia in the Viennese feminist movement; had such a gathering been organized in Istanbul, they thought, transwomen at no point would be excluded. Yonca herself was a paper presenter so together with her group of friends from Lezbifem they were provided with hotel accommodation. This became the second instance of disappointment, this time due to a realization of class differences between organizers and participants of the EL*C. "I didn't participate in the organization process so I don't know who made such decisions," said Yonca, "but I think this is an important sign of whiteness; we stayed in terribly expensive hotels. (...) Everything was really 'upper' [class]. That was not necessary; they could have invited more people [to participate in the conference] instead of spending so much money on luxury accommodation."

A third instance of disappointment occurred at a conference session on Black lesbian experiences. During this session, a Black presenter received

questions about “how it feels to be Black,” and then one about “how it feels to be a darker Black.” “We never ask such questions...” Yonca objected, “but she [the presenter] responded very well! She said: ‘I don’t think about my blackness all the time, I don’t feel something special about it but probably you do; perhaps you should ask yourself why you do!’.” Having witnessed this incident, Yonca became also critical about the positive reception of their own presentation on Lezbifem. She thought that the audience was overly enthusiastic about Lezbifem’s street protests and not so much about its politics of bridging feminist and LGBTI+ activisms. She felt irritated by the celebration of LB+ activists’ visibility in Turkey because she felt exoticized and romanticized:

They also investigated our looks. I had short hair, the other friend had her head shaved, etc. We were dark but chilled with our queer looks and they were like, ‘wow.’ This [our looks] had to do with our [upper] class position but they had no awareness on this. (...) Or, for example, they were surprised by our struggle against transphobia or our investment in queer politics. As if we are located [geographically] outside of these discussions!

Yonca’s disappointment with her experience around the 1st EL*C, which she said was shared by other participants from Turkey, shows how transnational encounters can expose class and racial processes and different understandings of lesbian inclusivity involved in feminist and queer solidarities. A number of dissonances occurred at this gathering between LB+ feminists from Turkey and whom they perceived as a Western community of lesbian activists. Providing presenters with quality accommodation, perhaps intended as a hospitable gesture on the side of conference organizers, was interpreted as a careless act of solidarity that only underscored class differences between activists from different contexts. A separate session on Black lesbians that could be considered as a space for empowerment reproduced, in the eyes of some participants, racial differences by singling out Black lesbian experiences as irreconcilable with those of White lesbians. Finally, the celebration of Lezbifem’s street politics and public visibility as the highlight action of the initiative

read like a dismissal, on the side of Western lesbians, of the initiative's valuable political work of bridging feminist and queer struggles in Turkey. In their street action, Lezbifem rather addressed LB+ exclusion in feminism and misogyny in LGBTI+ activism. Challenging the oppressive Turkish state was not necessarily high on Lezbifem's agenda and was not the motivation of their taking up the streets. LB+ feminists' queer looks and their "advanced" approach to queer and trans politics surprised Western lesbians who presumed that the lack of certain legal rights in a given context would result in "less developed" political perspectives and the avoidance of being out in the public space. As non-Western activists, Yonca and her friends felt homogenized by their Western counterparts who, from a superior position, evaluated what kind of political practice was to be celebrated without knowing much about the Turkish context and the diversity within feminist and queer communities; they found this attitude objectifying and patronizing.

Yonca's reflections on the 1st EL*C in Vienna can be considered in line with Wiedlack's critique of visibility politics which, in solidarity practices across the East–West divide, maintains "notions of Western superiority and Eastern backwardness" (2019, 26). Western LGBTI+ solidarity prioritizes visibility and public participation as "high point of modernity and progress" (Ibid.); when non-Western activists adopt different agendas than visibility and social and legal change, they might not be recognized by Western actors and fall outside of the scope of transnational solidarities. At the same time, Yonca applied a similar type of homogenization onto the organizers and what she saw as White, Western participants of the conference by referring to the two groups as "they" throughout the interview without acknowledging the diversity within these groups. Among the organizers as well as participants there were many from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia (EL*C n.d.) who might have shared a similar disadvantaged position vis-à-vis their West European counterparts despite their whiteness and taken-for-granted identification as Western. Yonca's awareness about class differences between activists in her own context vanished when it came to others'; she safely assumed that conference organizers could afford the type of accommodation they arranged for incoming presenters. Taking pride in the way her LB+ feminist community bridged feminist and queer struggles and handled trans inclusivity, Yonca also reinstated the

East–West divide but this time by elevating the non-Western context to a superior position.

Challenging Regional and Geopolitical Belongings

To counterbalance the critique toward Western activists as a homogeneous group of people and disappointment with their class and racial blindness provided in Yonca's narrative, we give the example of another conference which coincidentally also took place in Vienna, at the University of Vienna premises, in September 2017. The conference was titled "Fucking Solidarity: Queering Concepts on/from a Post-Soviet Perspective" and, according to the program, raised the questions "What kind of solidarities is needed and is useful to our friends and comrades within the post-Soviet space and/or postcolonial context? And how does what we, the White privileged western academics and activists as well as migrants and refugees coming from post-Soviet and other spheres do now and did in the past, to meet these needs?" (Fucking Solidarity n.d., 3). The conference was organized by a group of Austria-based queer activists and academics with or without a background in the post-Soviet space. According to Kathi Wiedlack, a queer activist and scholar from Austria who co-organized the conference, they "wanted to use resources connected to academia to develop concepts and approaches to create meaningful solidarity between Western and post-Soviet queer scholars, activists, and artists and at the same time challenge hegemonomies" (Wiedlack 2019, 34). Hence, the conference raised questions that we as scholars asked ourselves and our research partners within our research for this book, namely how solidarity can be established in unequal power relations, and how complicities and hegemonomies can be challenged. The conference gathered together a remarkably diverse body of activists, scholars, and artists from various regions including the former Soviet Union, Western and Northern Europe, and Turkey. Olga attended the conference without a presentation using it as an opportunity to get to know activists and scholars with whom we could collaborate within the *Spaces of resistance* project. In exchange, Olga offered her help as a session moderator and as a synchronous translator.

During four days Olga visited an impressive variety of activities from activists' presentations of their work to artistic performances and exhibitions. Speaking all conference major languages (Russian, English, and a bit of German) and experiencing many struggles addressed during the conference (being an academic migrant from the post-Soviet Belarus in Western academia), Olga felt comfortable and sympathized with many critical interventions that took place. However, she felt uneasy at times when Western/Northern academics and activists were addressed too straightforwardly and were explicitly required to be held accountable for their privileges.

We unpack the roots of this uneasy feeling in dialogue with Kathi Wiedlack's (2019) autoethnographic conceptualization of queer solidarity where she draws on her experience of co-organizing the conference. The first reason for such feelings of discomfort is related to the space/format of the conference which was more academic than activist. As mentioned, the conference took place in the university building and it was academic in format—it consisted of panels and moderated sessions some of which were also purely academic in their content. As Wiedlack writes about this when she reflects on her experience of “solidarity failures” during the conference:

Our first mistake was that, although we had intended to appropriate the academic setting to support activists and artists, as well as non-academic forms of knowledge productions, we rather incorporated the latter into the exclusionary format of an academic conference... (Wiedlack 2019, 39)

The “exclusionary format of an academic conference” refers here to a standardized academic setting of a scholarly conference with a strict time regulation, an expected format for paper presentations and Q&A sessions. This format, however, turned out problematic for inclusion of other modes of presenting knowledge such as film screenings or artistic performances. As Wiedlack reflects further, certain artistic expressions remained underrepresented as a result of this dominant academic logic—university classrooms occurred unsuitable to artistic performances and strict time limits frustrated those artists and activists who were not used

to the “accelerated timelines of the neoliberal university” (Mountz et al. 2015, 1238). In agreement with this vision, we want to add one more dimension of academic experiences where the clash between activism and academia is salient, namely an affective regime of academia that, unlike art or activism, remains suspicious to emotions and any other ways of personalized engagement in the production and presentation of knowledge (e.g., Widdowfield 2000). Explicit rage, frustration, or admiration are still rare emotional registers of formal academic gatherings including conferences where emotional expressions are in the best case reserved for informal interactions. Yet, these are precisely the feelings that Hemmings considers as most important for “a sustainable feminist politics of transformation” (2012, 148). This is, in our view, where the unexpected uncomfortableness of encountering other ways of facing difficult issues, which in the case of “Fucking Solidarity” often emerged from artistic and activist circles during formal panels and roundtables, comes from. Having socialized predominantly within academic spaces during the past seven years, Olga found the emotionally charged register of conference interactions unexpected and at times threatening. Exactly as Wiedlack says, the fact that the conference took place in academic premises and was mainly academic in format was adding to the dissonance in Olga’s perception of this event and interactions that happened there in the formal space of the conference panels. Our interpretation is also in line with the intentions of conference organizers who wrote in their address to academics from the North/West that the conference was “not a space that was created for you, so you can feel cozy and safe and curious about us (post-Soviet queers and migrants) and our contexts. We will challenge you here and there, as you challenge us every day, throughout our migrant every day realities” (Fucking Solidarity n.d., 5).

The quote above where Western and Northern academics are interpellated as entitled to “coziness and safety” of intellectual exchange (“curiosity”) is important for understanding the second reason of Olga’s uneasiness and uncomfortableness during the conference. Being herself a post-Soviet migrant with commitment to feminist and queer struggles in the region of her origin, why was she feeling challenged and “uncozy”—an emotion that was assigned to Western/Northern academics? This feeling was strong during some exchanges, in particular, when one of

the presenters was bluntly asked “to check his Western privilege and gaze by a non-Western queer and female identified person” (Wiedlack 2019, 35). Olga found this interpellation very uncomfortable and unsafe while Kathi Wiedlack experienced the feelings of guilt and shame for failing to create a solidarity space where non-Western participants would not be provoked to the extent that they felt the need to approach a speaker in such a blunt manner (Ibid., 40). Wiedlack writes about this incident as illuminating the complex dynamics in solidarity spaces where “White privileged Westerners” feel hurt when their well-intended gestures of solidarity and support are left unanswered or are explicitly challenged by those for whom solidarity is meant. In her “working through” the feelings that rise in such interactions, Wiedlack reveals the heterogeneity of “Western” activists and/or academics in their ethical commitments and a position they occupy participating in solidarity actions.

In the spirit of Wiedlack’s suggestion to “work through feelings” in order to deconstruct privileges (Wiedlack 2019, 40), we maintain that the sense of discomfort that some encounters raised were related to Olga’s own complicity in unfair and hierarchical academic structures of the West. When “Western” subjects were approached with particular negativity, Olga could not entirely distance herself from this interpellating experience. She had an early-career position at a Swedish university. She came to the conference in Vienna because she had funding from a research project supported by a private foundation in Sweden. Therefore, she could afford to stay in a hotel while some other participants including those with presentations had to stay in shared apartments and commute to the conference venue long distance. Moreover, the conference was a part of Olga’s professional activities. In line with the dominant idea of activist politics as driven by “passion”³ (Roy 2011), a professional commitment felt slightly as a betrayal of the solidarity ideal.

Read together, the accounts of Kathi, Olga, and Yonca underline how the categories of “West” and “East” fluctuate and change their meaning in solidarity practices through attention to affective and material dimensions of transnational solidarity spaces. The examples of two conferences we unfolded here show how feelings destabilize one’s identity or other

³ For Roy’s (2011) critique of contrasting “passion” and “profession” in activism, see Chapter 3.

group characteristics such as “Western activist,” “Turkish queer,” or “feminist post-Soviet migrant in Western academia,” which, according to Hemmings (2012), is what transformative feminist politics currently need. Encounters between LB+ feminists from Turkey and whom they considered as Western feminists, or between post-Soviet queer migrants and “Western” scholars, or even among “Western” scholars and activists, provide space for getting to know each other, learning about each other’s realities for individuals or groups who are asymmetrically positioned members of an imagined coalition. They result in the destabilization of established perceptions of the Other, oftentimes through disappointment and disillusionment alongside the sheer enjoyment of the physical gathering of a loosely defined global community. Yet, the above examples also expose the need for further communication between activists *about* the East–West and activism–academia divides and thinking together around issues that are now conceived as omnipresent in activist spaces regardless of geographical location. All in all, close attention to affects involved in encounters across divides shows that a success vs. failure approach is too simplistic to understand the dynamics of transnational solidarity practices. The discovery and recognition of “unbridgeable gaps” (Hemmings 2012) between differently positioned parties can be seen as part of a process through which feminist and queer struggles transform. The coming together of activists does not operate outside of and cannot transcend global inequalities (Ahmed 2014, 163). Thus, as Wiedlack argues, failures are necessary elements of solidarity attempts as they reflect “not only (...) personal shortcomings but also (...) structural problems” (Wiedlack 2019, 22). Approaching dissonances between activists from this perspective is valuable as it allows for an understanding of negative affects such as anger, disappointment, and feeling of exoticization as part of transnational solidarities in a way that reconstructs the idea of solidarity across difference as a possibility rather than an obligation.

Hymn Singing and Anti-Colonial Resistance: Solidarity as Shared Labor

In contradistinction to understandings of solidarity that emphasize homogeneity, we are influenced by scholars who have developed further Durkheim's (1968) theorization of organic solidarity (Wiedlack 2019). Rather than searching for a position of resemblance or common identity, these scholars bring forth understandings of solidarity as shared labor across difference and highlight the usefulness of conceptualizing solidarity as doing or acting in everyday life (Wiedlack 2019; Augustin and Jørgensen 2016). In the following, we attend to the collaborative work involved in solidarity as such everyday doing or acting.

While in feminism, solidarity and interdependence has been variously defined as either global sisterhood or solidarity across difference (Rai 2018), in socialist traditions, solidarity has been translated to rational expressions arising from class reflexivity (Fish 2002; Mansueto 1988). Durkheim (1995 [1912]) approached solidarity as a moral value, as a weave that kept societies together. He recognized the significant role of religion for nourishing popular struggles against relations of oppression and proposed that religion may bind individuals together into a social being greater than themselves (Mansueto 1988; Redekop 1967). In difference from places and relations of mechanical solidarity—characterized by resemblance and homogeneity—in which empathy or charity was the basis of morality, Durkheim argued that in contexts of organic solidarity—characterized by diversification and individuality—justice was the basis of moral action (Schoenfeld and Meštrović 1989; Giddens 1986).⁴ Our approach is influenced by theorizations that have developed Durkheim's ideas around organic solidarity to conceptualize solidarity as a form of working together (Wiedlack 2019). Such an act of working together includes confrontation of dominance and deconstruction of hierarchies between the parties involved (Wiedlack et al. 2019). Shared labor does not rely on empathy but takes a critical or transformative

⁴ Moving beyond the limitations of charity and empathy which relies on, and functions to sustain, particularistic relationships between the members of the social system, the idea of justice as the basis of modern or organic solidarity allowed Durkheim to seek solutions to social problems within the larger social system itself (Schoenfeld and Meštrović 1989).

approach to injustices, challenging material inequalities, and focusing on redistribution as the outcome of solidarity practices (Wiedlack 2019). Approaching solidarity as a working together allows us to recognize both material and emotional dimensions of solidarity work, which otherwise might become overshadowed (Binnie and Klesse 2012). This is a form of solidarity that acknowledges that all involved have something to gain from the collective act and does so by setting in motion structural effects which go beyond the personal.

In what follows, we examine practices of religiosity among the Sami people in Kirkenes in northern Norway and reveal how religiosity can express acts of solidarity in which memory, belonging, and culture are renegotiated and reclaimed through religious rituals. Below, we focus on the experience of hymn singing as embodied and affective shared labor, approaching this performance as a collective work of solidarity that confronts the violent acts of state actors and institutions, historically and presently (Mahmood 2016; Pine et al. 2000). In focus is not just the act of singing or emotions connected to the performance, but the deeper historical and broader everyday context surrounding it. We approach this phenomenon as an example of shared labor in a mundane setting, capable of building political and social change from the ground up through a long-term struggle involving people of different belongings in the region, as well as institutions such as the church and the church council, all of which had important roles making the hymn singing possible. The analysis is introduced with an ethnographic vignette.

Practices of Faith as Solidarity Work

It is a chill and sunny September day. I have already spotted the white church on the hill. Together with Olga, I am visiting the small town of Kirkenes to participate in Barents Pride, a collaborative Pride event organized by Russian and Norwegian LGBTI+ activists to express solidarity across borders. As we round the corner of the church building and take the few steps up to the entrance door, I see a pride flag tied to the rail, waving in the light wind (see Fig. 4.1). We are warmly greeted by Noor and Ane, two of the organizers of Barents Pride and as we enter

the church, I receive a leaflet presenting the liturgy and the hymns of the Rainbow mass we are about to attend. Olga and I take a seat next to each other in one of the benches. About three quarters of the benches are already full. When I later speak with Magnus, the cleric, he says that there were more people visiting this mass than usual, also many visitors whom he was surprised to see there. The ceremony is performed in Norwegian, Russian and Sami languages. An Orthodox priest holds a speech in Russian and a Sami woman reads a text and gives a short speech in Sami. As we sing the hymns in the three languages, I am overwhelmed by a feeling of belonging to the diverse collective in the church and I remember the broken connection to my Sami heritage on my mother's side. In my later conversation with Magnus, he says that he found the Rainbow mass an important event for the local inhabitants, not least in relation to Sami perspectives: "You should know that in this place, the process of Norwegianization (*førnorsking*) was strong. Up until the 1970s–80s, the authorities had an explicit goal that people belonging to Sami and Kven⁵ communities should become Norwegian. During the acculturation period, the authorities inflicted feelings of shame among these populations for not being good enough and pressing them to become something else than what they were. The same goes for non-heterosexual people, who carry similar feelings of not being good enough." Magnus finds it important that the church took such an outspoken and firm position during the Barents Pride. He tells me that one of the families he was surprised to see in the Rainbow mass later said to him that they have a grandchild who identify as LGBTI+. They found liberating that the institution which has expressed the strongest prejudices now opens up to accept people as they are.

The weeks following Barents Pride, Mia kept on thinking about the presence of Sami and LGBTI+ perspectives in the Rainbow mass. She became more intensely aware of the feelings of shame among the older generations which have erased the connections to the Sami heritage

⁵ The Kven people are a Balto-Finnic ethnic minority in Norway. From the late nineteenth century until the late twentieth century, the name Kven was a derogatory term. Among some members of the community it is still regarded as such, while others have reclaimed it, along with the revitalization of Kven culture from the 1980s onwards. Since 1996, the Kven people have had minority status in Norway and since 2005, their language is recognized as a minority language in Norway.



Fig. 4.1 Pride flag waving in the light wind outside of Kirkenes Church (Photo Credit: Mia Liinason)

in her own family. She contacted Máijá, the Sami woman who had performed during the mass, to learn more about the function of the church and religion in the Sami anti-colonial struggle in Kirkenes.

“Since 1993,” Máijá explained, she had been engaged on “a voluntary basis with Sami church services, with a special focus on women and children.” She recalled this as the year when the secretary general

of the Sami Church Council recruited volunteers and Máijá was encouraged to travel to Geneva to attend a network meeting against racism for minority women in Europe. Once back home, Máijá assembled a group of interested women in the area and asked them what they wanted to do to revitalize the Sami community. “One can be interested in doing many things [to reconnect to Sami culture],” Máijá told me, “such as knitting or speaking Sami, but this group of women, they only wanted to *sing*.” Basing her work on the principle of self-determination, Máijá followed the suggestion of the group. “So we sang, the hymns we had been listening to and singing at home as children.” As the Norwegianization process had banned everything Sami—the language, traditions, and culture—these women hadn’t heard these hymns for fifty or sixty years.

Mia also contacted Magnus, the cleric from the Rainbow mass. He told her that the struggle for Sami rights and community revival in the region is almost exclusively conducted by women: “20 years ago,” Magnus said, “no one here said they were Sami. The Norwegian assimilation process had been strong. Now this has changed. For the Sami revitalization process to take place, the church played an important part.” He referred to the hymn singing project started up by Máijá, and recalled from the church services during these years that people were crying in the church benches: “For those people, who haven’t heard their own language since they were children, neither spoken, nor sung, the experience of singing hymns in one’s own language gave strong reactions.”

As an affective and embodied practice, women’s hymn singing expresses an anti-colonial resistance against the violent assimilationist process of the Norwegian nation-state. Within this performance, the recollection of histories hidden reveals a legacy of struggle for self-determination and agency that stretches across centuries (Hämäläinen et al. 2018; Protopapas and Kaur 2011). In Norway, a harsh assimilation process toward the Sami community was executed through the educational system and other public institutions. The period of assimilation took its starting point in the early nineteenth century and continued until the mid-1980s, being at its most intense between 1851 and 1959. This was a period during which the idea of Norwegianization was proclaimed based on the notions of the racial superiority of ethnic

Norwegians and on nation-building ambitions to create a homogeneous nation-state with a unified population identified with a particular place and territory. These ambitions were especially strong in the period following World War II (Bjørklund 1985; Eriksen and Niemi 1981). A large number of Sami children were placed in boarding schools far away from their homes with the purpose to assimilate them to the dominating culture. In the schools, the use of Sami language was banned and children had to learn and speak in Norwegian (Hætta 2002; Bjørklund 1985; Pedersen and Høgmo 2012; Minde 1998). As of today, the majority of Sami is integrated as part of the Norwegian society. Simultaneously, the revitalization of culture, language, and community in Sápmi has grown strong and conscious efforts are made to preserve the Sami culture. In 1989, the Sami Parliament of Norway was founded and Sami was recognized as a third official language alongside the two existing official forms of Norwegian: *Bokmål* (book tongue) and *Nynorsk* (New Norwegian) (Hämäläinen et al. 2018).⁶ In the region of Kirkenes, the boundaries between ethnic belongings have blurred and the identity as Norwegian, according to Magnus, weakened:

My own family is almost not Norwegian at all. They are Sami, Kven, Finns... They were attacked at school if they spoke Sami, they were beaten if they spoke to each other in Finnish. Since the church started to recognize the Sami heritage—and especially when we keep worships in the countryside—for elderly Sami people, it is a strong experience to sing hymns in Sami language. They cry because they haven't heard this for so

⁶ Until 2017, the Norwegian church was part of the state, after which it finally became independent. Historically, the church has been one of the actors who have carried out the worst abuses toward the Sami people. In 1826, when the Norwegian territorial borders were redrawn, Kirkenes became a part of Norway. For the Sami people in the area, the new border forced them to choose whether they would belong to Russia or to Norway, resulting in enforced migrations and a social catastrophe among the community, according to Magnus. To realize the nation-building ambitions, the church became a key institution in this area and churches were built to mark Norwegian sovereignty in relation to Finland and Russia. In the years that followed, clerics in the Norwegian church abused their power to keep the Sami people obedient and submissive, among other things by selling cheap booze and taking reindeer herds as pawns. During the same time, the progressive Laestadian movement began to spread in the area. Sami women were inspired by its liberatory message, emphasizing Sami self-determination and taking a distance from the Norwegian state. Still today, the Laestadian movement is influential among the Sami population although it has become a more dogmatic and conservative movement.

long, these are hymns they know, which they have forgotten. The mother tongue sits deep.

In these narratives, the ritual and collective shared experience of hymn singing takes shape as a kind of healing or repair. As several studies have shown, there is a connection between singing “as a means of self-expression, regulation of emotions, and health and well-being” (Hämäläinen et al. 2018, 4; Moss et al. 2018). Yet, these performances are not only personally rewarding but also give effects that go beyond the personal. By reiterating counter-memories, such memories that fall outside of the concept of a unified, homogenous nation, alternative routes to recognition and shared identity are forged and, in this case, transmitted through the shared collective practices of hymn singing (Richardson 2000; Pine et al. 2000). Rather than searching for cultural or social unity, the multiple belongings and positions of the people involved, belonging to diverse ethnicities and religions and with different positions in society, illuminate this performance as an act of shared labor, as a practicing of solidarity in which “two or more parties (...) collaborate towards a collective goal” (Wiedlack 2019, 24).

Material and Symbolic Redistribution Through Shared Labor

While expressions of affect and collective performance are important instances for recognizing and confronting social hierarchies and exclusions, scholars have acknowledged the difficulties of generating “structural transformation through projects of collective feeling” (Pedwell and Whitehead 2012, 121; Berlant 2006). Nonetheless, rather than remaining located in an affective register or limited to awaken feelings of empathy among the Norwegian population, the anti-colonial project of singing Sami hymns incited a process of broader transformation in the region. As inequalities were taken seriously through the collective work of solidarity as shared labor, a process of material and symbolic redistribution was generated. In this, several actors were involved: institutions such as the Norwegian church, which later took the responsibility for

the Sami church services, and the Sami Church Council that encouraged Máijá to travel to the UN in Geneva and attend the anti-racist network meeting for minority women. Individual actors were also central, not least Máijá and the group of elderly women who took up the practice of Sami hymn singing in the first place, as well as the cleric Magnus who learned Sami language and have continued to fight for the practice of Sami church services to become accepted among all clerics in the parish and the broader region. A broader group of inhabitants in Kirkenes also took part in these ceremonies and in the singing itself. Afterward, they stayed true to the moment shared, which built a sense of community across different belongings and positionalities. The importance of the two social movements in the region, the labor movement and the Laestadian movement, were also mentioned by Mia's research partners who saw these shaping an important foundation for the Sami revitalization process as well as for the more recent, ongoing struggle to recognize LGBTI+ people's rights. According to Magnus, these movements have brought a spirit of life and a sense of community among inhabitants in the region without which people wouldn't have continued to live there, and through which other injustices could be recognized, challenged, and transformed. In contrast to welfare state solidarity (solidarity through paying tax) which was strongly articulated in Norway, as in all the Scandinavian countries, during the twentieth century and arguably functioned to sustain the assimilationist project of Norwegianization through its exclusionary emphasis on national homogeneity, the Sami revitalization process in Kirkenes demonstrates how relations of solidarity can flow in multiple directions to include participants of different belongings and positionalities and incite changes that go beyond the participants themselves.

Such building of complex webs of "mutuality and reciprocity over time" (Kelliher 2018, 5; Brown and Yaffe 2017) distinguishes solidarity from charity, and has the potential to stimulate changes in broader political discourses and societal structures. These changes didn't happen overnight but were the result of a slow and lengthy process, stretching across thirty years. This process is far from over but, according to Magnus and Máijá, the activity of keeping church services in Sami has not only revitalized the Sami community in the church but also had an effect on

the whole municipality: “When I moved from the municipality in 1998 to study at the university in Oslo,” Magnus says, “people were saying that, ‘No, this municipality is not Sami. There are no Sami living here. Those who wear the Sami colt here come from Kautokeino. But here, there are none.’”

“After six years,” he continues, “I return, and there have been great changes, because people have begun to talk with their grandparents, ‘Where do you come from? What is the history of this place?’ And if you attend May 17 [the day of the Norwegian constitution], you see a lot of people wearing the Sami colt in the parade. But the colt was a dress you should burn, you shouldn’t keep it. It belonged to the old. It doesn’t take much to abolish a whole population.” Magnus explained that such genocide was about to happen, as the Sami people were almost “done away with.” But now, he said, this has changed. “If before,” he remarked, “people were using Sami or Finnish when they didn’t want their small children to understand, today, they use English.”

Máijá explained that they started with the activity of singing Sami hymns during church services in 1996 and continued until 2006. By that time most of the women involved had become too old and now most of them are passed away. They set as their goal to make the institution of the church responsible for keeping up the work with Sami presence. Today, there are four Sami masses per year in the area, with Sami language, hymns, and content in the worship, and the cleric uses Sami language. However, it is not only the language which is affected by Sami inclusion in the church, but Sami self-determination impacts on the preparation of the church service and the theology is influenced by Sami cosmology. In similarity with several other indigenous systems of belief, the Sami cosmology is based on the idea of nature as having subjectivity. The relationship with nature resembles a close relationship to another human being. In this view, nature is not an object but has an independent existence which humans should be respectful of (Leinebø Ekre 2018). Máijá describes that it has been immensely difficult for them to make Norwegian clerics understand Sami cosmology. However, since five years back, the Norwegian church council is taking a more active role in relation to this and expects all members of congregations in the north

to include Sami in the masses and learn about Sami theology/cosmology. Although the responsibility for including Sami presence in the masses now lies with the church, Magnus clarifies that the participation and involvement of Sami people in the church service is very important: “They [people belonging to the Sami community] have ownership and decide what hymns we are going to sing and we talk about the sermon, the text for the sermon, and about how this relates to our congregation at large.”

Yet, despite the fact that many things have changed for the better as people belonging to the Sami community have a greater visibility and real influence in the municipality, significant challenges remain. Máijá explains that Sami children are still bullied at school and that Sami reindeer herders are involved in tough fights against the forces of capital, as state actors want to force them to move because of economic interests to expand the oil extraction in the area which is rich in natural resources. These struggles also take place within the Sami community itself, and tensions emerge between people of Sami background who are more and less assimilated into the Norwegian society. Máijá explains that it is heavy but that people belonging to the Sami community in the area who have not assimilated survive because they are part of an active transnational Sami network stretching across Norway, Sweden, and Finland. In the context of these ongoing struggles, and considering the support of her transnational network, Máijá found it “such a positive feeling to stand in the church and read a text in Sami on the Rainbow mass during Barents Pride.”

The Role of Religion in Justice Struggles

In the evening of the day of the Rainbow mass, a panel conversation was organized by the Barents Pride. The panel was composed of a Norwegian cleric; a priest from the Orthodox Church of Ukraine; an organizer of the Pride from the Russian side; and one Pride organizer from the Norwegian side. The moderator asked Elena, the Russian panel participant, why it is important to address religiosity and faith at a Pride festival. Elena responded that:

LGBTI+ people are the same kind of people as anyone else but religious LGBTI+ people have to live with a deep religious trauma. To search for strength in faith has historically been important for people. If you are excluded from your family, from your circle of friends and from society, it is difficult not only because they exclude you as an LGBTI+ person but also as a human being, and as this happens, you are not able to seek support in church. It is a heavy burden to carry, not being recognized as a human being in your community.

Later, Elena explained: “I believe in human beings. I don’t have much belief in states. But direct contact is always the most fruitful and I always look for people who have the ability to stay human. People who are capable of feeling emotions and acting in human ways.” By connecting the human-worldliness with faith and the sacred, Elena destabilizes the division between secularity and religion and shows the importance of both in bridging differences and overcoming injustices (van den Brandt 2014). In this perspective, rather than directing attention away from the world, religiosity can offer support for queers of faith to conduct themselves more strenuously in the world, and religiously inflected feelings can build a frame for a reflective form of reason (van Doorn 2015; Taylor et al. 2014).

Today, the shared collective experience of hymn singing in the church in Kirkenes has resulted in significant changes in the municipality, carrying a process of material and symbolic redistribution that is still ongoing. While it began as a small-scale project among Sami women, the collective performance of religious ritual and hymn singing has not only inspired cross-generational exchanges in the area and a sense of pride in Sami language and heritage but also an interest in recollecting and sharing histories hidden in the municipality. Taken together, the Rainbow mass, the Sami revitalization process, and the reflections of Máijá, Magnus, and Elena show the crucial role that religion and religiosity can play in solidarity struggles across different belongings and positionings. They illuminate the emotional potential of religion as a capacity to bind individuals together and create a spirit of community, enabling a space for organic solidarities and intersectional justice struggles to develop.

Ambivalences of Transnational Campaigns

As we discussed in Chapter 3, broader political and socioeconomic changes of the past decades created similar conditions for feminist and queer struggles across the global North–South and West–East, but also perpetuated global inequalities, and therefore had diverse results in different contexts. Transnational solidarity campaigns became more powerful, wider in scope in terms of both participation and agendas and, thanks to the advancement in digital technologies, more inclusive of communities that are marginalized in their local contexts. Increased number of INGO local branches in different parts of the world have also facilitated the coordination of solidarity action. In recent years, campaigns and mobilizations such as #MeToo, Ni Una Menos, the International Women’s Strike, and Las Tesis posed powerful responses to developments that result in the deterioration of the living conditions of women and LGBTI+ people. Many other campaigns took place on regional, national, and sub-national levels with the aim of alleviating injustices. Transnational solidarity campaigns and their local adaptations created novel possibilities of mutuality and linkage within and between feminist and queer struggles. Yet, as we show through two examples in this section, transnational solidarity campaigns are not always smoothly adapted or do not necessarily lead to positive outcomes in local contexts. Instead, they might be detrimental for local struggles as they produce or crystallize tensions between activists within and across borders. In the case of transnational campaigns around local issues, local events can be instrumentalized to further the cause of ally groups and organizations elsewhere. Similar to transnational solidarity practices across geopolitical, epistemological, and professional divides we have discussed in the first section, solidarity campaigns produce ambiguous results where consensus and conflict, and harmony and dissonance go together, and different affects are produced in different instances and on multiple scales.

Local Implications of Global Campaigns and Disputes Over Feminism

One line of inquiry in the Turkish case study was to understand how activists affiliated with the Women Are Strong Together initiative (*Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü*, hereafter Strong Together) situated their work vis-à-vis the recent wave of global feminist mobilization. As described in Chapter 1, transnational exchange of logos, slogans, as well as analytical approaches and political programs became a significant source of inspiration for Strong Together activists. An event organized by Strong Together and its aftermath revealed how transnational campaigns, the International Women's Strike in this case, could foster solidarities while bringing to surface disagreements over feminism within the group. Largely a coalition between feminist, left-socialist, and (pro-)Kurdish women, Strong Together was formed in Istanbul but, as the slogan "Women Are Strong Together" gained nation-wide popularity, already existing women's platforms with similar composition in various cities in Turkey have considered the possibility of re-naming themselves as Strong Together and thereby making the Istanbul-based initiative into a national one. Motivated by this possibility and the need to synchronize women's struggles across the country, Strong Together activists organized the Turkey Women's Gathering in Istanbul on 5–6 January, 2019. Nearly a thousand women participated in this meeting, which became a historic event in terms of the variety of women's and LGBTI+ groups it brought together, representing nearly forty cities—i.e., every second city—from all around Turkey.

The two-day gathering started with an opening session with small presentations by women's platforms from various cities⁷ where participants briefly talked about their motivation for attending the event as well as the most significant women's issues in their locales. As event organizers, Strong Together activists in Istanbul emphasized two things in

⁷ Convenors of the Gathering were women's platforms in the cities of Adana, Ankara, Antakya, Batman, Bursa, Diyarbakır (Amed), Hatay, Istanbul, Izmir, Kocaeli, Mardin, Mersin, Samsun, Urfa, and Van.

particular. First, that Strong Together in Istanbul went beyond the long-standing divisions between formal and informal women's groups as well as between *those women who identified as feminist and those who did not*. Strong Together activists were not mere representatives of their respective organizations; over time they had become friends and, in return, friendship gave their politics enormous strength. "Our differences are not a weakness or disadvantage but a great source of power," they said. The second point of emphasis was the rising mobilization of women on a global level, which was in line with the view of solidarity across difference Strong Together promoted: "Solidarity gives strength to our movement and, with this, we know we can move the world. We know this from women's uprisings in Argentina and Iran, from Iceland to the US, and Poland to Spain, where women [went for a strike] for freedom, bodily autonomy, labor [rights] and [recognition of their] identities. (...) and now here, as the women's movement in Turkey, we feel similarly powerful!" This was followed by a video clip of footage from the International Women's Strike action in several countries. Activists from other cities' platforms also expressed in their presentations their desire to organize a women's strike in Turkey to draw attention to the burning issues of gender-based violence, poverty, war, and environmental destruction. At the end of the opening session, participants were enthusiastic to move on to discussing, in smaller groups, the common issues and points of strength of the women's movement as well as its weaknesses and failures. The second day of the Gathering was organized in plenary sessions where participants shared insights from the previous day's group discussions and debated on the possibility of jointly pursuing future agendas. During these plenaries too, organizing across differences and transnational solidarities, particularly the one around the International Women's Strike, came out as two significant points that inspired women from different locales and political belongings—although not unanimously, as we see below.

Two months after this gathering, Selin met Rengin in Ankara for an interview. Rengin was organized in Woman Defense Network (*Kadın Savunma Ağı*), a recent (2017) independent socialist feminist initiative by women affiliates of Folk Centers (*Halkevleri*). She represented her

organization at the Ankara Women's Platform and was one of the organizers of the Platform's participation in the Turkey Women's Gathering. At the time of the interview, Rengin strongly identified with Strong Together's agenda to synchronize different women's struggles in Turkey. She saw feminism as a linkage between local and global struggles for gender equality and sexual rights, and found the Gathering a powerful moment for enhancing the feminist movement in Turkey. When asked what kind of inspiration she drew from transnational campaigns, Rengin said:

They (...) show that we are not alone in Turkey[;] (...) women all over the world have common problems. Some people might think, say, 'Women in more democratic countries live under favorable conditions.' That's not true; it's a lie and [these campaigns] very well reveal this lie. Women in Argentina, Poland, even in the US and Ireland have, like those in Turkey, problems with governments that attempt at their right to decide on their bodies—like [the right to] abortion. (...) [W]hen I see those feminist crowds in Argentina, I think like, 'This can also happen in Turkey, in Ankara; why not to organize it?' I think this is such a positive influence.

Rengin then moved on to talking about how transnational campaigns were similar to what she observed at the Gathering. The reason why the Gathering was so exciting for her was because it refuted the prejudice that feminism was a Western import and only a certain—privileged—group of women could relate to it. "For example, we had women coming from Erzincan; from Adana, Trabzon, Artvin, Bodrum, where else; Mersin and Şırnak—really from all corners of Turkey!" Here, what Rengin referred to as West was not only the global North. From a multi-scalar point of view, she addressed the global North and the western, more developed part of Turkey simultaneously. Just like transnational campaigns revealed the salience of feminism across the global North and South, so had the Gathering made clear that feminism did not appeal only to women in Turkey's developed, urban areas. Prior to the Gathering, feminists in those smaller cities were not aware of each other's struggles. This turned the Gathering into a moment of collective realization of the salience of feminist struggles everywhere; on national, sub-national, and global scales. The correlation Rengin drew between the Gathering

and transnational campaigns challenged arguments that associated feminism with Western imperialism and bourgeois ideology (Basu 1995). As feminist struggles proliferated and became more visible in countries and locales across the East–West and North–South divides, it transformed the status of feminism in the eyes of those who perceived it as irrelevant to their local struggles.

As reflected in Rengin’s words, solidarity campaigns encourage activists to understand their local struggle from a transnational lens as opposed to essentialist interpretations of politics of location where gender-based oppression is linked to under-development, Islam, or the war-laden Middle East political geography. Witnessing the rise of right-wing populism and anti-gender mobilizations in the “democratic” West and seeing that the recent opposition to the concept of gender and the Istanbul Convention in Turkey draws heavily on discourses on women’s and LGBTI+ rights produced in countries such as Hungary, Poland, and Austria, activists become more likely to understand contextual differences between “East” and “West” in terms of varieties of neoliberalism, conservatism, and religious fundamentalism. This challenges and subverts asymmetric understandings of solidarity where activists in countries that are considered as more advanced in gender equality and sexual rights support others who struggle with their misogynist and homophobic governments and/or cultures. Feminism, however, continues to be a topic of contention in the Turkish context. At the Gathering, it became obvious that some women saw feminism as a threat—now even more so in the context of transnational solidarities. During the closing session, a thick feeling of tension replaced those of enthusiasm and togetherness in the opening session when conflict broke over whether to add “feminist solidarity” in the final declaration of the Gathering as a source of mobilization for women in Turkey. Several participants one after another opposed the mentioning of feminism in the final declaration, claiming that it was not a common denominator for women; it was not invariably what brought women together to this Gathering. These participants criticized the Strong Together group for formulating their composition as one of *women who identified as feminist and those who did not*. Such a formulation, they argued, undermined the differences between women who did not identify as feminist and thereby

treated feminists as favored constituents of the women's movement. In response to these criticisms, other participants defended feminism and expressed their frustration about "allergic reactions" to feminism. Among those who identified as feminists, there were different views. According to some, it was indispensable to name feminists as proper subjects of the women's movement; not mentioning feminism would make feminists invisible as political subjects; feminism (understood as a women-only form of organizing) was what mobilized women in mix-gender left-wing organizations into gender equality struggle; it was heartbreaking that some women viewed it as an imposition. Other feminists saw no point in insisting on feminism as a common denominator and thought it was fair to not mention it in the final declaration. Yet others said they were both socialist *and* feminist and saw no necessary conflict between these belongings. It was clear that participants would not reach any consensus on this issue. When the Gathering ended, many participants had a dispirited expression on their faces, and organizers were in despair.

Following the Gathering, the divide over feminism marked the ensuing discussion on the International Women's Strike. Later in January 2019, Strong Together held a meeting in Istanbul in order to evaluate the Gathering and to decide on how to proceed with the idea of a women's strike that was embraced by many participants. Those who opposed the mentioning of feminism in the final declaration were also against a women's strike in Turkey because, they thought, the working class was politically weak and could not afford a strike at the time being. Most of these women belonged to the Labor Party (*Emek Partisi*, hereafter EMEP) a Marxist–Leninist organization which, unlike many other left-socialist organizations such as Rengin's, did not have an autonomous women's section. EMEP women were against women's separate organizing but they took part in women's platforms in various cities as representatives of their party. In relation to the International Women's Strike, their view was that feminists were appropriating an important working-class tool for a cause that would have no positive impact on the material conditions of working women. Prior to Strong Together's evaluation meeting, EMEP women published in their media outlet their own evaluation of the Gathering. The evaluation targeted precisely the idea of solidarity across difference and claimed that this idea was in

practice a “majoritarian imposition”: “The women’s movement have always accommodated different views, organizations, and institutions. (...) Discussions around the final declaration of the Gathering, however, showed that this progressive aspect of the women’s movement has now weakened. (...) the reality is that we were (...) accused of ‘hostility’ when we expressed our differences. (...) Women Are Strong Together, as it sets out with ‘feminist rebellion’ to organize a ‘feminist strike,’ does not accommodate our views” (*Ekmek ve Gül* 2019). With this criticism, EMEP women withdrew first from discussions around the International Women’s Strike, and later altogether from Strong Together in Istanbul. In women’s platforms in several other cities, their resistance to the International Women’s Strike and Strong Together’s efforts to synchronize local agendas resulted in a loss of enthusiasm around linking together local agendas and organizing a nation-wide mass women’s strike.

Unlike the two conferences in Vienna we discussed in the first section, in the case of Strong Together the “unbridgeable gaps” in solidarity practices had to do with irreconcilable visions of addressing gender equality and sexual rights rather than structural inequalities. The Women’s Gathering and its aftermath became an experience that “limit[ed] crosscutting ties in favor of a ‘primary’ loyalty” instead of building on the intersections of gender and labor “to foster coalitions” (Ferree and Roth 1998, 644). EMEP women’s resistance to embracing feminism as a motivating force in a coalition they participated in created “a difficult tension for those aiming to enact intersectional solidarity” (Einwohner et al. 2019, 18). Yet, the conflict over feminism and the International Women’s Strike cannot be said to have caused permanent damage to Strong Together constituents’ general adherence to community- and coalition-building. This is because, first, EMEP women continued collaborating with those groups they disagreed with during the Gathering on the occasion of other transnational solidarities, such as in defending the Istanbul Convention, showing the “temporary, specific, and strategic” (Ferree and Roth 1998, 643) nature of solidarity practices. Second, following their withdrawal from Strong Together, EMEP women invested more energy in politicizing the issues of women workers, started publishing an online newsletter on their activities, and launched a YouTube channel to reach

out to wider audiences.⁸ Considering that women workers' problems were not necessarily high on Strong Together's agenda as this coalition mainly defended policies and legal frameworks on gender equality, but not raised demands for improving the material condition of specific groups of women, EMEP women's decision to go solo can be seen under a different light. As Einwohner et al. argue (2019), separate organizing of groups that experience marginalization in a given coalition, "rather than reflecting a weakening of the movement, may represent an evolution of movement thinking about particular issues or groups" (17).

Complicity and Responsibility in Cross-Border Solidarity

Another example of complex relations between transnational, national, and local scales in solidarity practices comes from Russia. We unpack the ambivalent effects of transnational solidarity with LGBTI+ people from the Chechen Republic. In Spring 2017, Russian national and international media outlets exploded with outrageous news about state-initiated homophobic persecutions of LGBTI+ people in Chechnya (Brock and Edenborg 2020). The news caused a wave of solidarity actions on multiple levels involving LGBTI+ activists in Russia and all over the world, transnational human rights organizations, and international political bodies such as the EU and Council of Europe (Brock and Edenborg 2020; Smirnova 2019). The Russian LGBT Network, the largest LGBTI+ non-governmental organization with representation across the whole of Russia, acted promptly and helped rescuing queer people from Chechnya. It relied on extensive international support both financially through funds allocated by transnational organizations and politically through convincing foreign governments to provide asylum to rescued people (Smirnova 2019). In the interview with Irina, a Russian activist from "Perspective," a Moscow-based community center for LGBTI+ people (see Chapter 3), who was actively engaged in the work on rescuing people from Chechnya, she gives an example of

⁸ Ekmek ve Gül on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK-yNZP1hUVgv-EUXJqmOWQ>; see also <https://ekmekvegul.net/>.

tremendous support and solidarity from the Swedish civil society. She recalls this example in the context of our broader discussion of Perspective's collaboration with partners abroad. Among the usual suspects such as foreign embassies in Russia or large INGOs, she mentions more "unexpected encounters" that positively impress her understanding of transnational solidarity. In particular, she talks about a Swedish LGBTI+ foundation who announced a donation campaign in Sweden to tackle homophobic persecutions in Chechnya. The money was aimed at very specific expenses—to provide financial help to LGBTI+ people from Chechnya who were asking for asylum in Sweden. Irina was impressed by the promptness and genuineness of the response:

You may think where Chechnya is and where Sweden is. Nonetheless... I saw that it was not simply a political decision when some political figure decides to allocate support, these were sympathizing people. You may think, what is their concern? Why would they care about our Caucasus? This is very strange for me. It would not cross my mind to empathize with some, I don't know, the Japanese. Probably, with a particular person, yes, but to imagine that the whole country collects money to help our (...) poor (...) This was very surprising for me. The mentality is probably different. Perhaps we will grow to be like them. The Swedes.

Irina considers this type of solidarity as an ideal that other people, including Russians, have to aspire to. She finds it positively surprising that people in another country show so much care about the situation of LGBTI+ people in Russia. She also consciously distinguishes this sort of genuine, people-to-people, solidarity from more politically motivated solidarity actions initiated by particular political figures who may use transnational solidarity for promoting their own political agenda. Olga who interviewed Irina tries to provoke this line of thinking, questioning a somewhat essentialist idea of the philanthropic mentality of Swedes as opposed to careless Russian people. She asks whether the reason for such generosity can be related to the resourcefulness of the Swedes ("Probably, they just have more resources to help?"). Irina does not want to change her mind. She says in reply, "Yes, I was surprised how momentarily they mobilized. Wonderful people!".

In contrast to Irina's account we turn to the interview with Elena who, back in 2017, worked in the head office of a prominent international human rights organization which we call Human Rights International (HRI) here. Elena, herself originally from the post-Soviet region and a Russian speaker, has been long working in international human rights organizations which covered the LGBTI+ agenda in the post-Soviet space. When the news about Chechnya reached HRI, the organization responded with substantial financial and technical support helping in rescuing operations. However, in the longer run, the symbolic cost of this support did not satisfy Elena. The first bell rang when she was asked by the European office of the organization "to find a Chechen who could come to the Pride [in one of the West European cities]." Elena recalled: "I got furious! You know, I just wanted to shout at them. People are escaping from the situation when their lives are at stake, and there is a Chechen diaspora in Europe. What Chechen on the Pride? Are you out of your mind?" Elena meant that bringing a queer person from Chechnya to a Pride in Europe could expose a person to the danger of being outed by the Chechen diaspora in Europe. Then she also started noticing that the organization exploited the Chechnya case in campaigns to raise money, which, however, were not directly aimed at supporting people in danger or LGBTI+ community in general but rather on accumulating resources for the organization. Elena felt that the usage of the Chechnya case was close to a widespread fundraising strategy, when the pictures and images of atrocious human rights violations all over the world are demonstrated to rich philanthropists who are asked to show their solidarity by supporting the organization financially. She admits that she understands this strategy when the resources are then indeed spent on those victims of violations. However, she felt that this was not always the case for HRI. The organization used regions like Chechnya or the Middle East for short-term marketing campaigns because violations there attracted a lot of media attention and they were easy to wrap into a convincing message about the importance of HRI's work. At the same time, HRI often failed to allocate money or other resources for laborious long-term advocacy work in these regions which could have prevented such atrocities in the first place.

Elena's account raises several issues that are discussed in the literature on transnational solidarities as well as in activist circles. The first is related to the ambivalences of the visibility paradigm in LGBTIQ+ politics (Edenborg 2017; Stella 2015; Richardson 2017). Many transnational solidarity efforts evolve around creating "visibility for Russian LGBTIQ+ people and feminists, often in efforts to make their national governments exercise pressure on Russia" (Wiedlack 2019, 26; see also Neufeld and Wiedlack 2019). Apparently, as Elena's story shows, HRI relied on the same strategy when they wanted to bring a queer person from Chechnya to a Pride demonstration in Europe. Yet, this strategy does not take into account that for some people visibility increases vulnerability. In the case of Chechnya, as mentioned above, the danger that visibility could expose people to and make them an easy target of the Chechen diaspora in Europe was not even considered, when the idea was put on Elena's table. Importantly, we heard a similar critique from Russian activists in relation to some Russian-based LGBTIQ+ activists and organizations which exposed people for advocacy purposes at the expense of their safety. Also, while at a regional level queer existence in the Chechen Republic was made invisible by the President of the Republic Ramzan Kadyrov who denied the existence of LGBTIQ+ people in Chechnya (Brock and Edenborg 2020, 3–4), it underwent hyper-visibility in national and international media outlets and solidarity actions. The "spectacular dimension" (Brock and Edenborg 2020, 4) of the persecutions draw attention to the homophobic traditions and history of the Caucasus region and Russia in general. This is in line with how some liberal politicians from the Russian opposition and mainstream Russian feminists use women's oppression in the Caucasus for the construction of racist anti-Chechen sentiments in the public discourse in Russia (Reznikova 2014). As Wiedlack argues, the consequence of this "perpetual re-narration of Chechen (as well as Russian) tradition and history as anti-LGBTIQ+" fortifies "the state-sanctioned erasure of queer histories and lives from these cultures and traditions altogether, focusing exclusively on damage and pain rather than on resistance and resilience" (2019, 42).

The focus on damage and pain, or victimhood,⁹ is another theme that is strikingly present in Elena's narrative. In her interview, she starts talking about Chechnya in the broader context of discussing a fundraising strategy of "squirting out tears" from resourceful organizations and people. She describes how organizations where she worked organize fundraising dinners where they demonstrate documentaries of White people saving children in the Central African Republic (CAR). When we discuss how she feels when a similar strategy is applied to the post-Soviet region where she comes from, she says:

Elena: It feels strange when it applies to us. When I worked with propaganda ["gay propaganda" law in Russia], which pictures are selected for press-releases... How miserable LGBT people in Russia are. This discourse annoys me because it concerns me personally and very directly. When it comes to a child in CAR, I think, because of my privileges, this works on me, this exoticization of African children.

Olga: But do you agree that these two representations have something in common?

Elena: They are the same!

What Elena refers here to is a representational regime that produces "politics of pity" (Brock and Edenborg 2020, 17) and raises empathy among distant observers who voyeuristically watch the documentaries about "the rescue of African children" or suffering of queer people in Russia while simultaneously eating an expensive dinner on the boat sailing along Amsterdam's canals, as Elena describes. The critique of such solidarity practices considers "transnational politics of empathy" (Pedwell 2012) as "being embedded in colonial politics and the logic of global economy" (Wiedlack 2019, 38). Politics of empathy and pity contributes to self-transformation of more privileged subjects without necessarily a deeper understanding of their complicity with and responsibility for global inequalities, resulting in violence and exposure of vulnerable groups of people (Pedwell 2012). Empathy may develop into a paternalistic attitude toward the victims of violence who are considered as lacking agency and subjectivity (Wiedlack 2019). In fact, such an

⁹ A similar example of activists' resistance to reproduction of victimhood in fundraising campaigns in the national context of Norway is discussed in Chapter 3.

attitude was at first demonstrated by some Western-based activists who assisted asylum seekers from Chechnya (Smirnova 2019, 145). This may possibly constrain solidarity actions perpetuating Western privilege and “the Western model of gay activism” (Brock and Edenborg 2020, 15).

While we wholeheartedly align with the intention to problematize politics of empathy and pity in transnational solidarity practices, we also want to highlight that this critique has to be nuanced in order to avoid being dismissive of any solidarity action with the involvement of actors who are unequally positioned in global hierarchies. We consciously provide two different views on transnational solidarity with Chechnya LGBTI+ people because they shed light on different aspects of transnational solidarity practices and variegated perceptions of solidarity efforts by different actors. Even though Swedish people who donated money for the support of unknown and distant “Chechnya gays” may have been driven by the misleading idea of shared identity or empathy and pity with less fortunate people from a cruel backward region, as Chechnya is sometimes imagined even within Russia (Reznikova 2014), we see from Irina’s account that for her and other activists who invested efforts to rescue people these donations had a crucial symbolic and material meaning. Although these donations are part of the global moral economy of unevenly distributed privileges, they are directed to people in need and they do help rescue at least several lives literally. Elena’s critique does not undermine this positive dimension of transnational solidarity by any means. But it does highlight a somewhat darker side of good intentions. Exploitative circulation of cruel images of distantly suffering people contributes to maintaining hierarchies between tolerant, democratic, and well-meaning Western saviors and non-Western victims of savage, cruel cultures, and political regimes (Mutua 2001). The cost of such solidarity practices is that the myriad of creative ways to live, love, care, and resist in such circumstances remain unacknowledged.

Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed solidarity practices ranging from informal, community-oriented activism to globalized political coalitions with a

focus on their symbolic and material dynamics and embodied, affective dimensions. Based on an understanding of solidarity as politically motivated efforts of community- and coalition-building taking place on multiple scales and in multiple life fields, we argued for the indispensability of transnational solidarities for the making of feminist and queer spaces of resistance. Drawing inspiration from an emerging body of literature (Ahmed 2014; Butler 2018; Chowdhury and Philipose 2016; Connections 2020; Hemmings 2012; Salem 2017; Pedwell 2012; Wiedlack et al. 2019), we challenged the duality of consensus and conflict, success and failure, and harmony and dissonance in approaching solidarity practices, and argued instead for understanding negative affects as constitutive of sustained collaboration between diverse struggles for gender equality and sexual rights. Providing ethnographic accounts of small-scale, everyday, mundane acts of solidarity; attempts to organize across the East–West and North–South divides; and participation in solidarity campaigns on local to global levels, we built on this emerging literature by integrating a transnational perspective to the discussion. We further developed the notion of solidarity across difference (Dean 1996; Mohanty 2003) by exploring different kinds of difference such as those pertaining to racial/ethnic, religious, professional, political and geopolitical belongings, processes and relations within and across national borders. Our findings highlight ambivalences inscribed in solidarity projects and suggest that solidarity “cannot be presumed—it must be fought for and made real through individual and collective action. It requires tough conversations” (Emejulu 2018).

By way of concluding we would like to foreground the ways in which feminist scholarship can advance such an understanding. *First*, solidarity research would benefit from engaging more in discussions on the ambivalences of community- and coalition-building practices and critically interrogating and confronting power dynamics embedded in solidarity projects as opposed to simply acknowledging material inequalities between parties. As our discussion of the 1st European Lesbian* Conference (2017, Vienna) and the Fucking Solidarity Conference (2017, Vienna) showed, important here is to systematically dehomogenize categories of analysis, such as for instance, West–East and North–South, when studying transnational solidarities through sustained awareness

in research of the multilayeredness of belonging in a complex, globalized world. It is due to this multilayeredness that collaboration and conflict, pleasure and pain go together in solidarity practices; actors' assumptions around shared identities are always-already disrupted by various structural inequalities that destabilize these assumptions. Individuals or groups that aim to build bridges across borders, belongings, and movements, regardless of their well-meaning intentions, can—and often do—end up with undesirable and unfavorable outcomes and negative affects. In this regard, another aspect of the ambiguity inscribed in transnational solidarities that is worth exploring is the tension between individuals' and organizations' desire to support and transnationalize local struggles elsewhere and their own complicities and responsibilities in the reproduction of global inequalities. As we saw in the case of the campaign against the homophobic persecutions of LGBTI+ people in Chechnya, well-intentioned politics of empathy might result in failed solidarity by exposing to violence the vulnerable groups who are on the receiving end of transnational campaigns. Yet, as we elaborate in the chapter, failure in solidarity practices can be productive in that it highlights existing tensions previously unacknowledged by the actors involved, bringing forth new initiatives and different ways of affective, symbolic, and material engagements.

Second, grasping solidarity practices as forms of shared labor (Wiedlack 2019) enables deeper comprehension of how material inequalities can preclude as well as be addressed in feminist and queer struggles by calling attention to the practical and emotional work activists engage in on an everyday basis to build solidarities. We believe that the perspective of shared labor has a capacity to bring a stronger emphasis in solidarity research on the significance of redistribution of symbolic and material resources in building political and social change from the ground up. The collaboration between Máijá, Magnus, and many others in their anti-colonial struggle in the Norwegian town of Kirkenes, an account of which we offered in this chapter, is a good example of the transformative potential of long-term embodied and affective shared labor.

Third, and relatedly, research would benefit from more focus on longevity as a crucial aspect of solidarity practices that are a part of broader struggles for social justice. Only through time and persistent

commitment participants of solidarity projects become legible to each other and develop a culture of working together. Singular or short-term engagements or initiatives where different parties do not have a possibility for cultivating face-to-face, affective relationships might bear more risk of damage and failure when confronted with conflict and dissonance. Coalition groups on various scales are always in the making with conflict and tension as much their engine as affinity and consensus resulting in temporary—or permanent—withdrawal of their constituents, as seen in the disagreements between some feminist and socialist women in Turkey around the International Women’s Strike events. At the same time, there is no teleological relationship between moments of damage and failure and the long-term outcomes of solidarity efforts; negative affects and experiences in one moment, especially if collectively acknowledged and worked through, might lead to more resilient communities and coalitions in the long run. Genealogical investigations that tackle the interplay between momentary and overall appearances of solidarity practices and the co-construction of and dis/continuity between different spaces of solidarity are thus invaluable for developing conceptualizations of solidarity across difference beyond nation-bound and rights-oriented frameworks.

References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.
- Antrobus, Peggy. 2004. *The Global Women’s Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies*. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Augustin, Óscar García, and Martin Bak Jørgensen. 2016. *Solidarity Without Borders: Gramscian Perspectives on Migration and Civil Society*. London: Pluto Press.
- Baksh, Rawwida, and Wendy Harcourt, eds. 2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bassel, Leah, and Akwugo Emejulu. 2017. *Minority Women and Austerity: Survival and Resistance in France and Britain*. Bristol and Chicago: Policy Press.

- Basu, Amrita, ed. 1995. *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective*. Boulder: Routledge.
- Benería, Lourdes, Günseli Berik, and Maria S. Floro. 2015. *Gender, Development and Globalization: Economics as if All People Mattered*. 2 edition. New York and London: Routledge.
- Berger, Stefan, and Sean Scalmer, eds. 2018. *The Transnational Activist—Transformations and Comparisons from the Anglo-World Since the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berlant, Lauren. 2006. "Cruel Optimism." *Differences* 17 (3): 20–36.
- Binnie, Jon, and Christian Klesse. 2012. "Solidarities and Tensions: Feminism and Transnational LGBTQ Politics in Poland." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19 (4): 444–59.
- Birey, Tegiye, Celine Cantat, Ewa Mączyńska, and Eda Sevinin. 2019. *Challenging the Political Across Borders: Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Bjørklund, Ivar. 1985. *Fjordfolket i Kvænangen: Fra Samisk Samfunn Til Norsk Utkant 1550–1980*. Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget.
- Brandt, Nella van den. 2014. "Secular Feminisms and Attitudes Towards Religion in the Context of a West-European Society—Flanders, Belgium." *Women's Studies International Forum*, no. 44: 35–45.
- Brock, Maria, and Emil Edenborg. 2020. "'You Cannot Oppress Those Who Do Not Exist': Gay Persecution in Chechnya and the Politics of In/Visibility." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 26 (4): 673–700.
- Brown, Gavin, and Helen Yaffe. 2017. *Youth Activism and Solidarity: The Non-Stop Picket Against Apartheid*. London: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 2018. "Solidarity/Susceptibility." *Social Text* 36 (4/137): 1–20.
- Chowdhury, Elora, and Liz Philipose, eds. 2016. *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism, and Transnational Solidarity*. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press.
- Connections. 2020. "Disappointed Hopes: Reclaiming the Promise of Resistance." Workshop Organized by University of Edinburgh, Centre for Ethics and Critical Thought, 07.12.2020–09.12.2020. *Connections: A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists*.
- Dean, Jodi. 1996. *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism After Identity Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Doorn, Niels van. 2015. "Forces of Faith: Endurance, Flourishing, and the Queer Religious Subject." *GLQ* 21 (4): 635–66.

- Dufour, Pascale, Dominique Masson, and Dominique Caouette, eds. 2010. *Solidarities Beyond Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1968. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Free Press.
- . 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Edenborg, Emil. 2017. *Politics of Visibility and Belonging: From Russia's "Homosexual Propaganda" Laws to the Ukraine War*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Einwohner, Rachel L., Kaitlin Kelly-Thompson, Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, Fernando Tormos-Aponte, S. Laurel Weldon, Jared M. Wright, and Charles Wu. 2021. "Active Solidarity: Intersectional Solidarity in Action." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 28 (3): 704–29.
- Ekmek ve Gül. 2019. "Türkiye Kadın Buluşmasının ardından..." *Ekmek ve Gül*, January 26, 2019. <https://ekmekvegul.net/gudem/turkiye-kadin-bulusmasin-in-ardindan>.
- EL*C. n.d. "Why A EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community?" <https://europeanlesbianconference.org/about-elc/>.
- Emejulu, Akwugo. 2018. "On the Problems and Possibilities of Feminist Solidarity: The Women's March One Year On." *IPPR Progressive Review* 24 (4): 267–73.
- Eriksen, Knut Einar, and Einar Niemi. 1981. *Den Finske Fare: Sikkerhetsproblemer Og Minoritetspolitikk i Nord 1860–1940*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Fernandes, Leela. 2013. *Transnational Feminism in the United States: Knowledge, Ethics, and Power: Knowledge, Ethics, Power*. New York: NYU Press.
- Ferree, Myra Marx, and Silke Roth. 1998. "Gender, Class, and the Interaction Between Social Movements: A Strike of West Berlin Day Care Workers." *Gender and Society* 12 (6): 626–48.
- Fish, Jonathan S. 2002. "Religion and the Changing Intensity of Emotional Solidarities in Durkheim's The Division of Labour in Society (1893)." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 2 (2): 203–23.
- Fucking Solidarity. n.d. "Book of Abstracts 'Fucking Solidarity: Queering Concepts on/from a Post-Soviet Perspective'." September 20, 2017. https://qp8.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_qp8/Book_of_Abstracts_EN.pdf.
- Gender & Development. 2013. "Special Issue: Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action." *Gender & Development* 21 (2): 217–379.
- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2019. *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity During the Cold War*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1986. *Durkheim, Politics and the State*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Grewal, Inderpal. 2005. *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Haan, Francisca de. 2018. "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s: From Copenhagen to Moscow and New York." In *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, edited by Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, and Joanna Waley-Cohen, 230–42. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hætta, Odd Mathis. 2002. *Samene: Nordkalottens Urfolk*. Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.
- Hämäläinen, Soile, Frauke Musial, Anita Salamonsen, Ola Graff, and Torjer A. Olsen. 2018. "Sami Yoik, Sami History, Sami Health: A Narrative Review." *77* (1): 1–8.
- Hemmings, Clare. 2012. "Affective Solidarity: Feminist Reflexivity and Political Transformation." *Feminist Theory* 13 (2): 147–61.
- Irvine, Jill A., Sabine Lang, and Celeste Montoya, eds. 2019. *Gendered Mobilizations and Intersectional Challenges: Contemporary Social Movements in Europe and North America*. Illustrated edition. London and New York: ECPR Press.
- Jain, Devaki. 2005. *Women, Development, and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jong, Sara de. 2017. *Complicit Sisters: Gender and Women's Issues Across North-South Divides*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kelliher, Diarmaid. 2018. "Historicising Geographies of Solidarity." *Geography Compass*, no. 12: 1–12.
- Kulpa, Robert. 2014. "Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21 (4): 431–48.
- Leinebø, Ekre Eldbjørg. 2018. *Jordvenn—Venn Med Hele Skaperverket: Trosopplering i Praksis*. Oslo: IKO Forlaget.
- Lezbifem. n.d. "lezbifeministler.com-." lezbifeministler.com. <http://lezbifeministler.com/>.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . 2016. *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Maugushca, Bice. 2016. "Transnational Feminism: Still a Useful Concept?" In *Handbook of Gender in World Politics*, edited by Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe-Belfrage. Oxford: Edward Elgar.

- Mansueto, Anthony. 1988. "Religion, Solidarity and Class Struggle: Marx, Durkheim and Gramsci on the Religion Question." *Social Compass* 35 (2–3): 261–77.
- Martinsson, Lena, and Diana Mulinari, eds. 2018. *Dreaming Global Change, Doing Local Feminisms Visions of Feminism: Global North/Global South Encounters, Conversations and Disagreements*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Meyer, Mary K., and Elisabeth Prügl, eds. 1999. *Gender Politics in Global Governance*. Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Minde, Henry. 1998. "Constructing 'Laestadianism': A Case for Sami Survival?" *Acta Borealia* 15 (1): 5–25.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- . 1984. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2* 12/13 (3/1): 333–58.
- Moss, Hilary, Julie Lynch, and Jessica O'donoghue. 2018. "Exploring Perceived Health Benefits in Singing in a Choir: An International Cross-Sectional Mixed-Methods Study." *Perspectives in Public Health* 138 (3): 160–68.
- Mountz, Alison, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu, et al. 2015. "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance Through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14 (4): 1235–59.
- Mutua, Makau W. 2001. "Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights." *Harvard International Law Journal* 42 (1): 201–45.
- Neufeld, Masha, and Katharina Wiedlack. 2019. "Visibility, Violence, and Vulnerability: Lesbians Stuck between the Post-Soviet Closet and the Western Media Space." In *LGBTQ+ Activism in Central and Eastern Europe: Resistance, Representation and Identity*, edited by Radzhana Buyantueva and Maryna Shevtsova, 51–76. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pedersen, Paul, and Høgmo Asle. 2012. *Sápmi Slår Tilbake: Samiske Revitaliserings- Og Moderniseringsprosesser i Siste Generasjon*, edited by Solbakk Trygve John. Kárášjohka: ČálliidLágáduš.
- Pedwell, Carolyn. 2012. "Affective (Self-) Transformations: Empathy, Neoliberalism and International Development." *Feminist Theory* 13 (2): 163–79.
- Pedwell, Carolyn, and Anne Whitehead. 2012. "Affecting Feminism: Questions of Feeling in Feminist Theory." *Feminist Theory* 13 (2): 115–29.

- Pine, Frances, Deema Kaneff, and Idis Haukaness, eds. 2000. *Memory, Politics and Religion: The Past Meets the Present in Europe*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Popa, Raluca Maria. 2009. "Translating Equality Between Women and Men Across Cold War Divides: Women Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of International Women's Year." In *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, edited by Shana Penn and Jill Massino, 59–74. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Protopapas, Janice, and Gurleen Kaur. 2011. "Kirtanchaunki: Affect, Embodiment and Memory." *Sikh Formations* 7 (3): 339–64.
- Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Illustrated edition. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rai, Shirin M. 2018. "The Good Life and the Bad: Dialectics of Solidarity." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (1): 1–19.
- Redekop, Calvin. 1967. "Toward an Understanding of Religion and Social Solidarity." *Sociological Analysis* 28 (3): 149–61.
- Reznikova, Olya. 2014. "Rol' kategorii gender i race v issledovanii post-colonial'nosti v Rossii. Oplakivaemost' i chechenskii feminism." In *Na pereput'e: Metodologiya, teoriya i praktika LGBT i kvir-issledovaniy*, edited by Aleksandr Kondakov, 24–41. Tsentr nezavisimykh sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniy. <https://cisr.pro/publications/na-pereputye-book/>.
- Richardson, Julia. 2017. "Not Seen and Not Heard: The Security Dilemma of in/Visibility." *Critical Studies on Security* 5 (1): 117–20.
- Richardson, Tanya. 2000. "Disciplining the Past in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Memory and History in Schools and Families." In *Memory, Politics and Religion: The Past Meets the Present in Europe*, edited by Pine, Frances, Deema Kaneff, and Haldis Hauknes, 109–29. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Roy, Srila. 2011. "Politics, Passion and Professionalization in Contemporary Indian Feminism." *Sociology* 45 (4): 587–602.
- . 2016. "Women's Movements in the Global South: Towards a Scalar Analysis." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29 (3): 289–306.
- Salem, Sara. 2017. "On Transnational Feminist Solidarity: The Case of Angela Davis in Egypt." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43 (2): 245–67.
- Schoenfeld, Eugen, and Stjepan G. Meštrović. 1989. "Durkheim's Concept of Justice and Its Relationship to Social Solidarity." *Sociological Analysis* 50 (2): 111–27.
- Scholz, Sally J. 2008. *Political Solidarity*. University Park: Penn State University Press.

- Scholz, Sally. 2014. "Transnational Feminist Solidarity and Lessons from the 2011 Protests in Tahrir Square." *Global Discourse*, no. 4: 205–19.
- Smirnova, Elena. 2019. "Could You Show Me Chechnya on the Map? The Struggle for Solidarity Within the Support Campaign for Homosexual Refugees from the North Caucasus in France." In *Queer-Feminist Solidarity and the East/West Divide*, edited by Katharina Wiedlack, Saltanat Shoshanova, and Masha Godovannaya, 231–61. Oxford and New York: Peter Lang.
- Social Politics. 2018. "Special Section: The Good Life and the Bad: A Discussion." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (1): 1–49.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1996. "'Woman' as Theatre." *Radical Philosophy*, no. 75 (February): 2–4.
- Stella, Francesca. 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Taylor, Yvette, Emily Falconer, and Emily Snowdon. 2014. "Queer Youth, Facebook and Faith: Facebook Methodologies and Online Identities." *New Media & Society* 16 (7): 1138–53.
- Weldon, S. Laurel. 2018. "Some Complexities of Solidarity: A Commentary on Shirin Rai's 'The Good Life and the Bad: Dialectics of Solidarity'." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (1): 34–43.
- Widdowfield, Rebekah. 2000. "The Place of Emotions in Academic Research." *Area* 32 (2): 199–208.
- Wiedlack, Katharina. 2019. "Fucking Solidarity." In *Queer-Feminist Solidarity and the East/West Divide*, edited by Wiedlack, Katharina, Saltanat Shoshanova, and Masha Godovannaya, 21–50. Oxford and New York: Peter Lang.
- Wiedlack, Katharina, Saltanat Shoshanova, and Masha Godovannaya, eds. 2019. *Queer-Feminist Solidarity and the East/West Divide*. Oxford and New York: Peter Lang.
- Winslow, Anne, ed. 1995. *Women, Politics, and the United Nations*. New York: Praeger.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.





5

Spaces of Appearance and the Right to Appear: March 8 in Local Bodily Assemblies

As discussed in the previous chapters of the book, approaching transnational solidarity practices in various sites and types of relations involves attention to exchanges across multiple spatial scales. This chapter aims to deepen our understandings of corporeal and embodied dimensions of transnational feminist and LGBTI+ activism. In this chapter we provide an answer to the question—why in the era of digital solidarities people’s political assemblages in public space still matter and why the body remains an important instrument of queer and feminist struggles in offline as well as online contexts? The event in focus for this chapter is the International Women’s Day, and we follow this event in diverse locales in Sweden, Turkey, and Russia. By emphasizing how March 8 does not just relate to one single day, separated from other days over the year, we use the discussions in this chapter to underline the temporality of resistance and highlight a history of ongoing struggles, across and beyond March 8. We locate the body at the center of attention, to bring forth the significance of embodied forms of resistance for the (re)making of space and to illuminate the ways in which resistance flows across various scales, both individual and collective. In our approach to theorizing bodies in space,

we understand the right to appear as performative action and our discussion in the chapter is guided by the following analytical points: first, we highlight the ways in which attention to bodily assemblies reintroduces a focus on materiality as a broad socioeconomic agenda in feminist and sexual politics, within which notions of embodiment and corporeality are included in an intersectional way and we recognize that the right to appear opens up a possibility for a coalitional framework. Further, we highlight the distinct and overlapping ways in which bodily assemblies take shape and attend to the multi-scalar relationship between the individual and the collective in producing the space of appearance. Below, we give a brief introduction to how we approach these points.

Recognizing that women and LGBTI+ actors are positioned differently in multiple and diverse power relationships, we take our starting point in two ideas brought forward by Judith Butler: (i) when bodies assemble, the nature, or appearance, of public space is reconfigured; and (ii) that public spaces, such as streets, squares, and virtual platforms, could be conceptualized as part of public and corporeal action (Butler 2015). We further develop these insights as we explore struggles for the right to appear as performative action, and illuminate the ways in which resistance can create other spatialities than those defined through relations of domination (Pile 1997; Tufekci 2017; Peake and Valentine 2003). We approach the right to appear as a coalitional framework with potential to build linkages between different positionalities (Butler 2015, 27). In such a coalitional framework, the political meanings enacted are not only expressed through discourse but also through embodied and corporeal action, for example, as the discussions in this chapter will show, when coalitions are built between pious Muslim women and secular feminists involved in street action, or when activists use their bodies to protect fellow trans activists who are the target of hate speech or violence.

In our ambition to grasp the power and effect of public assemblies, we consider the initiatives that we analyze both in terms of written or vocalized political meanings and in terms of embodied and corporeal action, which may extend beyond discursive understandings of action and signify “in excess of whatever is said” (Butler 2015, 8). To this end, we recognize race and gender as lived experiences. Influenced by Linda Martín Alcoff’s (2006) phenomenology of embodiment, this approach

seeks to render tacit knowledge about racial and gendered embodiment more explicit and illuminate possible routes to transformation. While we highlight how a group's appearance through visibility can be a way to challenge the meanings ascribed to such forms of visible difference, we also recognize that visibility can take shape as a technology of power and control (see Chapter 4), facilitating strategies of state repression against groups seen to threaten the reproduction of the nation, such as irregular migrants, border-crossing queers, Muslim and feminist women (Luibhéid 2020; Sager 2018; Mayerchuk and Plakhotnik 2021; Brock and Edenborg 2020). We will bring forth ongoing negotiations around in/visibility understood as collective, multiple, and contextually constructed (Stella 2012).

The discussions in this chapter illuminate, among other things, how feminist and LGBTI+ activists in Russia as well as Sweden protest against racism, xenophobia, and capitalism; how women's and LGBTI+ rights actors in Turkey as well as Russia challenge economic inequalities and state militarism; and how broad-based feminist and queer initiatives in Sweden as well as Turkey resist police brutality and build coalitions between secular and religious feminists. In this conceptualization, we are inspired by feminist, postcolonial, and critical race scholars who emphasize the role of materiality in intersectional struggles (Young 1990; Bordo 2004; Sutton 2007; Hill Collins 2015) and highlight the interconnectivity of race, class, gender, and sexuality through an understanding of intersectionality as "dynamic, shifting, and multiplex" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 199). Nonetheless, while the corporeal dimension of feminist and queer activism brings attention to the materialities of struggle and a possibility for building coalitions across different positionalities, we also recognize that the corporeal dimension does not exclude conflicts in the struggle. For one, as illuminated in the feminist postcolonial and anti-racist struggles discussed in this chapter, racial, and gendered embodiment may be the very space for conflicts between feminists to appear, as actors bring attention to the erasure of race or trans embodiment in feminist struggle. Further, the role of corporeality can also be excluded among activist groups who focus on written and vocalized claims at the expense of tactile or embodied forms of action, experience, and cohabitation.

Based on the performative aspect of the right to appear, and the material understanding of corporeality and embodiment in feminist intersectional agendas, we illuminate in this chapter three distinct and overlapping ways in which bodily assemblies take shape in public space: (a) as an empowering existence; (b) as an expression of resistance against the fact that authorities associate certain bodies with criminality or terrorism, i.e., feminist bodies, trans bodies, racialized bodies; and (c) as a fluid and mutually determining the relationship between the individual body and the collective body. The embodied performances of feminist and LGBTI+ activists make use of the multiplicity of space to expose, for example, aggressions that violate the integrity of the body, through online postings of police brutality in neighborhoods or demonstrations (Butler 2015). In this way, both online and offline spaces co-produce the space of appearance, allowing feminist and LGBTI+ actors to demand rights and (re)claim the very same spaces. Still, no “one” body can establish the space of appearance, but this space can only come into being through collective action. It is a performative exercise which, according to Butler (2015, 77), takes place “‘between bodies’, in a space that constitutes the gap between my own body and another’s.” Such gatherings of bodies in public space are important because when bodies appear to express a protest, they are also expressing a bodily demand to be “recognized, to be valued, they are exercising a right to appear, to exercise freedom, and they are demanding a livable life” (Butler 2015, 26). Keeping attention to this multi-scalar, fluid and mutually determining relationship between the individual and the collective in producing the space of appearance, in this chapter, we show how feminist activists make use of the anonymity of the crowd and the multiplicity of space to be able to appear without fear of being exposed or attacked which, in return, opens up a possibility for activists to reshape the space of appearance in contexts of multiple constraints.

Using a transnational lens, we approach March 8 as a prism of analysis to explore the different ways in which struggles for the right to play out in different locales—in our chapter in Russia, Turkey, and Sweden—and to highlight what different tensions they bring up. Our discussion aspires to reach below the surface of March 8 to bring forth some of the ways in which the International Women’s day represents a history

of ongoing struggles stretching across several years. We recognize and seek to illuminate the long genealogies in struggles for gender equality and sexual rights and highlight how today's actors bring new dimensions to these genealogies. Our discussion in this chapter builds further on themes examined in previous chapters. First, it examines how spaces of resistance take shape through bodily assemblies in public space. Second, it focuses on questions of materiality in feminist and LGBTI+ struggles, which we discussed in Chapter 3. Third, it highlights the question of solidarity through attention to coalitional frameworks, which we discussed in Chapter 4. In this sense, the chapter brings together significant themes across the whole book.

Multi-Sited Ethnography in Relation to March 8

The International Women's Day epitomizes the century-long equality struggles of women. Originating in the revolutionary socialist movement of the early twentieth century, the socialist heritage of the day may easily be forgotten, when today it is commemorated by tributes to successful women or buying gifts to spouses, daughters, or girlfriends (Boxer 2009). The first women's day took place in the USA on February 23 in 1909, when U.S. socialist women organized demonstrations demanding political rights for working women. These women were commemorating a demonstration of women garment and textile workers in 1857, who took part in a protest against low wages, the twelve-hour workday, and increasing workload, which was brutally dispersed by the police. More than fifty years later, on the anniversary of this demonstration, the International Women's day began to take shape (Kaplan 1985). A year later, on August 27, 1910, German socialist Clara Zetkin together with her comrades submitted a resolution to the International Socialist Women's Conference at the meeting with the Socialist International in Copenhagen, proposing to organize an international working women's day to support the struggle for women's right to vote (Ruthchild 2010, 185). The resolution specified that "The Women's Day must have an international character and is to be prepared carefully" (Boxer 2009, 1).

The suggestion was accepted by all voters, more than 100 women from 17 different countries (FN 2006). In 1911, on March 18, the first official International Women's Day took place in Vienna with 20,000 marching protesters and similar events took place on the same day in Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland. In 1912, also protesters in the Netherlands and Sweden took part, yet, scholars argue, the day was marked as an uneasy alliance between socialists and feminists, as nation-building aspirations attempted to push aside the internationalist spirit of the day (Kaplan 1985; Chatterjee 2002; Pommerolle and Ngaméni 2015). In 1913–1914, the date was transferred to March 8. Russia first celebrated the International Women's Day on February 23,¹ 1913, focusing on making the parliament more democratic and extending the vote to women (Kollontai 1920). In Russia in 1914 the International Women's Day event received large attention, however, police intervention made demonstrations difficult, yet these tensions, according to Kollontai, underlined that the struggle for the vote in Russia by extension was an open call for overthrowing tsarist autocracy. Across the years since, the International Women's Day continued to develop through scattered celebrations in France, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Australia, Germany, England, China, and Indonesia (Boxer 2009). According to commentators, the day served to strengthen the international solidarity of workers, among others, because countries used to exchange speakers for the occasion (Kaplan 1985). By 1977, the United Nations adopted a resolution designating March 8 as an International Women's Day and today the International Women's Day is a public holiday in many countries (Gammache and Anderson 2016). The UN world conferences have had an impact on the growing international women's movement and the common work for women's rights, among other things, for the right of women to participate in economic and political development (Vargas 2003; Olcott 2017). However, recently, scholars have identified the widened popularity of March 8 marches around the world, illuminating their capitalist complicity (LeSavoy and Jordan 2013) and

¹ March 8 in the Gregorian calendar is the same day as February 23 in the Julian calendar (Gregorian calendar 2021).

their incorporation in existing political structures by mainstream feminist actors. Scholars have suggested that such attempts result in hijacking of March 8 by actors with less radical demands who invite celebrities to draw media attention to the event without challenging hierarchical structures (Mayerchyk and Plakhotnik 2021). Yet, the activist critique of such attempts has also resulted in the claiming of new or other spaces for expressing more pluralist, radical demands and bringing together the community, in particular located contexts as well as through transnationally connected actions such as *Ni Una Menos*, allowing feminism to challenge the universalized character of the “woman question.” In these movements of repoliticization, recovery, and reinvention (Segato and McGlazer 2018), actors question the neoliberal order and address the role of the state in upholding patriarchal violence, as the “space, meaning and practice of politics [is critically] rethought in light of the massive—or indeed the millennial—failure of state-centered projects” (McGlazer 2018, 148; Rudan 2018). In this chapter, we explore such alternative March 8 gatherings as well as the tensions and new alliances that appear through such events.

International Women’s Day in Sweden

Among women’s voter organizations in Sweden in the early twentieth century, questions relating to the International Women’s Day were intensively debated, not least since all men had been given the right to vote in 1909 and in Finland, women had been given the right to vote at the same time as all men in 1906. In 1912, the first year of celebrating the women’s day in Sweden, Swedish women held opinion meetings across the country. Both women in the socialist movement and women from the voter’s movement were involved as speakers at celebrations of the women’s day in an alliance across classes (Wikander 2011). If the International Women’s Day kept a slumbering presence in Sweden after women gained the vote in 1919, renewed interest for the day emerged in the 1970s, when the feminist-socialist organization *Grupp 8* [Group 8] re-awakened the celebration in 1971 with a demonstration demanding free abortion and daycare for all children. Together with

Svenska kvinnors vänsterförbund [the Swedish association for socialist women], Group 8 co-organized a meeting in 1972 and a large celebration of March 8 (Nordiska museet 2017). During the 1980s, the International Women's Day in Sweden became steadily more popular, and celebrations were organized by both social democratic women's organizations and trade union representatives. However, the discourse changed from claims rooted in a socialist-structural analysis directed to the state or to employers, to become more individualized, directed to women themselves, aiming to empower women to higher education, higher salary and higher positions in companies, and decision-making bodies. From the 1990s until today, it has become popular among companies and organizations as well as lobby organizations working to strengthen women's rights such as *Sveriges kvinnolobby* [Swedish Women's Lobby], to organize panels and events on women's day, to highlight the "woman question" and issues such as the gender pay gap or women's health, yet, these celebrations are strongly characterized by a universalized agenda and have little or no connection to the socialist or international heritage of the day. They are also rarely connected to the international spirit of the day in its early years or the broad socioeconomic agenda, carried by socialist women of the beginning of the twentieth century. Each year in the big cities, grassroots women's organizations usually co-organize a celebration with demonstrations and speeches, however, less mainstream or intersectional feminist actors or questions are seldom given space or attention during these celebrations. The turn of events in the Swedish case discussed in this chapter is one example of conflicts that can arise as the result of such forms of exclusion or agenda setting, in this case critique was expressed against the mainstream women's movement tendency to marginalize issues of race and racialization in feminist struggle.

Mia conducted participant observation on the celebrations of March 8 in Gothenburg (2018). She followed an event on the theme "The role of feminism in the hood: postcoloniality, struggle and organizing,"²

² In translation to English, we use "the hood" or the neighborhood for the Swedish word "orten," to reflect that, when based in self-identification, the denomination carries a feeling of belonging to a place as well as to a community between people living in similar marginalized residential areas of major cities over the whole country, and beyond. It may also express a

which was co-organized by a group gathering actors from civil society and the cultural and pedagogical sector in Gothenburg. This March 8 event was held at Blå Stället, a popular cultural center known for its art exhibitions and performances, and for being a stage for public debates, located in Angered, a multicultural area in the north-east of Gothenburg. Using a multi-scalar approach to connect subjects in different locations across multiple sites, Mia followed the actors from the March 8 event to a second event, *Burka Songs 2.0* in April the same year (Jakku 2018). This event was a screening of Hanna Högstedt's film *Burka Songs 2.0* from 2017 and a panel conversation focusing on questions of who can speak for whom and which subjects are considered as credible subjects and which are not (Håkansson 2018). Connections between the experiences and expressions by subjects in one location and the "fates of these same subjects in other locations" (Marcus 1995, 106) allowed Mia to explore the agendas and appearances of these struggles across various sites, from their anchorage in a single event (March 8), to illuminate linkages between diverse sites and discern deeper connections between these performances. Mia also followed some of the activists from the previous events to the Instagram account Polisbrutalitet i orten [Police brutality in the hood], where she conducted online ethnography. Stories posted narrated experiences of police violence specifically targeting racialized people and police violence in marginalized residential areas of major cities in Sweden.

International Women's Day in Russia

The International Women's Day in Russia has a long and ambivalent history. Alexandra Kollontai, a famous Russian revolutionary and socialist, attended the Copenhagen conference in 1910 (Ruthchild 2010, 185). In 1913 she wrote an article on the International Women's Day for

sense of connection to people living in similar areas in other countries. The direct translation of "orten" is the hood. Since the hood may be interpreted as a negative term, if used by people without connection to the place, this chapter will use the hood in direct quotes and the neighborhood in more general discussions. Throughout the chapter, we also use the term marginalized residential areas of major cities. We are grateful for the valuable input and generous reflections from Nana Osei-Kofi on this terminology and translation.

Pravda, the Bolshevik daily newspaper published in St. Petersburg. The special issue of *Pravda* appeared on February 17 and was entirely dedicated to the “woman question,” which marked the first celebration of International Women’s Day in Russia (Ruthchild 2010, 186). The festivities took place in five cities including Kyiv (the capital of today’s Ukraine) and Tbilisi (the capital of Georgia). The biggest celebration occurred in St. Petersburg (Ruthchild 2010, 186). It was organized by female textile workers and attracted speakers of various political convictions. But it also dragged extensive police force as if predicting the potential transformative power of the International Women’s Day celebrations which led to the fall of the tsarist regime in Russia in February 1917 (Ruthchild 2010; Wood 1997; Voronina 2017). However, the initial political edge of the International Women’s Day gradually faded in the Soviet Union. At first it turned into an important annual occasion for the Communist Party’s political campaigning among women (Voronina 2017, 8). Under Stalin, it was celebrated as “International Women’s Day of workers, struggle for communism and emancipation from capitalism” (Voronina 2017, 9). From the late 1950s onwards March 8 were losing its political meaning, instead turning into celebration of women. In 1965, March 8 became an official holiday in the Soviet Union (Voronina 2017, 9). With this came another discursive change, as the day became associated with traditional patriarchal femininity and women’s achievements in motherhood and household management (Voronina 2017). This understanding of March 8 still remains dominant in Russia.

However, with the rise of grassroots feminist activism and the spread of transnational feminist ideas in the country we observe the reemergence of a political, feminist, meaning of the International Women’s Day. Many feminist events are organized across the country on March 8. The day remains a free-of-work state holiday which allows feminists to gather together for various occasions. Echoing the history of March 8 in Russia, St. Petersburg still stands out as the place of most numerous public demonstrations. Olga conducted participant observation of March 8 celebrations in two sites: in the capital city of Moscow (2018) and in St. Petersburg (2019). She also followed the event online collecting material about celebrations in other cities across the vast Russian territory. In Moscow she attended multiple small-scale public gatherings on

the central streets as well as several feminist indoor events organized by various feminist groups. In St. Petersburg she took part in a public gathering on the Lenin square. She followed this gathering afterward through analyzing a publicly available video of the rally that was released in the Russian-language social network *Vkontakte* by the rally's organizers and through interviewing one of the rally's co-organizers who led a bodily performance during the gathering. The second section provides a detailed analysis of this material. Being based on the analysis of the same event across time (2018 and 2019) and space—virtual and physical—the Russian case provides the story of corporeal struggles on March 8 across and within several sites, mapping struggles over visions about “the definition of collective reality” (Marcus 1995, 109).

International Women's Day in Turkey

Compared to Sweden and Russia, the popular celebration of March 8 in Turkey has a more recent history. Until the 2000s, organizing around the International Women's Day was without a mass base, mostly confined to socialist, feminist, and Kemalist activist circles. The first known celebration was organized by the Communist Party in 1921. Until World War II, the Communist Party of Turkey raised a number of demands on the occasion of March 8 such as equal pay for equal work and the prohibition of women's employment in heavy works and night shifts (Tunçay 2009 in Akbulut 2016). Losing its appeal in the Postwar years in the context of Turkey's alignment with the First World (Anderson 2008), the International Women's Day resurfaced gender politics in 1975 as the Association of Progressive Women (*Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği*, IKD) mobilized for March 8. An organization of socialist women tied to the Turkish Communist Party, IKD raised the issues of equal pay for equal work and child care at the workplace in collaboration with the Women's International Democratic Federation³ (Akal 2003). Emerging in the political field in the early 1980s, feminist women politicized March 8 as a day for demanding full equality between the sexes in public and private

³ A brief discussion of Women's International Democratic Federation appears in Chapter 1.

spheres. Similar to socialist women they organized street demonstrations to raise their voices, but their source of inspiration was the rise of feminist activism in Western Europe and North America. From the late 1980s onwards Kemalist women integrated March 8 to their politics in line with their adoption of the UN gender equality agenda and discussed women's rights in relation to modernity, equality, and struggle against Islamism (Çağatay 2017). In the second half of the 1990s, feminist, socialist, and Kurdish women started to organize joint protests on the International Women's Day where women's sections of political parties and labor unions as well as women's organizations marched in parade in a predefined order.

The Feminist Night March (*Feminist Gece Yürüyüşü*) in Istanbul, which we explore in the Turkish case discussion, was first held in 2003 with no more than a hundred women gathered in the Taksim Square, the historical landmark for demonstrations of the social opposition of different kinds, calling attention to the relationship between patriarchy and militarism upon the US invasion in Iraq (Karakuş and Akkaya 2011). The night time demonstration differed from the day time parade in that it addressed feminists as individuals, instead of groups of women representing their respective organizations, providing room for the visibility of diverse modes of feminist existence and resistance. Adopting an intersectional view on feminist politics, this annual event became popular in the 2010s as more people joined feminist and queer struggles and occupying public spaces became an important mode of visibility in Turkey and globally. While "Feminist Night March" as a concept spread to other cities and towns in Turkey; the social profile of its participants in Istanbul diversified so as to include young women and queer people from marginalized residential areas as well as near-by cities. The many colorful, homemade placards with remarkable slogans handwritten by feminists received a lot of media attention, particularly those that related humorously to body politics and sexual rights.⁴ Increasingly motivated by the discourses and practices of transnational feminist solidarity, which we discussed in the previous chapter, the march received international

⁴ See, for example, <https://twitter.com/feministgundem/status/840080926402994176/photo/4> (accessed 31.12.2020).

recognition as well as verbal and physical attacks and smear campaigns from the government and pro-AKP civil actors. In the context of March 8's appropriation by the AKP elite⁵ and its global scale depoliticization by neoliberal structures, the Night March stands as a radical intervention that ties gender and sexual politics to broader social agendas and resists the exclusion of feminist and queer bodies from the public sphere. At the same time, it is an expression of coalition politics that is always in the making, shaped by the dynamics of transnational feminist and queer struggles, their agendas and politics of in/visibility.

The case on Turkey traces the life and times of the Feminist Night March in one site, using a reading practice which illuminates multiple or layered narratives across time shaping developments ahead. In January–March 2019, Selin conducted participatory action research with feminist and women's initiatives that mobilized around the International Women's Day, and a digital ethnography of the events and discourses around March 8 in various cities in Turkey and nationally. She has attended numerous feminist and women's gatherings and online communication toward, on, and after March 8, and took part in the organizing committee of the Night March. The case draws on field notes and observations together with interviews with feminist and queer activists and data gathered on social media (Twitter) and news websites. The analysis addresses March 8 as a historical event that is part of ongoing struggles around politics of visibility, solidarity, and the right to appear in public assembly transnationally.

Taken together, conceptualizing March 8 as a transnational phenomenon, we approach March 8 events in various contexts in relational terms, emphasizing the multiplicities and connections that “decenter hegemonic versions of feminism at varying scales” (Roy 2016, 290), as we bring forth linkages in the production and circulation of feminist praxis and emphasize sub-national cultural formations as well as

⁵ While the AKP circles treated feminism as a non-national, marginal ideology, they have also instrumentalized days such as March 8, the International Women's Day, and November 25, the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), as well as feminist concepts of women's empowerment and agency, to claim Turkey's superior position in women's rights due to its Islamic, and therefore “more just,” societal relations, and to disseminate their counternarration on gender based on the notion of “gender justice.” See Chapter 1 for further discussion.

crossnational connections (Tambe 2010). As we approach the fieldsite as a heterogeneous network, the social phenomena in focus of our attention are the dynamics surrounding the struggles for the right to appear and spaces of appearance in various locations, including notions and practices of in/visibility, through the lens of March 8 in the contexts of our research. The fieldsite is understood as constructed by how participants enact and perceive the right to appear and spaces of appearance (Burrell 2016) and we employ a multi-sited methodology (Marcus 1995) to trace this phenomenon, its cultural formations, actors, and narratives.

Struggles for the Right to Appear

March 8 in Sweden: Agency, Visibility, and the Role of Feminism in the Hood

2018 was the first year a March 8 event was organized in Angered, an area represented in mainstream media as exposed to criminality and violence, however, inhabitants' descriptions of the area contrast this picture by expressing feelings of belonging and community (Ortens röster 2020; Atto 2019).⁶ The host of the March 8 event, Afaf, a young, Black woman, a poet and performance artist who self-identifies as Afro-Swedish, opened the event by recognizing the exclusions of Black and Muslim feminists in Swedish feminism. Explaining that she never saw women like her represented in the mainstream feminist struggle, she emphasized that this event was organized as a celebration of feminism in the neighborhood: "Today, we have our own day, our own celebration." Afaf referred to an ongoing debate around the film *Burka Songs 2.0*, which illuminates anti-Muslim racism, bringing up questions of Muslim women's right to speak. As a public screening and panel conversation of the film recently had been canceled by the municipality, Afaf said half-jokingly-half-sincerely that the organizers had been afraid that

⁶ See, for example, the Instagram account Voices from the hood (*Ortens röster*) 2020 and Atto 2019.

the March 8 day event would have had to be canceled.⁷ Then she took the opportunity to introduce one of the panelists of the evening, who also was one of the panelists in the *Burka Songs 2.0* event. The panelist was greeted with a strong applaud from the audience of approximately eighty people sitting close to each other, the majority of them young, Black and/or Muslim women but there were also older women, as well as young and older Black men, and a small number of white women of different ages, including Mia herself. All seats were occupied and people were standing along the walls. The atmosphere was relaxed with the audience focused on the activities on the stage. Some people were calmly moving around, to fetch water to drink or a cup of tea, to say hi to a friend, or arrange seats next to each other. With reference to the cancelation of the screening of *Burka Songs 2.0*, Afaf clarified that these developments have made people in the neighborhood worried about how much space Black and Muslim feminists are allowed to take in the public. These tensions, she said, put the spotlight on the necessity of getting organized in a struggle for the right to appear and to claim space.

The first point in the program was a panel with four young Black and/or Muslim feminists, engaged in a conversation on the theme: “Post-colonial feminism: struggle, organizing and resistance.” By illuminating multi-scalar linkages between the body and colonial civilizing missions, between the embedded site of protest and histories of struggle, the panelists located the body at a crossroad between resistance, power, and space (Cuesta and Mulinari 2018). In the capacity of panel chair, Afaf asked the panelists: “What does postcolonial feminism mean to you?” Upon receiving this question, Alya, a woman wearing hijab, responded that: “You see, we have a history filled with racism and colonialism. This

⁷ Originally, the film was scheduled for screening as part of a pre-EuroPride program event on March 14, 2018, organized by the municipality of Gothenburg. Yet, on March 1, 2018, the local government in Gothenburg announced that they had decided to cancel the screening of the film and the panel conversation, in response to critique from an op-ed in the local right-wing populist newspaper *Göteborgs-Posten*. The op-ed criticized the one-sided focus of the arrangement and the one-sided composition of the panel, which would be constituted by two Muslim feminists, known for their active engagement for the right to wear the veil and struggles against anti-Muslim racism (Sonesson 2018). One month later, a screening of the film with accompanying panel conversation was organized anew. This time by an independent association, *Göteborgs litteraturhus* [Gothenburg Literary House].

violence has left traces in our societies and our bodies. We have incorporated this violence.” Another panelist, Maryam, continued to explain that colonialism’s historical developments have impacted our contemporary society and personal lives on different levels, such that social class and processes of racialization appear at the center of modes of inequality:

Take for example, ownership. Who owns power in terms of money, in the context of decision making? Those areas which are the most racialized are also the poorest areas. The more Black people who live in an area, the more impoverished it is.⁸

Illuminating the unwillingness among white people in Sweden to recognize the interplay between private ownership/money and decision-making power for sustaining racial hierarchies, and demonstrating the existence of a colonial civilizing ambition in present-day discourses of Muslim women’s rights in Sweden, Alya explained that: “Everyone wants to hear about my exposure to violence, but who is the perpetrator? It is as if this country suffers from collective amnesia.” She continued to explain the ignorance in Sweden of its colonial history, its civilizing mission, and how colonial racist discourses of Black or Muslim populations as “the Other” circulate and flourish. She concluded: “It feels unfair, but I have to handle this lack of awareness, which results in an internalized oppression. Colonialism isn’t a historical event, we have a racial hierarchy today.”

A third panelist, Karima, a self-identified Muslim feminist, deepened this aspect of the significance and co-construction of class and race by giving some examples of names on such neighborhoods: “Hjällbo, Biskopsgården, Hammarkullen. There is a lot of prejudice and lack of knowledge, there are material differences and discrimination at the workplace.” Bringing the body to the center of attention, in its multi-scalar intersection with space, power, and resistance, the contributions of Alya, Maryam, and Karima in the March 8 panel expressed a certain kind of thinking through the body. A similar kind of thinking through the body has for a long time been at the center of the theoretical and political

⁸ In the conversation, the speaker referred to figures in *Afrofobirapporten* (2014).

agenda of Black and Chicano feminists (Cuesta and Mulinari 2018). Yet, the feminists in the panel on March 8 not only located the Black and Muslim woman's body but also the neighborhood as the space of struggle, at the center of attention, aspiring to reinscribe these bodies and spaces in historical and contemporary relations of power. Simultaneously, those relations of power were located within the bodies and spaces of Black and Muslim feminists. These bodily re-inscriptions were highlighted in contributions to the panel among other things through Alya's narration of colonial violence as internalized and of Maryam's description of racialized areas as impoverished. Their approach was situated in an understanding of power in terms of access to money and decision-making capacity. As they employed a thinking through the body, their contributions brought forth a focus on political agency and subjectivity, visualizing how political struggles can shift and transform the position of bodies from passive objects within relations of power to active political subjects, involved in building connections and shaping alliances between diverse, collective bodies (Cuesta and Mulinari 2018) visualized, too, in the March 8 event itself.

In the panel conversation during the March 8 event, the discussion evolved to focus on Black and Muslim women's right to speak and to claim space. On this point, the fourth panelist, Mona, who self-identified as an Afro-Swedish Muslim feminist, emphasized that:

Fundamentally, the questions brought up today are about survival. There are women who need to think about survival every day. Our struggles concern being recognized as a human being in one's own right, the right to exist and to claim space. (...) Use the position you have and stand up.

Recognizing the ambiguities of body politics, Mona illuminated the risks at stake for Black and Muslim women in the context of Swedish feel-good antiracism, within which it has become transformed from a site of political struggle to a Swedish national value, shaping the basis for a "subject position that reinforces the moral superiority of whites as antiracists" (Cuesta and Mulinari 2018, 11). In this context, Black and Muslim women are frequently victimized and deprived agency, autonomy, and voice. In this sense, their struggles for the right to speak

and to appear concern questions of survival in both literal and discursive respects.

Mona was also a panelist in the conversation after a screening of *Burka Songs 2.0*, which after its cancellation by the municipality in March was re-organized by an independent organization in April the same year. The screening was introduced by a short talk by the Lebanese filmmaker Farah Kasseem, who said that the only way to achieve change within a context of the war on terror where anti-Muslim conspiracy theories circulate is to “share stories. To share something that comes from your heart, from your experience, to connect people and help them understand how complex the situation is.” In the panel conversation after the screening, colonialism was addressed as well as the lack of interest and ignorance about the role of colonialism in present-day racial regimes in a Swedish context. With anchorage in relations and histories of colonialism, the panelists of the *Burka Songs 2.0* event engaged in a conversation around what subject is allowed to speak and on what conditions. In this panel, Mona asked: “How are the linkages to colonialism visualized in policy and society today? Developing her thoughts further, Mona suggested the need to

let practices of resistance take departure in history. It is not a coincidence that Muslim women, with an analysis of power relations, are silenced, because they challenge hegemonies. (...) But we have a responsibility, from our parents, to carry out this struggle, as a struggle for equality.

Mona’s understanding of the role of the body in struggles for rights did not suggest an ahistorical understanding of bodily needs, nor did it approach the body as a pure effect of particular historical contexts. Rather, she proposed a more open-ended approach, genealogically linked to history as felt in the body through everyday memories and experiences of trauma, while keeping open the possibility of future transformation.

After the screening of the film in the *Burka Songs 2.0* event, three women appeared on the stage to read out loud stories from the Instagram account *Police brutality in the neighborhood (Polisbrutalitet i orten)*. The admins describe the account as a place to share stories to grasp the extent of the problem of ethnic/racial profiling and to provide

a broader perspective in debates around safety in the neighborhood. Postings illuminate unprovoked, aggressive, and brutal police violence particularly targeting racialized people. In the postings, racialized groups appear simultaneously both hypervisible and invisible (Leinonen and Toivanen 2014). The stories from the Instagram account provide examples around how Swedish authorities attempt to control Black, migrant, and/or Muslim populations, in most cases by violence and aggression. The reading of these stories directed a focus on state institutions as important aspects in the struggle for claiming space, for tellability, and for the right to appear. Leily, a young, Black woman from Malmö, introduced the readings by explaining that: “[Police brutality] happens because we are located in the bodies that we have. People talk about us, to us but our stories have been hidden. Now we are going to read these stories.”

Until August 2019, the Instagram account included 78 postings and stories from Black, migrant, and Muslim individuals, sharing experiences of being violently stopped and searched by aggressive policemen without explanation, beaten and yelled at, driven out to the woods by the police in the middle of the night, and being exposed to racist speech. In the stories, the experience of being exposed to violent acts by the police emerges as an experience shared by Afro-Swedes, Roma, and Muslim populations in marginalized residential areas of major cities (Civil Rights Defenders 2017). Further, postings in the account illuminate that ethnic minorities and racialized groups are also frequently targeted in places outside of the neighborhood. In the postings, vulnerability is mobilized collectively, shedding light on a structural problem.

As we trace enactments in a struggle for the right to appear, it is time for us to move back again to the March 8 event in Angered. When we re-enter this event, the panel conversation had been wrapped up. There has been a dance performance, and information about actions against female genital mutilation (FGM). All participants were offered a generous amount of delicious couscous, vegetables, and bread. Fataneh, a young woman, poet, and artist, read out loud her poem “I know a woman in the hood,” a poem which visualizes the multiple oppression of Black women. The poem turned the gaze from the white savior-subject to the Black woman-agent and illustrated the colonial nature of the idea

of White people saving brown women from brown men, highlighting the nature of such projects as denying racialized women their agency. “The hoods where we live,” Fataneh read firmly, “are seen as risk areas but,” she asked, “what risk is it that we are exposed to? Frequently, it is said that we are exposed to violence and poverty. But actually” she continued,

we are exposed to racism. All can see the figures in the statistics, but no one recognizes that the figures visualize racism against those who live in the hood. I am a woman in the hood. The top-three problems I encounter are 1. Racism 2. Capitalism. 3. Patriarchy.

Anchored in questions of corporeality and place, Fataneh’s poem highlighted linkages between the discussions in the Instagram account, connecting the struggles against racial/ethnic profiling to hierarchical, colonial agendas, and protesting against the construction of Black and Muslim women as victims who needs to be “saved” from their histories, communities, and/or families. The poem also connected to the *Burka Songs 2.0* discussion and the panel conversation in the March 8 event by recognizing the existence of a racial regime in Sweden, being the product of intersections of racism, capitalism, and patriarchy. In the poem, Fataneh employed a multi-scalar thinking through the body, connecting the individual body, with the neighborhood and the state, which transforms the position of bodies from passive objects to active subjects. Exercising a corporeal resistance, the poem challenged histories and presents of colonialism and racism, rooted in the embodied experiences of Black and Muslim women, reframing these stories from being seen as individual anomalies to collective agendas in spatially and temporally distinct struggles for the right to appear.

Taken together, these three events shaped a sub-national cultural formation by establishing linkages between each other and bringing to light questions of visibility, tellability, and the right to appear, as these emerge in the feminist movement (March 8); in the contemporary debate (*Burka Songs 2.0*); and in virtual/physical space (the Instagram account). The enactments taking place around the March 8 event “The role of

feminism in the hood: postcoloniality, struggle and organizing” illustrated how bodily acts and corporeal forms of resistance can transform the position of bodies from objects of power to subjects acting and speaking together (Butler 2015; Alcoff 2006). Further, Burka Songs 2.0 acknowledged the significance of visibility and tellability for bringing about change. The event itself, including the debate and the many turns around the event, manifested the double-edged nature of visibility as a route to change, and as a measure of control. Finally, the sharing of the stories of police brutality, posted on the Instagram account, expressed a form of body politics in which an ambiguous relationship between bodies and power was brought forth. Here, the racialized body emerged as a target of social control but also as a site of agency, through the telling of and engagement with stories around police brutality, breaking the silence, and illuminating a wider pattern. Highlighting tensions between representation and rights, the events included here illuminated the complex move through which the body cannot be used as a mere instrument for political claims, but that it is crucial to let one’s body, and the plurality of bodies, become a “precondition of all further claims” (Butler 2015, 181). By acting together at the inter-linked events of March 8, the Burka Songs 2.0 event, and in the Instagram account, the individual is transformed from a single body exposed to violence, to a part of an alliance of collective bodies who take action for social change. In this struggle, a broad feminist agenda rooted in the materiality of experience, embodiment, and place, sustained the development of a coalitional framework between differently positioned activists, as actors at these events entered into the negotiation of the space of appearance through collective action.

March 8 in Russia: Claiming the Right to Appear

In 2017 when Olga just started conducting her research in Russia, feminists in St. Petersburg took March 8 to the streets—they organized a non-approved rally on the Nevsky prospekt, the city’s most central avenue. This was but one public event that Russian feminists started organizing on March 8 on a regular basis in the 2010s in an attempt to

reclaim the political meaning of the International Women's Day, which was largely lost during the late Soviet period (Voronina 2017). The series of public events in Moscow on March 8, 2018 was explicitly referring to this reclamation. With the slogan "Go out! Retrieve March 8!", *Komitet 8 Marta* (March 8 Committee), the left-leaning nongovernmental organization, urged women to reappropriate the meaning of March 8 from the patriarchal "day of spring, love, and beauty" to "the day of solidarity among women in their struggle for rights" (Komitet 8 Marta 2018). These public events were sometimes challenging to organize. The organizers of the Nevsky Prospekt rally in 2017 initially planned to hold the gathering on the Field of Mars, a large square in the St. Petersburg center. When they applied for permission to the St. Petersburg municipality, their request was declined under the pretext that another mass event had already been scheduled there (V Peterburge grazhdanskie aktivisty proveli miting v chest' 8 marta' 2017). As a result, the non-approved rally on the Nevsky prospekt was suppressed by the police, and several activists were detained (Klochkova 2017). The aforementioned series of events in Moscow in 2018 consisted, among others, of single-standing pickets on Arbat, a pedestrian street in the Moscow center. The picket participants who were replacing each other in order to avoid the detention by the police held placards with requests to stop sexual harassment and discrimination of women on the labor market. While single-standing pickets did not require any formal permission, they were still closely observed by a group of policemen (Fieldwork notes, March 8, 2018). As these examples demonstrate, the right of bodily appearance on the streets is not taken for granted by Russian feminist activists. At the same time, as the slogan "Go out! Retrieve March 8!" or the urge of St. Petersburg activists that "it is time to take to the streets and to vote with our appearance for feminism" (Feminism—dlia kazhdoi 2018) illustrate, the right to appear is deemed important by Russian feminist activists in reclaiming the feminist meaning of March 8 as the site of the struggle for women's rights in a broad sense. Just as Butler (2015, 83) asserts, "political claims are made by bodies as they appear and act...".

In what follows, we analyze one particular example of such collective bodily appearance which is the feminist rally in St. Petersburg in 2019 (Sasunkevich 2021). This rally managed to unite local feminists from

the variety of the political spectrum and political organizations with a pro-feminist agenda. Unlike in 2017 when the feminist gathering was not permitted by the St. Petersburg authorities, the rally of 2019 organized by a feminist initiative March 8, 2019 got a permission to be held on the Lenin Square in front of the Finlyandsky station, located slightly away from the most central parts of the city. Navigating between solidarity with other activist groups, namely LGBTI+ activists, and caring about participants' security, the rally's organizers warned in the Russian-language social network *Vkontakte* that potential participants could be detained for bringing rainbow items to the rally. Simultaneously, they also provided information about legal assistance in case of detention (8 Marta v Sankt Peterburge 2019).

The rally's motto was "Feminism for each and one*"⁹ (*Feminism dlia kazhdoi**). The description of the event acknowledged multilayeredness of problems that women face in the contemporary Russian society—the limited access to resources such as money, time, and decision-making; sexual and domestic violence and harassment; the insufficient support of motherhood; stigmatization of prostituted women; the dehumanizing prison system; the state homophobia and increase of hate crimes; the lack of legal and social support to migrant women and their children; and the lack of accessible spaces for people with disabilities. Thus, the agenda of the rally appealed to various social actors. It departed from the woman question and women's needs but it also expanded beyond them including LGBTI+ people and people with disabilities and addressing the woman question as a broad social issue determined by economic inequality and the inefficiency of the political system. The organizers' description of the event finished with the sentence "Patriarchy and capitalism off!" Moreover, during the rally itself, this agenda was also extended by a clear stance against Russian nationalistic militarism when the feminist poet Galina Rymbu read her anti-military poem which implicitly condemned the Russian aggression in Ukraine and related it to gender violence and the dominant patriarchal order.

⁹ In Russian, "each and one" had a feminine grammatical gender, i.e., the organizers foremost appealed to women*. There was an additional note that "*" signified the inclusiveness of the space and organizers' will to include non-binary-, queer, and trans people.



Fig. 5.1 Capture: Feminist rally in St. Petersburg (Photo credit: Olga Sasunkevich)

On a sunny, springy day of March 8, 2019 from 300 to 500 people gathered around the statue of Vladimir Lenin (see Fig. 5.1). There were representatives of various political ideologies including socialist movement, communists, anarchists, and a broad feminist spectrum and identifications, notably, cis- and transgender people, lesbians, and queers. The organizers had a list of speakers who were invited to the Lenin's postament one-by-one to present their organization or movement and to speak out the most important feminist-related issues. The rally started with one of the organizers underlining the intersectional spirit of the rally once again. The person talked about *peresechenie*¹⁰ (the intersection)

¹⁰ The anglicism *interseksionalizm* to designate the intersectional approach is also used in the Russian-language scholarly literature and activist circles. However, it is important to acknowledge that activists used the Russian term *peresechenie* (literally, intersection) to speak of identity and experience overlaps.

of identities/experiences/discriminations that constructs women's subjectivity and, consequently, the multiplicity of problems women face. While naming the structures of oppression, the organizer mentioned nationalism, conservative forces, the Russian Orthodox Church, the state, and the capitalist system. The placards, which participants brought to the rally, also raised various issues—from clearly feminist questions of domestic and sexual violence, harassment, and reproductive politics to economic inequality that prevents women from deciding their reproductive behavior freely. For example, the Russian socialist movement had a placard “For the right for abortion. For the possibility not to make the abortion.”

Women who spoke out during the rally varied across age, political affiliation, and questions they raised—some considered labor, care burden, and economic rights among the most pressing issues, others talked about individual autonomy, patriarchy, gender stereotypes, and domestic and sexual violence and harassment as a part of the feminist agenda. One speaker talked about femicide as an existing but unrecognized problem in Russia. She said that, according to activists' data, more than one hundred women were murdered in Russia during the previous two months of 2019. As she continued:

The tradition is to announce a moment of silence to acknowledge those who died. We suggest not to keep silent, but to scream. To scream together those who are here now. We will have a minute of a common scream, of rage and anger caused by the powerlessness and violence against women. Please, join me (*screaming in a microphone, the crowd joins*).

The performative scream was followed by another speech about the struggle against homophobia as a part of the feminist agenda. Olga, another organizer of the rally, came to the postament with a placard stating that lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender issues belong to feminist questions, the fact that, as she mentioned, did not always find support among feminists. Her speech raised a round of applause. Enthusiasm and support were perceptible during other speeches as well. When a female-identified representative of the Russian socialist movement said that she

was nervous because this was her first speech in front of such a large number of people, the crowd cheered her with applause and sounds of support.

However, the tension arose when a transgender activist, Ekaterina, rose to the postament. At first she was also cheered by the first rows of participants, where activists known as intersectional feminists, lesbians, and self-identified queers, gathered. But then someone shouted from the crowd, “A Woman is not a costume,” putting into question Ekaterina’s self-identification as a (transgender) woman. Ekaterina got confused, the enthusiasm with which she started her speech decreased. Someone from the crowd shouted, “Go away!” “This is an intersectional rally,” one of the organizers shouted back. A short pause occurred, then four activists rose to the postament and stood on both sides from Ekaterina as literally lending her a shoulder of support. One of the activists held a placard which can be roughly translated from Russian as “A woman can mean many things, it is not your call to decide upon this meaning.”¹¹ Ekaterina managed to get back to her speech where she brought up the agenda of transgender women and the miscomprehension of their agenda in some feminist circles.

Later on, the organizers announced “practices of bodily liberation” as a rally activity. Two performance artists—Dasha and Marina—were invited to the podium. Dasha, who introduced themselves as a queer-performer, activist, and a facilitator of bodily practices for LGBTI+ community, suggested to perform some noise to make people’s presence on the square apparent. After that, Dasha suggested to shake bodies in order to get rid of oppression. Marina, who introduced themselves as a hip-hop artist, continued, “Discrimination and violence are directed to our bodies, therefore, we came here today to claim our rights, to become visible.” Dasha suggested to look around and to establish an eye contact with other participants of the rally. Then both Dasha and Marina told participants to sense their bodies in the space, to sense their groundedness and find some ease. And then, they continued, “We are here because we disagree and because we continue to struggle against oppressive structures. And we suggest now to shake away all external things that stick to

¹¹ “Zhenshchina” mozhet znachit’ mnogoe, ne vam reshat’ chto.”

our bodies. Let's start with transphobia." After that they co-ordinated people's shaking movements that were aimed at exorcizing transphobia from participants' bodies.

Dasha and Marina's performance was clearly addressing the transphobic incident that occurred some minutes earlier. As performance artists, they challenged this incident through bodily practices. Moreover, they wove transphobia into a broader narrative of oppression and discrimination which directly affects people's bodies. In this sense, their ambition can be seen as an attempt to pose questions of oppression, homo- and transphobia, and invisibility of intersectional experiences, on a level of corporeality. Their appeal to multiple individual bodies as a part of a united collective protesting body of the rally can be interpreted as an aspiration to imagine solidarity not only as a concept but also, and even more so, as a particular bodily practice of collective assemblage.

When Olga interviewed Dasha¹² a year later, they explained the importance of bodily practices in activism as follows:

For some time I wanted to develop my own bodily program. When I returned to Russia [after living in the US for 15 years as a migrant], I realized that two of my strong wishes—to work with the LGBT community and to teach bodily practices—can intertwine. It seemed to me that others have also had this strong wish—a wish to have a community [based on] some kind of bodily cohesion.

While the community was very supportive of this idea, Dasha found it difficult to secure funding for such community work. Dasha, a performer, a somatic practitioner, and movement educator, reworked their project applications many times in order to make the project more convincing:

And each time I had to say that discrimination is ongoing through our bodies, that it is directed at our bodies, but at the same time corporeality is entirely excluded from the LGBT discourse. And of course in Russia the LGBT discourse and activism are very logocentric. Everything is built

¹² The name is real. The interview quote and the following analysis are approved by the research partner.

on discussions, language, speaking groups, including therapy. But what was important in [the project] is that it gave the sense of regular presence without a necessity to position yourself somehow. We used words to say names and pronouns, to describe our experiences but then we always shifted to different somatic practices such as guided meditation, dance improvisation, and other bodily expressions, where words were still possible. I've always wanted to connect the language with physical movements, to not establish them as separate entities...

Following this, Dasha also describes how important touch and cuddling are for their bodily exercises because these bodily practices help people learn something about themselves by getting in contact with others.

Focusing on the body as a site of activist politics in the example above, we want to highlight several important aspects that the corporeal dimension can add to feminist and queer politics. First, as the feminist struggle for the right to appear in public space in Russian cities reveals, bodily assemblies remain an important political site even though the extensive digitalization of activist practices expands and reconfigures the notion of public space and the meaning of political (Fotopoulou 2016). To get together in the street and become a part of a collective bodily assemblage is a powerful political gesture in (re)claiming the meaning of March 8 as a feminist occasion aimed at the struggle for rights and against social and economic disadvantages for multiple groups of women including migrants, non-binary and transgender persons, and people with disabilities. The fact that in Russia, as in many other countries across the liberal–authoritarian divide, the right to appear is not given automatically but should be claimed through bureaucratic processes of applying for permissions, careful safety precautions, or clashes with police, manifests the acknowledgment of the political significance of bodily assemblages on the streets.

Second, bodily assemblies are not unproblematic. As we have seen in the case of Sweden and Russia, the right to appear is not equally given to everyone. As in the classical Polis, where “the slave, the foreigner and the barbarian were excluded from [the space of appearance] (Butler 2011),” mainstream progressive queer and feminist politics often exclude

particular groups (such as women of color or Muslim women in the case of Sweden or transgender persons in the Russian example) who are considered as unwanted subjects of public appearance. Yet, as the case of bodily solidarity with a transgender woman Ekaterina during St. Peterburg's rally demonstrates, the public assembly provides a space to contest exclusionist politics. Importantly, this happens beyond logocentric performativity of identity politics—the verbal promise to be intersectional and inclusive contained in organizers' invitation to the rally and in the immediate response to transphobic incident by one of the organizers (“This is an intersectional rally”) extends to the performative act when other “bodies” literally lend a shoulder to a confused person in need of support and empowerment. This powerful occurrence greatly illustrates Butler's thesis, according to which the political body is not individual, it does not act alone (Butler 2015, 77). The space of appearance is the “performative exercise [that] happens only ‘between’ bodies” (Ibid.) bringing the political dimension of the public appearance into existence.

Finally, the performative “practices of body liberation” that followed the incident only strengthened this political collectivity. The performative artists leading these practices aimed to fortify the space “between” bodies where the political action emerges from, in accordance with Butler (2015). We can think of this in terms of emerging corporeal and affective solidarity that becomes a source of empowerment. The corporeal solidarity gave Ekaterina the courage to resume her speech. The affective solidarity that occurred when the participants of the rally shook their bodies or when they screamed together out of rage at the level of gender violence in Russia turned them in to agentic subjects—instead of being subjugated to the position of victims of violence, the participants, mainly women, acted in resistance through screaming and shouting. Bringing these corporeal and affective actions to the fore, the organizers co-created the space of the political where the less powerful or those deprived of rights (such as LGBTI+, migrants, or disabled women in Russia) acquired political agency “that emerge[s] precisely in those domains deemed prepolitical or extrapolitical” such as “sexual, laboring, feminine, foreign, and mute” body (Butler 2015, 76, 86).

As we have examined activist engagements for the right to appear in relation to March 8 in Sweden and Russia by tracing the construction of an alliance of bodies across sites and mapping corporeal struggles over visions around the space of the political, further on, we turn to explore March 8 and the Feminist Night March in Turkey, with attention to layers of narratives and collective struggles over time. Situating March 8 as the overarching transnational frame for the discussions in this chapter, by way of conclusion, we will draw on these discussions to bring forth overlapping and contrastive ways in which bodies in assemblies on the International Women's Day in these three contexts are involved in coalitional struggles to perform their right to appear and, by so doing, reconfigure the materiality of public space.

March 8 in Istanbul: Struggles Over Anonymous Visibility

For many years on March 8, the Taksim Square of Beyoğlu neighborhood in Istanbul witnessed the gathering of thousands of women and queer people on the occasion of the Feminist Night March. Feminists marched through the İstiklal Avenue until the Tünel Square, taking over the space that has been the heart of culture, art, entertainment, and Istanbul's nightlife as well as home to many oppositional struggles. With its highly enthusiastic atmosphere the march gave hope to many; it was understood as the culmination of feminist mobilization toward March 8 each and every year. This was also where the diversity of feminisms came to the fore as the variety of bodies and their slogans destabilized the dominant image of feminists as uncovered (equated with secular) and female/feminine-looking. At the same time, organizers of this march had highlighted the anonymity of women as a collective political subject, for example, by signing the front banner used during the protest as "feminists" and asking participants to make their organizational affiliations invisible in their placards. In the 2010s, social media became an important factor in reaching out to different kinds of crowds; the profile of participants as well as of organizers further diversified. Over the years,

the Feminist Night March (*Feminist Gece Yürüyüşü*, hereafter FGY) grew into a spectacle, and struggles over gender politics grew around it.

FGY organizers are an ad hoc committee that forms every year on the occasion of March 8. Committee members are feminist activists participating as either individuals or part of (pro-)feminist organizations. FGY preparations start several weeks before March 8; among them are holding weekly meetings on organizational matters, putting up posters and distributing flyers in different neighborhoods, and organizing workshops for producing slogans and handwritten placards. FGY social media accounts, redundant the rest of the year, become active where organizers share calls, images, and videos to build up enthusiasm toward March 8. Since 2009, Feminist Space (*Feminist Mekan*), an apartment in a run-down building in Beyoğlu, on a street parallel to the İstiklal Avenue, serves as a backstage for the Feminist Night March.¹³ It hosts FGY meetings and workshops; it is where all the equipment, from banners and placards to sound system, is kept for the March 8 demonstration. Besides the Taksim Square, it can be considered as another, important yet invisible, starting point of the march. Following every FGY, organizers hold an evaluation meeting at the Feminist Space, already linking a given year's organizing to the upcoming one. The Space is crowdsourced by feminists, and activists who run this space serve as anonymous volunteers to ensure Feminist Space's independence, so that it is not associated with any particular organization or brand of feminism but belongs to the movement as a whole. As such, this space is a backstage also for feminist and queer solidarities and coalitions that are made, undone, and remade, throughout time, enabling the diverse and colorful assembly that marks Beyoğlu's center every March 8 (Fig. 5.2).

The first FGY committee meeting in 2019 started with one activist reading out loud the notes from previous year's evaluation meeting to tune in the current year's committee members to the spirit of March 8.

¹³ This space was established and used by the Socialist Feminist Collective between 2008–2015. During these years, it was also accessible for feminist and queer groups of different sorts (e.g., organizations, informal initiatives) that needed “a room of their own” to organize and strategize. In 2016, upon the collective's dissolution, it was taken over by a group of activists who did not wish to lose a space that had become an anchor for feminist struggle. The space was then renamed as Feminist Space (*Feminist Mekan*) and continued serving as a hotspot for different groups with agendas ranging from pro-peace activism to queer feminist literature.



Fig. 5.2 Preparations for the Feminist Night March at the Feminist Space (*Feminist Mekan*) (Photo credit: Selin Çağatay)

A discussion followed on the theme of the march that would be featured on the main banner behind which the crowd gathers. This banner would be photographed by journalists and remain in the memory of spectators as “the message” from feminists. Ideas and insights from activists followed one another: “We need to highlight the different ‘colors’ of the crowd!”, “We should formulate our message in an uplifting way!”, “We want to be reassuring, invoking courage and determination in participants!”, “We will not negotiate our rights and freedoms, we will not adapt!”, “Women are everywhere, and so is feminist resistance!”. In the end, the main theme and the slogan for March 8 came out: “We Don’t Abide by Patriarchy! This Is a Feminist Revolt!”. The theme would highlight the different ways of everyday resistance to oppressive gender norms and politics. With this in mind, feminists were invited to share on social media how they resist patriarchy with the hashtag #BuBirFeministisyandır. This was an appeal to visibility of feminists as not homogenous

but anonymous collective, a collective defined by being exposed to and resisting patriarchy as their “galvanizing condition” (Butler 2015, 9). As part of their strategy of being an anonymous collective, the FGY committee asked participants with organizational affiliation to make room for individual women. They announced on social media, that the FGY is

a space where ... no group representation or political discourse weighs heavier than that of an individual woman who joins [the march]. Of course, everyone will bring along the placards where they express their unique way of resistance; this will make the space animated, ... but we hope to not come across a situation where any woman feels like she does not belong to this space.

With this, organizers emphasized “the right to appear as a coalitional framework,” constructing the FGY as a “site of alliance among (...) people who [might] not otherwise find much in common and between whom there is sometimes even suspicion and antagonism” (Butler 2015, 27).

In recent years, feminists’ emphasis on being an anonymous collective acquired two important functions in gender politics; it is a method of resistance to state intervention and police brutality, and it allows for differential political belongings and bodily appearances to be in temporal and spatial alliances without overriding each other. Several days before the FGY, Selin interviewed Ceren, a member of the organizing committee. Ceren was known to the police as a movement leader and had charges against her for “promoting terrorism.” Before the interview, she had received a call from a policewoman who said,

‘That [Taksim] area is forbidden zone, you cannot march there.’ And I said, ‘I am not the person in charge; there is no point in you giving me this notice, I cannot accept it.’ Then the policewoman got irritated and she said, ‘You call that many people to gather [in Taksim], for sure there is somebody responsible for it!’ I said, ‘Well no. Those people gather there by their own initiative.’ Which is not a lie! If we didn’t make a

call (...) half of those people would still gather. The FGY is by now a phenomenon that is beyond us, more than the call we make.

Ceren's conversation with the police and her statement about the autonomy of FGY participants draws attention to how feminists might not only claim to be an anonymous collective but also act as one and express this publicly through discursive and corporeal means. This anonymity is what secured the Night March; since the organizers were an ad hoc committee with no leader or official form, a ban on the march could not be communicated to them and they could go around the legal framework that closed the public space to protest.¹⁴

When, on the evening of March 8, the police barricaded part of the Taksim Square and the side streets that connected to the Istiklal Avenue to block demonstrators' entry to the marching route, thousands had already gathered in the square. Diversity of their bodies stood in stark contrast to the feminists' portrayal as a uniform group of people; mothers with young children, high school students, older women, women with headscarves, LB+, and trans feminists were visible in the crowd. The police told the organizers who occupied the front line that marching through the Istiklal Avenue was banned and that they should lead the crowd through a different route if their aim was to march. This sounded like a bluff in many ways, not least because there was no alternative route where demonstrators could safely walk. With around twenty thousand feminists chanting and shouting slogans behind, organizers pressed for parading the Istiklal Avenue, insisting that they are there as "women" and women's right to appear in public could not be banned. The police then started pouring teargas on the front line and broke into the crowd at once. On its seventeenth year, the Feminist Night March was intervened.

Police brutality on feminists in 2019 became one instance through which visibility in public space shapes and is shaped by struggles over gender politics. Another instance was on March 9, when pro-AKP figures and news sources spread the claim that the crowd booed the *ezan*, the

¹⁴ Following the occupation of Gezi Park near the Taksim Square in 2013, public assemblies in this area have been banned. Feminists were the only group who still paraded the Istiklal Avenue. The government despised this, but the legitimacy and increasing transnational popularity of March 8 had so far kept the police from intervening.

Islamic call to prayer (Yeni Akit 9 March 2019). Organizers later learned that in the midst of the protest demonstrators heard the *ezan* coming from the Taksim Mosque in progress. Although it is a tradition as an expression of respect to stop action and listen quietly to the *ezan*, the sound that came from the construction site dispersed among the crowd and did not reach the front lines where demonstrators clashed with the police. While news sources alleged that this was a planned protest to the *ezan*, Erdoğan condemned the demonstrators: “A group led by the CHP (Republican People’s Party) and HSP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) that *pretended* to gather for the Women’s Day insulted the prayer with boos and chants” (Cumhuriyet 10 March 2019, emphasis ours).¹⁵ This caused a huge turmoil on Twitter between those who condemned feminists and those who denounced the fake news and/or defended the right to protest the *ezan*. The fake news was clearly connected to the ongoing smear campaign where anti-gender actors portrayed feminists in opposition to Islam and family values, as well as Turkish nationalism, in an aim to dissociate struggles for gender equality and sexual rights from Turkey’s new nation-building project. Prior to March 8, mosques became sites where propaganda against feminists spread. In many mosques in Istanbul, the Istanbul Convention and the 6284 Law (Law to Protect Family and Prevent Violence against Women) were targeted with prayer sessions against these legal mechanisms. In line with this campaign, “booing the *ezan*” was fabricated to scare away people, especially covered women, from joining feminist and queer struggles. A placard that said, “Are you God? Down with your family!”, obviously written by a Muslim feminist, went viral on Twitter and received a lot of hate and lynching.¹⁶

¹⁵ When in 2013 Gezi-inspired protests spread all over the country, the AKP government marked the events as terrorism staged by the Kemalist CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, Republican People’s Party) and the pro-Kurdish HDP (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, Peoples’ Democratic Party) in an attempt to discredit the protestors and their demands for freedom from AKP’s authoritarian, neoliberal, populist rule. The visibility of feminist and LGBTI+ activists in Gezi protests was used by pro-AKP actors as a justification to stigmatize them as linked to terrorism (*Birgün* 14 March 2019). As a sign of dissociating the Taksim-Beyoğlu area from its historical association with alternative cultures and oppositional struggles, in 2017, the state approved the construction plan of a mosque in the Taksim Square, right in the area where protestors used to gather before they marched through the İstiklal Avenue.

¹⁶ See, for example, https://twitter.com/search?q=Allah%20m%C4%B1s%C4%B1n%C4%B1z%3F%20Aileniz%20bats%C4%B1n&src=typed_query. (accessed 31.12.2020).

For many activists and commentators there was a link between the police intervention and the visibility of covered women at the march (Sönmez 2019, Küçükırca 2019). This link was that the body of a feminist with a headscarf challenged the dominant caricature of the feminist subject as immoral and against the nation, which made it difficult for anti-gender actors to demonize feminists as unbelonging women. In return, by claiming that feminists offended the call to prayer, pro-AKP, anti-gender actors expected to discourage Muslim women from participating in a feminist alliance.

The aftermath of the smear campaign, against the expectations of anti-gender actors, strengthened the legibility and affinity between Muslim and secular feminists. Pressed to respond immediately to allegations, the FGY committee announced on social media accounts that:

The police did not listen to the *ezan* when blocking women's way, not letting them gather, and pouring teargas on them (...) Those who did not let us through the route we've marched for the past sixteen years, and kept us intentionally next to the mosque, now claim that we are against the *ezan*. No one shall manipulate our cause! Our revolt is to the police barricade, to those who want to ban March 8 and the women's parade. (Sendika.Org 10 March 2019)

Organizers had to react quickly, and they did not feel in position to claim whether anybody had or had not protested the *ezan*. Upon their response which was backed by many including women who belonged to Islamist circles, the smear campaign faded. But this triggered heated debates in feminist listservs and WhatsApp groups, around whether a response was necessary and what should have been said, considering that the mosque construction targeted feminists, queers, and the greater social opposition in the first place and perhaps, for that reason, the whole trick deserved being booed. Among the 2019 FGY organizers there were none who identified as Muslim feminist, thus the response to allegations was released without any input from Muslim feminists. At the evaluation meeting organized after March 8, however, Nur from the newly founded Muslim feminist organization Havle, was present. Sharing her reflections on the FGY and its aftermath, Nur said that she and her comrades in

Havle meant to take part in the FGY committee and expressed regret for not having done so. “But,” she said, “we were present [in the Taksim Square] as a large group [of Muslim feminists].” Considering the possibility of police intervention, they stood at the back, away from the front line. They therefore heard the *ezan* coming from the construction site: “Some people fell silent. Some people kept blowing their whistles. Some were staring at us. Some blew their whistles at us! I thought the *ezan* was really loud (...) perhaps it’s psychological.” Nur also expressed that as Muslim feminists they considered responding to the “booing debate” on social media, since they heard the whistle blows, but then gave up on this idea thinking that this would again be used against feminists. They decided that it makes sense for some people to protest the *ezan* in a context where “the abuse of religion is to such a [great] degree.”

We draw a number of conclusions from the experience on and around March 8 in Istanbul in 2019 in relation to visibility, solidarity, and the right to appear in public assembly. First, different reactions to the “booing debate” suggest that feminists’ intention to gather in the Taksim Square and march the Istiklal Avenue is an expression of not only their right to occupy public spaces but also the importance of being an anonymous collective against feminists’ association with terrorism and national unbelonging. Despite their lack of consensus about the right way of responding to the fake news, feminists stood together and politicized police brutality instead of revealing to the public their disagreement over the right to protest the *ezan*. Aware of their hypervisibility in the feminist movement, Muslim feminists especially held back from joining this debate. Similar to Ceren’s refusal of her role in organizing the March 8 demonstration when challenged by the police, Muslim feminists withdrew their individual reactions to the booing debate in order to push forward their visibility as part of the feminist collective political subject. This attitude shows the interplay between individual bodies and the collective body and reconfigures the embodied plurality in the March 8 space beyond intersectional discourses enacted by the FGY committee. Second, the collective ability to remain composed at the face of anti-gender attacks to discredit feminist suggests an understanding of March 8 beyond its significance as a single-day event, as part of ongoing struggles to cultivate solidarities and alliances between groups involved in

feminist and queer struggles. This ability is an outcome of a history of exchange, conflict, and collaboration between pious women and secular feminists. Although “Muslim feminism” is a new phenomenon in Turkey, since the 1990s, pious and secular activists came together in many platforms and initiatives and, especially in the 2010s, in those that unsettled the counterpositioning of feminism and Islam (Çağatay 2018). In this sense, the “booming debate” contributed to across the religion-secularity divide; the months after March 8, for example, saw a number of events at the Feminist Space discussing Muslim feminism, where Muslim feminists expressed their desire to be seen as equal constituents, not allies, in the feminist movement (Feminist Mekan’da Cuma Buluşmaları 2020a, b). Last but not least, by featuring the Feminist Space as a backstage for the FGY, the Turkish case points at the “multi-layered constructions of spatiality” (Liinason 2018) of March 8 in the form of a continuity between different spaces of resistance across time, namely the Taksim Square and the Feminist Space. Whereas the former space features “feminists” as an anonymous political collectivity, the latter is where face-to-face encounters take place, differences are negotiated, alliances are forged through “developing forms of becoming legible to one another” (Butler 2015, 38). Understanding how each other are “exposed to differential forms of living gender violence, and how this common exposure can become the basis for resistance” (Ibid.), in return, strengthens the idea of collective subjectivity that marks the spirit of March 8 gatherings.

Conclusion

Taking our departure in the International Women’s Day as the transnational frame of this chapter, we used a multi-scalar approach to connect subjects across different places of struggle, to map struggles over visions, and to illuminate the temporal multilayeredness of narratives of struggle. As we conceptualized the field as a heterogenous network, we sought to embrace the liveliness of events as they were unfolding to trace embodiment and corporeality in feminist and LGBTI+ struggles rather than limiting our scope within place-bound limits of a particular site or group of people. Following our understanding of resistance “in the grey zone,”

that is, composed by mutually determining and fluid exchanges between large-scale struggles in transnational social movements and in/visible resistant tactics on a micro-scale, the discussions in this chapter took interest in exploring these fluid relationships between individual bodies and the construction of collective spaces of resistance against dominant powers.

Through the lens of March 8, we traced the claiming of space performed in variegated struggles for the right to appear, be listened to, and heard in situated locales in Turkey, Russia, and Sweden and highlighted the various and overlapping spaces and scales on which these struggles take place, at the same time as the multiple temporalities of struggle were recognized through individual memories of previous protests and collective remembrances of histories of struggle. Within a broader context of attempts at appropriating March 8 by neoliberal or neoconservative elites, the events analyzed in this chapter present forceful interventions into existing efforts at universalizing questions of women's or sexual rights and de-linking questions of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality from broader socioeconomic or intersectional agendas. The performances in this chapter express a broad-based refusal, in various locales, to accept such attempts to curb the open-ended struggles for justice and rights, through police violence, or expressions of hatred underpinned by racism or transphobia.

As we kept attention to the multi-scalar, fluid and mutually determining the relationship between the individual and the collective in shaping space of appearance, our empirical examples brought to the fore how a focus on political agency and subjectivity, through individual narratives and appearances on a stage in Angered, at a rally in St. Petersburg, through the sharing of posts at a digital platform, or by carrying a slogan at a placard on the streets in Istanbul, can shift and transform the position of bodies from individual expression to collective agendas. Demanding the right to take space and to appear in public space, the many bodies of protesting individuals become part of a collective, protesting body. However, as highlighted in this chapter, the conditions for expressing such a right to appear are not automatically given to these groups or established without effort, but characterized by complicated bureaucratic processes of applying for permissions, by

staying patient through taxing ambiguities of bureaucracy when permissions get canceled because of unfounded or unclear reasons, by carefully thought through safety precautions, or by more or less violent clashes with the police.

The narratives collected here visualize some of the challenges and hopes inherent in the broad coalition politics in feminist and sexual struggles. While, in the Turkish example, these broad coalitions were part of a strategy of being an anonymous collective that generated a protection for the march itself, as well as for the individuals involved, in Russia, the broad coalition gathered people who otherwise might not have much in common, connecting different topics in the struggle, suggesting the possibility to imagine and express solidarity beyond the conceptual level but as a particular bodily practice of collective assemblage. However, as seen in the cases of the attempts at excluding certain categories of people from the right to appear in space, such as transgendered people in the Russian example, and Muslim feminists in the Swedish case, these bodily assemblies were not unproblematic but brought particular challenges to the coalitions as well as to the gathering itself. Yet, also here, as illuminated by our examples, the bodies of others could give literal protection, strength, and support to persons under attack, as fellow activists in the Russian case put their bodies on the line, to give shelter and support, and in the Swedish case, the participation of actors from other Swedish cities and from transnational feminist networks gave strength to the local community in Gothenburg, who under uncertain circumstances re-organized the canceled film screening. We conceptualize these dynamics in terms of emerging corporeal and affective solidarities, within which the body is not only an object of oppressive powers but also a site of resistance.

Further, as illuminated in the cases discussed throughout this chapter, struggles for the right to appear also brought problematics of visibility and hypervisibility, as actors could risk to be interpreted within broader political discourses, such as when Muslim feminists refused to join the “booming debate” in Istanbul, aware of their hypervisibility in the debate and cognizant of the risks of statements being hijacked by actors with other aims. A similar hypervisibility was experienced by Muslim feminists in the Swedish context, who shared stories of racial profiling and

police brutality. Within a context of such attempts at controlling the movements and relationships of groups of people, we recognize the key role of embodiment in struggle as corporeal action can signify more than what is said with words, and in other registers. In this way, we argue, bodily assemblies can take shape simultaneously as an individually empowering experience and a collective, political expression of resistance against the exclusion and violence of hegemonic actors and authorities who associate certain bodies with terrorism or criminality, such as feminist bodies, trans bodies, and racialized bodies.

Through the scale of the body, this chapter has examined the role of corporeality in resistance and traced core questions in feminist and LGBTI+ political work, such as invisibility/visibility, silence/speech, and exclusion/inclusion. Engaging with the ambiguities of embodied resistance through attention to the simultaneous exposure and agency of the body, this chapter visualized the potential of corporeal modes of resistance to shift from the individual to the collective. We noted that the space of appearance, as a political space, does not happen in “one” body but takes place between bodies claiming space. Building further on discussions in the previous chapters, this chapter attended to questions of materiality in feminist and LGBTI+ political work (see Chapter 3), highlighting the broad, socioeconomic agenda that appear in feminist and sexual politics when questions of embodiment and corporeality are brought to the fore. The discussions in this chapter addressed resistance *through* the body, as well as protests against the hypervisibility, respectively, invisibility *of* certain bodies, illuminating that resistance in the corporeal register opens up possibilities for a coalitional framework between differently positioned activists (see also Chapter 4). By approaching resistance as a relation between bodies claiming space, in this chapter, we have shown that attention to multiple scales of resistance can provide more fine-grained understandings of the constraints within which feminist and LGBTI+ struggles are located. In the next chapter (Chapter 6), we bring together all these dimensions and offer a contrastive discussion focused on the key findings of this book, as

we address the multi-scalar transnational methodology that formed the point of departure for our work.

References

- ‘8 Marta 2018 v Sankt Peterburge’. 2019. 6 March 2019. https://vk.com/meeeting082019?w=wall-178899754_44.
- Akal, Emel. 2003. *Kızıl feministler: Bir sözlü tarih çalışması*. Istanbul: Tüstav.
- Akbulut, Erden. 2016. *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonundan: TKP Kadın Bürosu 1984–1986*. Istanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları.
- Alcoff, Linda. 2006. *Visible Identities. Race, Gender and the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, Perry. 2008. “After Kemal.” *London Review of Books* 30 (18): 13–22.
- Atto, Juliet. 2019. “5 Frågor till Ortens Röster!” *Bang* (2): 1–7.
- Birgün. 2019. “Soylu’dan ‘8 Mart’ yorumu: Kahramanmaraş olayının nasıl çıktığını biliyor musunuz?”. 14 March 2019. <https://www.birgun.net/haber/soylu-dan-8-mart-yorumu-kahramanmaras-olayinin-nasil-ciktigini-biliyor-musunuz-249944>.
- Bordo, Susan. 2004. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. California: University of California Press.
- Boxer, Marilyn J. 2009. “The International Women’s Day”. *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest Wiley Online Library*.
- Brock, Maria, and Emil Edenborg. 2020. “‘You Cannot Oppress Those Who Do Not Exist’: Gay Persecution in Chechnya and the Politics of In/Visibility”. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 26 (4): 673–700.
- Burrell, Jenna. 2016. “The Fieldsite as a Network. A Strategy for Locating Ethnographic Research”. In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, edited by Hjorth, L., Horst, H., Galloway, A., & Bell, G. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Butler, Judith. 2011. ‘Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street’. n.d. Transversal Texts. Accessed 5 March 2021. <https://transversal.at/transversal/1011/butler/en>.
- Butler Judith. 2015. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

- Çağatay, Selin. 2017. "The Politics of Gender and the Making of Kemalist Feminist Activism in Contemporary Turkey (1946–2011)." PhD dissertation, Budapest: Central European University.
- . 2018. "Women's Coalitions beyond the Laicism–Islamism Divide in Turkey: Towards an Inclusive Struggle for Gender Equality?" *Social Inclusion* 6 (4): 48–58.
- Chatterjee, Choi. 2002. *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910–1939*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Civil Rights Defenders. 2017. *Slumpvis Utvald. Ras-/Etnisk Profilerings I Sverige*. Stockholm: Civil Rights Defenders i samarbete med Kriminologiska institutionen. https://www.criminology.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.361560.1513162298!/menu/standard/file/CRD-5600-Rapport_Slumpvis-utvald_final.pdf.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2015. "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 1–20.
- Cuesta, Marta, and Mulinari Diana. 2018. "The Bodies of Others in Swedish Feminism." *Gender, Place & Culture* 25 (7): 978–93.
- Cumhuriyet. 2019. "Erdoğan, 8 Mart'ı hedef aldı: Ezana terbiyesizlik ettiler", 10 March 2019. <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/erdogan-8-marti-hedef-aldi-ezana-terbiyesizlik-ettiler-1287024>.
- Facebook. 2020. "Burka Songs 2.0", 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/burkasongs2.0/>.
- "Feminism—Dlia Kazhdoi." 2018, 27 February 2018. https://vk.com/meeting082017?w=wall-162439920_2.
- Feminist Mekan'da Cuma Buluşmaları. 2020a. "Rümeysa Çamdereli ve Zehra Keleş İle "Kategorilerden Taşmak, Duvarlarda Gedik Açmak: Bugünün Türkiye'sinde Müslüman Feministler." Accessed 31 December 2020a. <https://open.spotify.com/show/5zwhzdsvxHru8ihYWOHPy>.
- . 2020b. "Zehra Keleş İle "Kafir Devletten Erkek Devlete: Nasıl Feministleştik?" Accessed 31 December 2020b. <https://open.spotify.com/show/5zwhzdsvxHru8ihYWOHPy>.
- Förenta Nationerna (FN). 2006. "Internationella Kvinnodagen – En Översikt." <https://unric.org/sv/internationella-kvinnodagen-en-oversikt/>.
- Fotopoulou, Aristeia. 2016. *Feminist Activism and Digital Networks: Between Empowerment and Vulnerability*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gammache, Bobbie, and Anderson, Diane. 2016. "International Women's Day." *Update 2015–2016* 43 (55): 7–7.
- Håkansson, Axel. 2018. "Filmregissören Beklagar Att Goteborgs Stad Bojer Sig för Kritik." *SvT Nyheter*. <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/vast/filmregissoren-beklagar-att-goteborgs-stad-bojer-sig-for-kritik>.

- Instagram. 2020. "Ortens Röster."
- Jakku, Nina. 2018. "Islamophobia, Representation and the Muslim Political Subject. A Swedish Case Study." *Societies* 8 (124): 1–17.
- Kaplan, Temma. 1985. "On the Socialist Origins of International Women's Day." *Feminist Studies*, no. 11: 163–71.
- Karakuş, Filiz, and Gülfer Akkaya. 2011. "İstanbul—Amargi Feminizm Tartışmaları 4: 8 Mart (Sunum: 12 Mart 2011, Amargi Kadın Kooperatifi)." In *İstanbul—Amargi Feminizm Tartışmaları*, edited by Amargi, 55–84. İstanbul: Amargi Yayınevi.
- Klochkova, Ksenia. 2017. "Kak Feministki Vernuli Sebe 8 Marta." *Fontanka.Ru*. Accessed 5 March 2021. <https://www.fontanka.ru/2017/03/09/001/>.
- Kollontai, Alexandra. 1920. "International Women's Day—Alexandra Kollontai." <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1920/womens-day.htm>.
- "Komitet 8 Marta". 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/events/2406400629385601/>.
- Küçükkirca, Iclal Ayşe. 2019. "İç Diyalogun Dış Yansımaları Dindar/Müslüman Feminist Kadınların 8 Mart 2019 İstanbul Feminist Gece Yürüyüşü Üzerine Sözlerine Dair." *Sosyal Demokrat Dergi* (blog). 13 May. <http://www.sosyaldemokratdergi.org/ayse-iclal-kucukkirca-ic-diyalogun-dis-yansimalari-dindar-musulman-feminist-kadinlarin-8-mart-2019-istanbul-feminist-gece-yuruyusu-uzerine-sozlerine-dair/>.
- Leinonen, Johanna, and Mari Toivanen. 2014. "Researching In/Visibility in the Nordic Context: Theoretical and Empirical Views." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 4 (4): 161–67.
- LeSavoy, Barbara, and Jordan, Garrett. 2013. "The Capitalist Hijacking of International Women's Day: Russian and American Considerations." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 14 (3): 244–58.
- Liinason, Mia. 2018. "Borders and Belongings in Nordic Feminisms and Beyond." *Gender, Place & Culture* 25 (7): 1041–56.
- Luibhéid, Eithne. 2020. "Migrant and Refugee Lesbians: Lives That Resist the Telling." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 24 (2): 57–76.
- Marcus, George E. 1995. "Ethnography in/of the World System. The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* (24): 95–117.
- Mayerchuk, Maria, and Olga Plakhotnik. 2021. "Uneventful Feminist Protest in Post-Maidan Ukraine: Nation and Coloniality Revisited". In *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues, Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist*

- Theorizing and Practice*, edited by Redi Koobak, Tlostanova, Madina, and Thapar-Björkert, Suruchi, 121–137. London and New York: Routledge.
- McGlazer, Ramsey. 2018. “Special Section: Transnational Feminist Strikes and Solidarities.” *Critical Times* 1 (1): 146–48.
- Nordiska museet. 2017. “Internationella Kvinnodagen.” *Nordiska Museet*. <https://www.nordiskamuseet.se/aretsdagar/internationella-kvinnodagen>.
- Olcott, Jocelyn. 2017. *International Women’s Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History*. *International Women’s Year*. Oxford University Press. <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780195327687.001.0001/oso-9780195327687>.
- Peake, Linda, and Gill Valentine. 2003. “Editorial.” *Gender, Place and Culture* 10 (2): 107–9.
- Pile, Steve. 1997. “Introduction.” In *Geographies of Resistance*, edited by Steve Pile and Michael Keith, 1–32. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pommerolle, Marie-Emmanuelle, and Nadine Machikou Ngaméni. 2015. “Fabrics of Loyalty: The Politics of International Women’s Day Wax Print Cloth in Cameroon, Africa.” *Africa* 85 (4): 565–76.
- Roy, Srila. 2016. “Women’s Movements in the Global South: Towards a Scalar Analysis.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29 (3): 289–306.
- Rudan, Paula. 2018. “The Strike That Made a Difference.” *Critical Times* 1 (1).
- Ruthchild, Rochelle Goldberg. 2010. *Equality and Revolution: Women’s Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905–1917*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Sager, Maja. 2018. “Struggles around Representation and In/Visibility in Everyday Migrant Irregularity in Sweden.” *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 8 (3): 175–82.
- Sasunkevich, Olga. 2021. “Emancipation Is More than the Freedom of Choice: Rethinking the Feminist Agenda in Postsocialism.” In *Gender and Power in Eastern Europe: Changing Concepts of Femininity and Masculinity in Power Relations*, edited by Katharina Bluhm, Gertrud Pickhan, Justyna Stypinska, and Agnieszka Wierzcholska, 45–59. Societies and Political Orders in Transition. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Segato, Rita Laura, and Ramsey McGlazer. 2018. “A Manifesto in Four Themes.” *Critical Times* 1 (1): 199–211.
- Sendika.Org. 2019. “Polis ezan dinlemeden saldırdı, kadın düşmanları da nasibini aldı.” *Sendika.Org*, March 10. <https://sendika.org/2019/03/polis-ezan-dinlemeden-saldirdi-kadin-dusmanlari-da-nasibini-aldi-536984/>.

- Sonesson, Jenny. 2018. "Burkans kritiker måste också bjudas in." *Göteborgs Posten*. <https://www.gp.se/ledare/sonesson-burkans-kritiker-m%C3%A5ste-ocks%C3%A5-bjudas-in-1.5235913>.
- Sönmez, Berrin. 2019. "İslık, ezan ve İslamî feminizme saldırı." *Gazete Duvar*, 12 March. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/yazarlar/2019/03/12/islik-ezan-ve-islami-feminizme-saldiri>.
- Stella, Francesca. 2012. "The Politics of In/Visibility: Carving Out Queer Space in Ul'yanovsk." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 (10): 1822–46.
- Sutton, Barbara. 2007. "Poner El Cuerpo: Women's Embodiment and Political Resistance in Argentina." *Latin American Politics and Society* 49 (3): 129–62.
- Tambe, Ashwini. 2010. "Transnational Feminist Studies: A Brief Sketch." *New Global Studies* 4 (1): 1–5.
- Tufekci, Zeynep. 2017. *Twitter and Teargas*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- "V Peterburge grazhdanskıe aktivısty proveli miting v chest' 8 marta'. 2017. Радио Азаттык. 2017. <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/28358084.html>.
- Vargas, Virginia. 2003. "Feminism, Globalization and the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement." *Cultural Studies* 17 (6): 905–20.
- Voronina, Olga. 2017. "Gendernye" Prazdniki: Transformatsiia Simvolicheskikh Znachenii'. *Zhenshchiny v Rossiiskom Obshchestve* 84 (3): 3–16.
- Wikander, Ulla. 2011. "Kvinnodagen Jubilerar." *Feministiskt Perspektiv*, March, 1–3.
- Wikipedia. 2021. "Gregorian Calendar."
- Wood, Elizabeth A. 1997. *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Yeni Akit. 2019. "Bunlar kadın değil terörist! Ezanı ıslıkla protesto ettiler," 9 March. <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/bunlar-kadin-degil-terorist-ezani-islıkla-protesto-ettiler-649261.html>.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics." *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 13 (3): 193–209.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.





6

Conclusion

The political and intellectual work with this book has been sustained by an ambition to provide a pluralist image of feminist and LGBTI+ activism. Influenced by significant interventions in feminist and queer postcolonial and postsocialist theory and inspired by new developments in critical geographies of resistance and space (Browne et al. 2017; Ghodsee 2019; Roy 2016; Stella 2015; Suchland 2011; Tlostanova et al. 2019), this ambition shaped our point of departure for the book as we have sought to develop a nuanced account of feminist and LGBTI+ formations and exchanges across diverse spaces and scales.

In our endeavor we have aimed to push forward an intellectual concern about the rigidity and taken-for-grantedness of categories such as North/West and South/East in current geopolitical and epistemological projects (Müller 2020; Tlostanova 2012). Struggling ourselves to clearly position Russia, Turkey, and even Scandinavia within these distinctions, we have strived to show throughout the book that the boundaries of these categories are contested, multiple, ambivalent, and fluid. By introducing such inconvenient geopolitical contexts within the same project, we have been doomed to “complicate and disrupt the binarism” (Tlostanova 2012, 131) of the West–East and the North–South

divides. Rather than comparing two non-Western/Northern and “not-quite” Eastern/Southern (Müller 2020) contexts, such as Russia and Turkey, between each other or both of them with “the Western ideal” of gender progressive and homotolerant Scandinavia, in this book, we have employed a multi-scalar transnational methodology to analyze and draw new insights from our rich ethnographic material. This has enabled us to catch sight on the relationality between places, histories, and subjects, to grasp how such relationality has shaped gender and sexual politics differently in various times and places, and to shine a light on the multiplicities of activist practices within specific locations, highlighting some of the many and diversely situated lives and livabilities, as they are embedded in particular situations and affective and embodied relations.

Across the pages of this book, we have aligned with an understanding of resistance as context-specific. Such an understanding involves a recognition of resistance as contingent on, adaptive to, and reproductive of existing relations of power. This implies, in turn, that aspirations to understand resistance have to address the overlapping hierarchies that exist in situated contexts, at the intersections of notions and practices of geopolitical regions, national states, cultures, and social and economic relations. From this starting point, our analytical strategy consisted in a careful tracing of overlaps and convergences as well as shifts and differences in feminist and LGBTI+ activism across and within our respective contexts. Processing and analyzing our ethnographies took place in the shape of an ongoing dialogue between us three authors, in various constellations and intellectual spaces, in project meetings, during coffee breaks, in seminar rooms, in parks, at conferences, in one of our kitchens, in restaurants, on trains, in cafés, and in the shape of reflections on written accounts. We have had the true pleasure to engage in a generous amount of ethnographic material, collected over the course of five years (2016–2021) on various offline and online events, campaigns, demonstrations, protests, day-to-day exchanges, festivals, organizational activities, and ongoing struggles within feminist and LGBTI+ activism. We have developed professional friendships with some of the activists whose accounts appear in this book, and deepened our affinities to the struggles exercised. Through this engagement,

we have developed a multi-scalar understanding of resistance characterized by a mutually determining relation between resistances at different scales, from invisible or hidden practices of the everyday to large-scale events and street actions. Thinking feminist and queer struggles in terms of the multifaceted nature of resistance, we argue, carries a potential to challenge, dismantle, or transform political, social, and economic hierarchies because it incites and inspires new practices, fluctuating between mundane, invisible, or hidden forms of political action, and collective types of contentious politics.

Actors who struggle to realize social justice and strengthen democracy find the contradictions of present times perplexing and vexing: While feminist and queer solidarities and resistances show an unprecedented proliferation as diverse forms of feminist and queer activism are becoming increasingly visible (Alvarez 2014; Arruzza et al. 2019; Bacchetta 2017), current times reveal deep oppositions to rights-based movements, as far-right ideologies and neo- and ultra-conservatism appropriate feminist and queer concepts to mobilize concerns about gender equality and sexual rights in support of their conservative or nationalist agendas (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017; Corrêa et al. 2018). In the meantime, neoliberal forms of governance administer populations by economic logics of calculation, forging new global patterns of exploitation and inequality (Newman 2014; Fraser 2009). This immediate context has impacted this book in several ways, not least in relation to our focus on the material conditions of feminist and LGBTI+ organizing in such unpredictable and changeable times as our contemporary present. As we have shown in Chapter 3, feminist and LGBTI+ activists from various localities develop innovative ways to navigate hegemonic relations at the intersections between the state, civil society, transnational actors, and the market. They do so with different rationales: while some seek to secure resources in order to continue or expand their activities, others wish to gain more visibility, and yet others seek to remain “under the radar.” While activists in Scandinavia are assumed to have more harmonious relations with the state, our analysis elaborates that activist-state relations in this context are dependent on the agenda of activists, the “maturity” of their collaborations with other political actors, and their proximity to the integral state. Small-scale organizations with more

radical political interests, such as rights and livabilities of queer asylum seekers, are sidelined from direct interactions with the state by well-established mainstream women's and LGBTI+ organizations. Whereas activists in Russia and Turkey are usually in explicit or implicit opposition to the anti-gender and homophobic governments in these contexts, mainstream CSOs in Scandinavia perceive contentious politics in relation to the state as unnecessarily provocative and politically damaging. With this, we also note the differential scholarly treatment of the alignment between NGOs/CSOs and the state in the three research contexts; while in Turkey and Russia activists are assumed to be indiscriminately against the oppressive state, in the Scandinavian context, the organic relationship between mainstream CSOs and the neoliberal state remains under-problematized.

The varieties detected here have brought attention to the complex nature of state–civil society relations, highlighting that while relations with the state are important, they are by no means exhaustive in explaining the conditions of activist work. The strategies and tactics of resistance depend on the positionality of activist groups in relation to hegemonic struggles as these are embodied by relations between state actors, global and local civil society actors, and the market. The state still remains an important source of financial support for activist work, even though in the case of Turkey and Russia this support usually comes from the states abroad. However, there are many intermediaries in this process—from large transnational organizations responsible for distributing governmental and private funds to individual employees—whose relations with activists on the ground—whether paternalist or supportive, bureaucratic, or personal—can substantially influence the process and the outcome of activist work.

Our findings have illuminated that, as much as transnational activism has the potential to transgress national borders, it can also contribute to the reproduction of inequalities among activists, both within and between countries. Thus, rather than drawing the major line of distinction in transnational feminist and LGBTI+ activism along the hierarchies of the North–South and West–East, we have attended to an array of differences including generational and geographical (e.g. metropole/province) belongings, the content and nature of activist work,

political commitments, and ethical concerns. By bringing to the fore the agentic experience of activists across the three contexts and the critical potential of “similarity in difference” (Tlostanova 2012, 131) in their work, our research destabilizes the North–South and West–East divisions.

Moving from a focus on material conditions in feminist and LGBTI+ activism to embodied and affective processes, Chapter 4 examined practices of solidarity across difference in community- and coalition-building efforts in transnational as well as local settings, and revealed the affective dissonances and ambivalences inscribed in transnational solidarities. Focusing on relationships in multiple life fields and between as well as within borders, belongings, and movements, this chapter highlighted the fluidity between informal, small-scale action, and more co-ordinated, institutionalized organizing with important implications for the making of spaces of resistance, resilience, and repair. Engaging with examples ranging from transnational campaigns and conferences with actors from Turkey and postsocialist geographies to local anti-colonial struggles of Sami people, our discussions in this chapter illuminated that tensions, disagreements, and conflicts between feminist and LGBTI+ actors are inseparable from friendship, affinity, and care, and thus important aspects of solidarity work that call for more attention in solidarity research. This chapter also brought forth the significance of solidarity as involving a practical and emotional shared labor on an everyday basis over time. We found that solidarity practices necessarily ask for critical interrogation and confrontation of power dynamics, and we became convinced that a focus on temporality in explorations of solidarity practices is key, seeing that longevity appeared as a crucial aspect of solidarity in broader struggles for social justice.

In Chapter 4, our analysis further highlighted the need for a critical reconsideration of the North–South and East–West binaries as the salient framework in which to understand transnational solidarities and the hierarchies inscribed in them. While global inequalities along the North/West and South/East axis certainly shape—and jeopardize—community- and coalition-building efforts in feminist and queer struggles, activists’ multiple belongings beyond the national context, for

example, professional, geo/political, religious, and racial/ethnic identifications on sub-national and regional levels, complicate the picture.

While in line with our approach to resistance oscillating between the mundane and the spectacular, we illuminated less remarkable, quotidian, even hidden and covert, modes of resistance in previous chapters, Chapter 5 brought attention to larger-scale forms of political action in the analysis of March 8 celebrations through our three contexts. With a departure in our theoretical interest in the multi-scalar nature of resistance, and in the role of such resistance in producing the space of appearance, we focused on corporeality and embodiment in struggles for the right to appear and attended to the distinct and overlapping ways in which face-to-face encounters and bodily assemblies took shape across Sweden, Russia, and Turkey. Throughout the discussions in this chapter, we recognized how bodily assemblies visualized a broad feminist agenda that reintroduced a focus on materiality in the intersectional strands of feminist and LGBTI+ resistance. Highlighting the frustration experienced by Muslim feminists in a Swedish context with being both hypervisible, such as in situations of racial profiling, and non-visible, like in the mainstream feminist movement, we interrogated the double-edged nature of visibility as both being a route to change and a measure of control. This was an issue that had resonance with the Turkish analysis and in particular with the responses to the “booing the Islamic call for prayer (*ezan*) debate” among feminists in this context. Taken against the background of a longer history of exchange, conflict, and collaboration between pious women and Muslim and secular feminists, which had shaped alliances across the religion-secularity divide and gave sustenance to the community at the Feminist Night March, this example also brought to the fore temporal aspects of coalitional frameworks between differently positioned activists. As we attended to the multi-scalar relationship between the individual and the collective in producing the space of appearance, this discussion also illuminated how the emphasis on being an anonymous collective presents an efficient resistance in contexts of police brutality and state intervention, as it at the same time allows for plurality in the struggle, providing space for many differential political belongings and bodily appearances.

Yet, in spite of the value and potential of bodily assemblies in resistance, our discussion also illuminated that bodily assemblies are not free from tensions. Rather, they can be illustrative of the brute reality in which particular groups often are excluded from more mainstream versions of queer and feminist politics. While offering examples of such exclusionist attempts, the occasions analyzed in Chapter 5 also provided contexts for contestation. In addition to and beyond the logocentrism of discourse and verbalized performance, these contestations took bodily expression, for instance, when other bodies took a stand on the line to lend support and empower a person in need. Demonstrating the capacity of corporeal action to signify by other means, and in excess of what is said, this and other examples in this chapter showed that the political body does not act alone, as one single body, but that the space of appearance takes place between bodies, claiming space (Butler 2015). As we kept a focus on political agency and subjectivity, this discussion developed insight into the ways in which the position of bodies shifts, from individual expression to collective agendas. Seeing that embodied struggles for the right to appear express a resistance against the biopolitical power of the state and state experts over the self, body, and sexuality, the corporeality of resistance is located at the core of feminist and LGBTI+ activism. This capacity of corporeality, we argued, makes bodily assemblies both individually rewarding and allows for a collective experience of resistance to emerge. We found these enactments shedding elucidating light on the empowering and political dimensions of embodied action.

Through the examples illuminated across the pages of this book, we have sought to unsettle the common West–East and North–South dichotomies by attending to the relationality between places, histories, and subjects in the contexts of our research and grasp the influence of this relationality on gender and sexual politics. In doing so, we have highlighted multiple convergences and shifts in the ways in which feminist and LGBTI+ actors in Russia, Turkey, and the Scandinavian countries resist and negotiate the material conditions of struggle in the state-market-civil society nexus. We have attended to how activists navigate the ambivalences of solidarity in various local and transnational contexts, and illuminated the simultaneous vulnerability and power of the body in corporeal modes of resistance, shifting from the individual

to the collective. As spaces of resistance, we conclude, these feminist and LGBTI+ resistances have a potential to shape other spatialities than of those defined through relations of domination. In their capacity to both express collective forms of protest and to build new relations of connectivity and belonging, these spaces influence the multifaceted dynamics of political identities. However, we maintain, a focus on collective and larger-scale forms of resistance should not be read as emphasizing a politics of visibility as the preferred kind of activism. Rather, these enactments should be understood within a broader context of both more spectacular, attention-seeking forms of political expression as well as less visible and small-scale, everyday forms of resistance. Within such broader contexts of resistance, it is possible to catch sight on the fluidity between various scales of resistance—individual/collective, micro/meso/macro, local-transnational—which can incite and inspire new practices of resistance. By so doing, these struggles also carry a hope for more open-ended futures.

While this book finalizes our collaborative research on transnational feminist and LGBTI+ activism in Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey, our commitment to activist struggles in these contexts is far from being over. As our concern throughout this 5-year research journey has been to bridge activism and academia in common struggles instead of dividing them in the dichotomy of a researching versus researched subject, we have launched the networking project “Feminist and Queer Solidarities beyond Borders” engaging further with some of our research partners from the respective contexts in the discussions we featured in this book. As this project develops, we are reminded again and again that our livabilities—as feminist and queer activists and academics—are in many ways similarly shaped by neoliberal conditions as well as anti-gender mobilizations that threaten the prospect of gender equality and sexual rights. Yet, in the spirit of our intellectual endeavor in this book, we do not take these conditions for granted but disrupt and challenge them from various sides, incorporating different resources that are available to us through our variegated experiences.

References

- Alvarez, Sonia E. 2014. "Beyond NGOization? Reflections from Latin America." In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, edited by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal, 285–300. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Arruzza, Cinzia, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser. 2019. *Feminism for the 99 Percent: A Manifesto*. London: Verso.
- Bacchetta, Paula. 2017. "Murderous Conditions and LTQ+ POC Decolonial, Anti-Capitalist and Anti-Misogyny Life Imaginings in France." *Lambda Nordica* 22 (2–3): 153–73.
- Browne, Kath, Niharika Banerjee, Nick McGlynn, B. Sumita, Leela Bakshi, Rukmini Banerjee, and Ranjita Biswas. 2017. "Towards Transnational Feminist Queer Methodologies." *Gender, Place & Culture* 24 (10): 1376–97.
- Butler, Judith. 2015. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Corrêa, Sonia, David Paternotte, and Roman Kuhar. 2018. "The Globalisation of Anti-Gender Campaigns Transnational Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and Latin America Create Unlikely Alliances." *International Politics and Society*, May. <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/human-rights/the-globalisation-of-anti-gender-campaigns-2761/>.
- Fraser, Nancy. 2009. "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History." *New Left Review*, no. 56 (March/April): 97–117.
- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2019. *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War*. Illustrated edition. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kuhar, Roman, and David Paternotte, eds. 2017. *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Müller, Martin. 2020. "In Search of the Global East: Thinking between North and South." *Geopolitics* 25 (3): 734–55.
- Newman, Janet. 2014. "Landscapes of Antagonism: Local Governance, Neoliberalism and Austerity." *Urban Studies* 51 (15): 3290–3305.
- Roy, Srila. 2016. "Women's Movements in the Global South: Towards a Scalar Analysis." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29 (3): 289–306.
- Stella, F. 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Suchland, Jennifer. 2011. "Is Postsocialism Transnational?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (4): 837–62.
- Tlostanova, Madina. 2012. "Postsocialist ≠ postcolonial? On postSoviet imaginary and global coloniality." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48 (2): 130–142.
- Tlostanova, Madina, Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, and Redi Koobak. 2019. "The Postsocialist 'Missing Other' of Transnational Feminism?" *Feminist Review* 121 (1): 81–87.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Index

A

- Activism 1, 3–5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15–18, 20–22, 24–28, 30, 32, 33, 50–52, 56, 60, 67, 70, 83–85, 88–92, 180, 191, 200, 202, 217, 239, 240, 243, 245, 246
grassroots 119
marketization of 57, 84, 110, 122
Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) 92–96, 99, 100, 120, 131, 203, 224–226
Advocacy 66, 90, 91, 108, 125, 144, 177, 178
Anti-gender 6, 14, 15, 30, 62, 86, 90, 120, 172, 225–227, 242, 246

B

- Bodily assemblies 32, 67, 69, 192, 194, 195, 218, 230, 231, 244, 245

C

- Civil society 13, 17, 18, 22, 25, 32, 51, 54–57, 83, 86, 91, 96, 101, 103–105, 107, 109, 110, 114, 117, 118, 176, 241
transnational 52, 54, 56, 59, 109
Civil society organization (CSO) 18, 56, 94–104, 108, 117–121, 126, 131, 242
Coalition-building 27, 32, 60, 63, 66, 144, 181, 243
Collaborative research 246
Colonial 6, 65, 124, 146, 179, 205–210

decolonial 65
 postcolonial 15, 60, 62, 65, 66,
 68, 152, 193, 198, 205, 211,
 239
 Community-building 144
 Community centers 24, 89, 125
 Complicity 52, 59, 155, 175, 179,
 196
 Co-optation 52, 54, 58, 125

D
 Donor politics 23, 84, 113, 122,
 132

E
 Extended arm of the state 55, 103,
 131

F
 Feminism, feminist 1–6, 10, 13–15,
 17, 19–33, 50–52, 54, 56,
 58–70, 83–86, 90–100, 104,
 109–111, 114, 115, 117–122,
 125–127, 131, 132, 143–151,
 154, 156, 157, 168–174, 178,
 181–183, 191–198, 200–207,
 210–216, 218–228, 230, 231,
 239–246
 “Foreign agent” 86–88, 90, 111
 Funding 13, 18, 31, 56–59, 83, 84,
 86, 88, 90, 93, 101–106, 109,
 112, 118–121, 123–129, 132,
 148, 155

G
 “Gay propaganda” law 89

“anti-propaganda” law 88, 89
 Gender-based violence 92, 129, 170
 Gezi protests 94, 96, 225
 Government-organized nongovern-
 mental organizations
 (GONGOs) 95

I
 Integral state 55, 95, 117, 131, 241
 International Women’s Day 22, 25,
 32, 67, 85, 92, 191, 194–203,
 212, 220, 228
 (In)visibility 22, 23, 30, 32, 49, 50,
 52, 54, 59, 67–70, 85, 90,
 101, 120, 124, 148, 151, 166,
 172, 173, 178, 193, 202–204,
 209–211, 217, 220, 221,
 224–227, 229–231, 241

L
 LGBTI+ 1–5, 7, 11–16, 19, 20,
 22–29, 31–33, 50–52, 56,
 58–61, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70,
 83–86, 88–91, 93, 94, 96,
 98, 101, 102, 104–107, 109,
 110, 114, 116–125, 127–132,
 143, 145, 147, 148, 150, 151,
 158, 159, 164, 167–169, 172,
 175–178, 180, 182, 192–195,
 213, 216, 219, 228, 231,
 239–246

M
 Mainstream organizations 84, 106,
 107, 116
 Minority organizations 116–118,
 123, 124

Modernity 7–9, 151, 202

Multi-scalar 19–21, 24, 28, 51, 52,
62, 67, 68, 70, 84, 115, 132,
171, 192, 194, 199, 205, 206,
210, 228, 229, 232, 240, 241,
244

N

Neoliberalism 4, 6, 18, 30, 32, 52,
54, 56, 57, 61, 84, 92–95,
100–102, 104, 105, 132, 172,
197, 203, 225, 229, 241, 246

NGOization paradigm 58, 83, 131

Nongovernmental organizations
(NGOs) 15, 17, 18, 27,
56–59, 61, 86, 87, 100, 104,
114, 119, 124, 126, 127, 131,
147, 242

P

Persecutions of LGBTI+ people in
Chechnya 147, 175, 182

Postsocialism 68, 110, 112, 239, 243

Precarity 57, 126

Q

Queer 1, 3–6, 15–17, 19, 21, 25,
27, 28, 30–33, 50, 52, 59–61,
63, 65, 66, 68–70, 85, 88, 93,
95, 97, 104, 119–122, 124,
126, 144–148, 150–156, 167,
168, 175, 177–179, 181, 182,
191, 193, 202, 203, 214, 216,
218, 220, 221, 225, 226, 228,
239, 241–243, 245, 246

R

Resistance 4, 21, 32, 49–54, 59, 66,
68, 69, 144, 179, 202, 205,
206, 211, 223, 231, 239, 241,
244–246

corporeality of 52, 245

scales of 69, 231, 246

spaces of 4, 5, 49, 50, 53, 54, 58,
61, 64, 67, 69, 70, 96, 143,
181, 195, 228, 229, 243, 246

Russia 1, 3, 5–8, 11, 13–15, 17–20,
22–24, 30, 31, 50, 51, 55,
56, 58, 67, 70, 83–86, 88–91,
95, 96, 109–112, 114, 115,
124–127, 130, 131, 162, 175,
176, 178–180, 191, 200, 201,
215, 218, 220, 229, 230, 239,
240, 242, 246

S

Scandinavian countries 2, 3, 5–12,
14–20, 24, 25, 31, 32, 50,
51, 55, 56, 67, 70, 83, 84,
101–105, 108, 109, 116, 117,
125, 126, 131, 132, 164, 239,
245, 246

Service organizations 88–90

Solidarity

affective solidarity 64, 219

reflective solidarity 60

as shared labor 146, 157, 163

transnational solidarity 59, 70,
132, 146, 147, 155, 156, 168,
175, 176, 178, 180, 191

Space 3, 4, 11, 22, 24, 52, 53, 58,
59, 67, 96, 99, 154–156, 192,
204–207, 219, 221, 229, 239,
240, 246

State–civil society 32, 54, 55, 84–86, 95, 102, 103, 109, 118, 124, 131, 242
State homophobia 52, 213

T

Transnational activism 132, 242
Turkey 2, 3, 5–15, 17–20, 27, 29, 32, 50, 51, 55, 56, 58, 67, 70, 83, 84, 96, 97, 99, 100, 109,

119, 120, 124–129, 131, 132, 148–152, 156, 169–173, 183, 191, 193, 194, 201, 203, 229, 239, 240, 242, 243, 245, 246

W

West/North, South/East 14, 20, 61, 65, 110, 118, 124, 127, 145, 147, 148, 154, 239, 243