



“They make your Life like Shit” - Masculinity and Violence against Transgender People in Istanbul

*Dedicated to Şevval, Rüzgar, Demet and all other survivors in the world,
and to all those who did not survive.*

By Melike Çınar

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Glossary

NGOs and relevant associations

Kadın Kapısı – literally meaning “Women’s Gate”, an association based in Beyoğlu/Istanbul providing support, STD prevention and legal advice for sex workers. Affiliated with the Human Resource and Development Foundation.

KAOS GL – NGO in Ankara advocating the rights of homosexual people, raided on the suspicion that they engage in or facilitate illegal activities.

Lambdaistanbul – Istanbul-based NGO for the rights of LGBT people, raided on the suspicion that they engage in or facilitate illegal activities.

Istanbul LBTT – Istanbul-based NGO for the rights of LGBT people with a focus on transwomen, founded by Lambdaistanbul members to providing a special place for transwomen to go.

Conceptual terms

Gender identity – subjective feeling of belonging to one gender.

LGBTI – abbreviation for ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex’; describing the field of sexual minorities.

Othering - Othering is the process setting of oneself and one’s own social image apart by classifying other people with different features as ‘alien’, ‘strange’ and/or inferior. It is at the same time the process of

devaluing the Other in comparison with the self. The concept of the Other has proven useful to explain unequal power relations. Being ‘othered’ does not constitute an attribute in this context, but does mark the relation between the Other and the self (Ahmed 2005). The Other is written with a capital letter in this understanding (Kristeva 1982).

Outing – “Outing” usually implies the process by which a homosexual or bisexual person declares their sexual orientation to their environment. For transgender people there exists a special outing process concerning their sexual identity. The outing of a person as transgender can be carried out by the person her/himself, or it can be imposed from the outside. Transgender people may also aim to lead a life without outing themselves, rather being received as being a man or a woman. The sexual orientations of transgender people vary like those of every other human. Transgender people can thus be confronted with double outings - their identity as well as about their orientation.

Passing – Passing describes a phenomenon whereby members of a social minority are not identified as being such on the basis of missing or impalpable outward attributes, but are instead perceived to be members of the majority.¹⁹ Passing describes a process of assignment which can fail again and again. Passing is therefore a particularly relevant process for transgender people; as an achievement, as protection from discrimination, or as a recurring and often humiliating experience in social interaction. Gender is again and again constructed in social interaction by certain practices, through the cooperation of all involved. My appreciation of passing is as a part of everybody’s daily life.²⁰ The perception of and through others is what makes passing successful or not. Everybody passes many times each day, but passing usually only becomes conscious when failing at it.

Transgender – In my work I only use the own designation term transgender (except literal citations). This term emerged in distancing from the pathologising, medical term transsexual, which is illogical when looked at it closer (the syllable ‘-sexual’ implies a desire, but here describes an identity). The term transsexual was coined by the US-American psychiatrist Robert Stoller who used it to describe a “possibly damaging personality disorder” (Connell 1999). To this day the term implies a disorder in the person thus addressed (Gender



Identity Disorder – GID).²¹ With the word transgender, I invoke every person who does not (want to) live in the sex assigned at birth. Some transgender people call themselves transsexual but as I am not the term will not be used by me. I work close to the definition given by Stryker: “people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain gender” (Stryker 2002).

Transwoman – A female person whose sex assigned

Fragen zum Text

1. Die großen Linien anhand derer die Intersektionalitätsforschung Kategorien und Strukturen betrachtet, sind race, class und gender. Benennen Sie, an welchen Stellen diese drei Kategorien einander bedingen bzw. herstellen und stellen Sie heraus, wie eine theoretische Betrachtung aussehen kann, die die intersektionell verschiedenen Formen des Othering in westlichen Gesellschaften einschließt und aufzeigt.
2. Was bedeutet Othering bezogen auf race, class und gender? Welche Funktion erfüllt es?
3. Im vorliegenden Artikel geht es um die interaktive und andauernde Herstellung der Kategorie Geschlecht. Diskutieren Sie, welche Formen der Herstellung Ihnen häufig begegnen und inwiefern diese ein Anderes (und welches) benötigen.
4. Innerhalb einer Gesellschaft werden immer wieder Gruppen konstruiert, denen der Schutz der Gemeinschaft versagt wird und die aus dem System der Norm herauszufallen scheinen. Diskutieren Sie, wie das Wechselspiel aus Sich-selbst-Aufwerten und Das-Andere-Abwerten funktionieren kann.
5. Welche Rolle können staatliche Institutionen wie Behörden bei der Herstellung und Durchsetzung von Normen spielen?
- 6.

Links (Auswahl)

Zu den genannten türkischen Organisationen (Seiten auch auf Englisch):

- <http://www.lambdaistanbul.org/s/>
- <http://www.istanbul-lgbtt.org/lgbtt/>
- <http://www.kadinkapisi.org/>

Universitäre Einrichtungen:

- www.vings.de
- <http://www.ucalgary.ca/gender/>

- <http://gender.stanford.edu/>
- <http://oso.stanford.edu/lectures/series/6-clayman-institute-for-gender-research>
- <http://www.gender.hu-berlin.de/>

Deutsch(sprachige) und EU-Organisationen:

- <http://www.transinterqueer.org/>
- <http://www.ilga-europe.org/>
- <http://www.gwi-boell.de/web/eu-geschlechterpolitik-eu-geschlechterpolitik-458.html>
- <http://www.rosa-luxemburg.info/category/gender/>

Methoden:

- <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs>

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Trans Pride March, Istanbul, June 2011, source: private.



Trans Pride March in Istanbul, June 2011, source: private.