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Essay

A Feminist Critique of Cybersecurity: Techno Feminist Imaginaries of Vulnerability and Care

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ABSTRACT

In this collection of five short essays, each authors examine how online spaces produce and reproduce queer marginalisation while also offering opportunities for queer expression, connection, and resistance. Tanvi Kanchan examines Indian queer activists' connections with Indigenous and Black politics in the U.S. and anti-gender rhetoric that travels between American conservative contexts and Indian Hindutva contexts to highlight how digitally mediated transnational rhetoric is simultaneously progressive and reactionary. Łukasz Szulc, on the other hand, proposes that feminist and queer manifestos can suggest ways to imagine alternative digital futures and navigate the present. Likewise, Yener Bayramoğlu unearths the ambivalence emerging from digital spaces offering connection, visibility, and resistance while also extracting data and regulating subjects. Ahmet Atay considers how the digital mundane presents an opportunity for queer disruption and activism, and, finally, Rohit Dasgupta encourages the tension of concurrent embodiment in digital and offline spaces. From these essays, we see rising tensions between digitally mediated 'transnational' and the local struggles, and queer critical imaginaries and organisational work. Here, we find space for queer presence and activism within both mediated and unmediated public spaces.

Keywords: technofeminism, visibility, digital activism, cybersecurity, queer studies

In inviting Ahmet Atay, Yener Bayramoğlu, Rohit Dasgupta, Tanvi Kanchan and Łukasz Szulc to submit short commentary pieces for this special issue, our goal was to foreground contradictions of how the seemingly queer digital visibility negotiates contradictions of various spatio-temporal as well as of multiply mediated and placed (whether in ground/land space or in digital space) contexts of queer (un)liveability. Rather than simply acknowledging or celebrating the online transnational presence of LGBTQ+ individuals — which would

implicitly frame the internet as universally liberating for marginalised groups — we approached the problematic by questioning the various ways in which these technologies became entangled within the production of affective intensities shaping contemporary networked political landscapes and queer experiences within them. Therefore, in framing our request, we returned to some past work from over two decades ago, where Mitra and Gajjala (2010) had raised questions regarding how the online network-ability itself produced particular placements and intersectional identities through the very technical networked interface. While academic research has consistently documented the role of digital spaces in supporting LGBTQ+ communities, from early studies of gay and lesbian online communities and digital coming-out experiences, to research on how transgender identities are expressed through mobile technology cultures, this celebratory approach to the queering of and through digital space whether through online gaming self-identity production (where in-game 'gender-bending' or building of queer and trans identities and communities creates queer digital placements), through hashtag activisms and networks or through Tumblr and other social media based communities formed online. Dating back to the 1980s and 1990s, online existence has opened up portals for queer imaginaries. However, the access to such portals is shaped by material conditions of access and literacy – social, technical, linguistic and cultural.

Further, while critical scholars have also examined how race, gender, class, and sexuality intersect in digital environments, this body of work has also generally accepted the premise that online spaces naturally provide venues for queer expression and identity formation. At the current moment, the political economy of platforms becomes more visible than ever before; however, as we explicitly see, politics shapes the ways in which corporate ownership of platforms shifts digital cultures.

Thus, we understand that the act of 'becoming' online – simultaneously living online and emerging as a discursive presence online – happens through contextually embedded practice that occurs at complex intersections where online and offline experiences both diverge and converge in dramatically different ways depending on the situation. Digital queer expression does not happen in a vacuum but is deeply influenced by varying social, cultural, and political contexts. Intersectionality in digital transnational place/space is nuanced not just because of diverse offline contextual and embodied lives of queer people, but, rather, also through the remediation within and through different digital platforms.

In contemporary social media contexts and in a more recent dialogue around queer Indian digital activism, Smita Vanniyar (Gajjala et al., 2019) noted a renewed surge in LGBTQ+ visibility. Most of this visibility, however, does not include content that contextually addresses intersectionality in socio-cultural spaces outside of the deployment of categories made visible through a 'global north' orientation of the academia and of situated understandings of race, gender, and class (Andrews, 2019; Das & Tripathi, 2025; Dasgupta, 2017). For instance, issues of caste, class, region, ethnicity, language, nation, and religion in various so-called 'global south' contexts are (conveniently) elided and side-stepped by academic elites from such contexts. The leadership of critical theory thinking is shaped through global north-based academia. This origin and framing do not adequately access the complex layerings of the social that lies outside of the spaces recognised as being within the 'global north.' Thus, even cultural differences in the approach to queerness are not adequately engaged, and the approach to queerness is shaped mostly through global North or Westernised ideas of what to be queer is, and what queer activism should look like. Puar (2012), in her critique of the way intersectionality has travelled and been deployed as a feminist method, says:

> *While one might worry, then, about the development and adaptation of the terms gay or lesbian or the globalisation of the term queer, Massad (2009) highlights the graver problem of the generalisation and assumed transparency of the term sexuality itself - a taken for granted category of the modernist imperial project (Puar, 2021).*

These points also resonate with what Rahul Rao notes as the postcolonial/developing world ('global south'?) 'Experience of being relegated to what we might think of as positions 'out of time'" which as he notes "is a deeply ambivalent one, promising both marginalisation and the prospect of release from the iron cage of hegemonic time' (Rao, 2020).

Overall, critical counterpoints to the celebratory narrative of online queer spaces are offered by each of the essayists in their essays. For instance, Tanvi Kanchan draws on their research on Indian queer and trans women's digital cultures. This essay serves to highlight how transnational flows around queer identities can be both progressive and reactionary by linking Indian queer activists with Indigenous and Black politics in the U.S. while also linking the anti-gender rhetoric that travels between American conservative contexts and Indian Hindutva contexts. This demonstrates the double-edged nature of digital transnationalism. Additionally, Kanchan observes that the real world is often positioned as oppositional to the online. Within this disconnection, organising, too, is separated from activism. Antonio Gramsci's Philosophy of Praxis, a development of Hegel's groundwork, proposes that unity between thought and action, in addition to leadership organically developing from a movement embodying such unity, is what brings forth revolutionary change by reshaping the common perception of citizens (Gramsci, 2000). Thus, as Kanchan proposes, online spaces choreograph action by uniting queer individuals and shaping perception through education. Kanchan suggests that we need to find ways to

leverage transnational digital connections for offline organising by sharing strategies across movements, learning from trade unions and community organisations, and building sustainable organising capacity rather than just responding to 'irregular political flashpoints.' Similar to Atuk and Cole (2024), Kanchan's work supports a marbled embodiment of activism, intertwining online and physical spaces of resistance to fully unite social justice movements and enable coordination across barriers such as (dis)ability, physical location, and caste.

Szulc (2013), on the other hand, argues that feminist and queer manifestos can suggest ways to imagine alternative digital futures that, in turn, provide a challenge to 'big tech's technological solutionism.' To imagine a world in which queer utopia takes shape is to reject naivety and instead generate practical possibility. In doing so, the queer virtual world can manifest through the commitment to bring about practical changes. Instead of rejecting technological developments, queer movements can leverage them to bring such practical change, using a marbled approach of virtual and physical acts and actions. Further, the digital space and its accessibility across nations, (dis)ability, race, gender, class, and caste, allows for the pluralisation of possible utopia rather than limiting it to the often hegemonic and neo-liberalised mainstream presentation of queer being.

Yener Bayramoğlu focuses his critical, yet optimistic, lens on queer migrants living in Europe and in Turkey. He suggests that digital technologies produce sites where contradictory affects lead to connection, visibility, and resistance but stay with the ambivalence and not try to resolve it. We need to see what this ambivalence exposes – 'what it demands, what it might still make possible.'

Ahmet Atay considers how the digital mundane presents the opportunity for queer disruption and activism. Routine interaction with old and new technology alike has facilitated our seamless integration into the digital world. Such everyday tasks, given their commonplace occurrence, have minimised the labour put into completing them. By completing this labour with activist intent, Atay asks if larger institutions, systems, and structures can be disputed or even toppled. Integrating queer digital spaces into digital work allows for moments of queer joy and connection. As an example, pausing from the extended digital workday that has sprung from technology's enabling of the leaching of the professional into the private sphere by interacting in queer spaces can provide reprieve and optimism for tired, disconnected queer individuals. The digital mundane, then, combats queer loneliness for particularly marginalised activists.

Finally, Rohit Dasgupta builds on the possibility of marbled embodiment between virtual and offline space, noting that the contrast between the two should not be relieved but rather leveraged. Dasgupta finds that this tension links a visionary future to organisation, brings transnational solidarity to local spaces, and centres the greatest need. Such unity brings the optimism that the goal can one day become reality, a central tenet of the Philosophy of Praxis. As Gramsci (1971) has argued, the common person of the movement must have faith in its philosophy and the strength of the leadership of the movement. Though digital spaces enhance such faith by layering activism and infrastructure, Dasgupta crucially points to the counter- and antagonistic movements and actions manifesting virtually. To keep such unity and faith, then, is to precariously navigate the maintenance of such spaces.

There are interesting connecting threads between the five pieces around issues of queer lifeworlds, transnational solidarity and activism, and organising within the intersections of the digital and the political. This appears as a tension at times between the digitally mediated 'transnational' and the local struggles, queer critical imaginaries and organisational work, holding space for queer presence and activism within both mediated and unmediated public space. In response to an interview question that is later made into a GIF, 'What's the nastiest shade you've ever thrown?' artist Juliana Huxtable says, 'Existing in the world.' She later said (Gossett et al., 2022) that her response vocalised her approach to dealing with being visibilised via the 'politicised' aspects of her being in the world and facing explicit transphobia. As we ponder these essays, we might ask what other forms of political work do these queer critical imaginaries do to shape our digitally mediated lives and futures and how might we relate the points made to historical struggles of queer visibility and live-ability in various regional publics?

QUEER DIGITAL ACTIVISIM AND ORGANISING: TRANSNATIONAL LESSONS AND CAUTIONS

Tanvi Kanchcan

Digital spaces and social media platforms offer an avenue for queer and trans people to find each other, to become politically educated and activated, and to forge connections across barriers of space, time, and geography. In India, the context I primarily work within, such digital spaces can provide an alternative when offline queer and trans communities, friendships, and bonds are hard or impossible to find. Even for those embedded in offline community, online queer spaces offer a slew of resources, knowledge infrastructures, information, and intimacies for those both within and outside of metropolitan contexts with an ease of access

that often cannot be reproduced offline. The potential of the online space for queer and trans people lies in its ability to connect us, show us that we are not alone, and enable us to politically educate each other.

During my doctoral research on queer and trans women's digital queer cultures in India, many of the participants, as well as my comrades and friends with whom I discussed my project, expressed their deep affection and gratitude for the online spaces they had encountered through their lives and that they continued to be a part of. They underlined that it was through such online spaces that queer lifeworlds opened up for them, and that this was especially important when they felt such worlds were missing for them offline. What is important to note here is that instead of such online spaces being the end of their queer journey, or the final destination point, it instead provided a pathway to actualise and make possible the offline worlds they so deeply wished to inhabit.

Let me elaborate on what I mean. A recurrent idea that came up in my interviews was both the vitality of the online spaces for community-building and becoming politically educated, as well as the defiant belief that the online world was 'not real' or was less real than the offline world. Many of the interlocutors, whose primary use of their social media platforms was to engage in a digital activism that mainly hinged around political education, emphasised that they believed that online queer 'activism' remained toothless if it never crossed over into the offline. In other words, they resisted the impetus to be satisfied with their queer activism remaining confined to the online and gestured to the importance of engaging in forms of political action and community organising offline.

This brings us to a crucial juncture. To talk about digital activism – and its queer transnational currents – begs a critical engagement with what 'activism' might mean, denote, and consist of in the first place.

Taylor (2016), in her Baffler article provocatively titled 'Against Activism,' argues that 'today's activists have come of age in a very different milieu,' with little to no familial ties or associations to parties or organising spaces, and at a time of widespread union-busting and attempts to discredit and defang organising attempts. Taylor writes persuasively to make a distinction between activism and organising; she points out that the former is not inherently the latter, and that for long-term activist goals to be met, there needs to be dedicated and foundational organising structures and power to accompany it.

I am interested in examining her argument through the prism of online spaces by centring the role that the digital has to play in this 'different milieu' of activism. The primary, or at least the first, site of youth political activation has become the internet, and particularly social media platforms; it is where people first come to activism. It provides such actors the access and space to engage with political discourse, particularly for queer and trans people across the globe, and even more so for marginalised queer and trans people vis-à-vis race, religion, caste, class, and location (Baishya et al., 2020).

The centrality of privately-owned social media platforms like Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, amongst others, in these new formations of public spheres, complicates this situation. The political-economic structures that govern social media platforms often stand in direct opposition to the potentially liberatory use made of these platforms. Their revenue structures, logics, design, and governance technologies are not set up with liberatory purposes in mind; instead, they are quite the opposite. In such an ecosystem, polarising content becomes the content people most engage with and is therefore rewarded through algorithmic privileging (Paasonen, 2020; Tufekci, 2017). As such, these sites can become prime spaces for online activists to build audiences – often transient and ever-changing – rather than communities. In other words, the design and logics of these platforms promote the formation of audience-like relationships rather than *communities* of interdependence and care.

The nature of online activism (and indeed this includes queer activism), leads to a focus on the individual. Such an online activism can be overly focused on individual political actualisation, which atomises people, rather than on building community power through political action. The pace of the online is also determined by platforms, rather than people's capacity, which can lead to burnout rather than sustainable community organising.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the research participants I interviewed expressed such an aversion to conflating the online with the offline. Let me be clear: the forms of political education, knowledge production, friendships, intimacies, and connections with other queer and trans people that online spaces make possible, especially for those who are marginalised further through caste, religion, race, and location, is an invaluable and precious affordance. Many of my own connections, both affective and communicative, would not have been possible or lasted through my geographical relocations and through global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, had it not been for the online queer lifeworlds that I was able to inhabit.

Nevertheless, I am interested in nuancing the kind of 'activism' that we speak of when we speak of digital activism, particularly in queer political contexts, which I am most familiar with and inhabit most often. If we accept Taylor's argument that activism has become decoupled from organising, as well as her attendant argument of the importance of organising for long-term political gains, and if we are to proceed from a cautious reckoning

of how online activism can fuel an atomisation of individual actors and points of political activation, then we must rethink our digital activist strategies and behaviours. To come back to the question of online queer activism and its transnational currents, I do believe the transnational possibilities that digital spaces open up can provide us with one pathway forward.

I have explored elsewhere (Kanchan, 2024) the opportunities that Instagram and other social media platforms can offer for marginal queer and trans users in India to make transnational connections with queer activists and users. I discuss how the interlocutors were able to make connections with Indigenous queer politics and Black politics in the US, to discuss issues of the de/criminalisation of homosexuality in different Asian contexts, and to build transnational solidarities around political priorities, through being inspired by political gains in other contexts, and attempting to apply these to India. I use queer in an expansive sense, as do the participants; they resist a congealment around a simplistic politics of gender and/or sexuality and expand a queer political worldview to all forms of structural oppression and power.

I believe that these transnational activist opportunities can be leveraged and expanded further through the sharing of organising aims, strategies, challenges, and advice. An intersectional queer digital activism that is not divorced from the importance of organising, would, for me, look like organisers and activists from various parts of the globe, engaged in various progressive and radical struggles, sharing their experiences and insights with others. This might include using digital mediums to train organisers across the world or sharing particular organising and community-activation strategies that have been successful. It would also look like building solidarities and learning from different types of movements and organisations, such as trade unions, farmers' movements, renters' unions, food banks, neighbourhood cop watches, community education programmes, and so on, to build successful queer organising strategies and campaigns, both online and offline.

If the persistent belief within queer activism in India is that the online requires dialogue with the offline to remain impactful, then it is urgent and necessary for us to ask how we can leverage our transnational activist networks to build local activist strengths and power. Central to this must remain a focus on building long-term organising strategies and capacities that do not simply coalesce around and fizzle out outside of irregular political flashpoints. In Pakistani grassroots organiser Tooba Syed's keynote lecture on transnational anti-gender politics and resistance at the London School of Economics (2024), she discussed the difference between activism and organising. The logics of social media platforms particularly promote a hyperfocus on activism at the expense of organising. Instead, I want us to ask what an intersectional politics of organising and community-building online would look actually like, and how the queer and trans online communities we are part of can work towards this goal.

It would be remiss of me to not mention that transnational digital 'activism' can also take many forms, including that of anti-progressive and right-wing forces. A particular threat to forms of queer organising and activism has been the transnational spread of 'anti-gender' politics, discourses, rhetoric, and campaigns (Holvikivi et al., 2024). As Minj and Pandit (2024) point out, such anti-gender movements 'take exception to de/postcolonial, anti-settler, queer and feminist insights into the constructed nature of the sex/gender/race system.' India has been no exception to this recent upsurge. I follow Minj and Pandit's (2024) caution to not place too much importance on the supposed (geographical) origin of such anti-gender ideology because of its homogenising tendencies and its ability to flatten various contexts. Instead, what I am interested in is how particular rhetorical and discursive formulations of anti-gender and transphobic ideology have 'transnationalised,' for lack of a better term, and the role that social media platforms and digital spaces have played in such a 'transnationalising.'

Let me provide an example of what I mean. In February 2024, I came across a post on X from Yes, We Exist, a progressive Indian social media community space that 'raises awareness about the LGBTQIA+ community' in the country. Their post was a critique of a recently published article from OpIndia, an infamous right-wing Hindu nationalist misinformation website. The OpIndia article railed against the 'woke' political takeover of a school in New Delhi that offered students the option to describe their gender identity as non-binary, and Yes, We Exist pointed out how the editor Nupur J. Sharma appeared to be 'taking lessons directly from American conservative media.' Their insight was not untrue; while transphobia is not a Western import to India, the particular discursive construction of trans-inclusivity as 'woke' by an Indian website that caters to Indian audiences indeed points to a particular transnational flow of rhetorical devices.

Sharma's response on X to Yes, We Exist included the statement, 'Keep your hands off our kids. Your delusion is not biology.' This, too, struck me as a particular transnational rhetorical configuration as far as anti-gender ideology goes. The idea of gender ideology as being particularly harmful to children, and the attendant ideas that progressive factions around the world need to 'keep their hands off our kids' or 'leave our kids alone,' has gained particular currency across the globe, specifically in reactionary digital spaces (see, for instance, Rédai's (2024) exploration of this rhetoric in the Hungarian context). It is intriguing, and perhaps also inevitable, that this rhetoric has reached, or rather is beginning to emerge, in Indian contexts as well and that it is being

leveraged by right-wing Hindu nationalist forces towards a broader politics of Hindutva. As Chamas (forthcoming, 2026) has explored in the context of Lebanon, the moral panic around trans people 'corrupting' children has reached new terrains where it has not historically been popular as a form of transphobia. Chamas further emphasises that Western anti-gender rhetoric is being capitalised on by political actors in the Global South toward their own political ends. It is perhaps inevitable, then, that this rhetoric has reached, or rather is beginning to emerge, in Indian contexts as well, and that it is being leveraged by right-wing Hindu nationalist forces towards a broader politics of Hindutva.

An undeniable part of how such rhetoric has travelled transnationally is the role of social media platforms, such as X itself. With Elon Musk, the owner of X, declaring that the words 'cis' and 'cisgender' are slurs, in response to users calling him cis, and that people using these words on X would be dealt with as perpetrators of hate speech (Elsesser, 2023), it is no surprise that the platform is one of the most egregious players in the transnational spread of anti-gender rhetoric online. As Banaji (2023) reminds us,

> *The types of activism facilitated by the online sphere have correctly been interrogated not only through their actual and intended political outcomes but also in terms of the connections between the far right, unaccountable tech billionaires, and neoliberal political-economic tendencies*.

Nuancing forms of digital activism, their goals, the actors involved in them, and the ends to which they are mobilised, must be central when thinking through and talking about an intersectional feminist and queer digital activism. Staying vigilant to the many different forms of transnational flows that digital platforms can engender and moving our focus from a solely activist standpoint to one of organising alongside activism will allow us to put the privately-owned and oppressive platforms we coopt for our own progressive political motives towards more radical and liberatory ends.

RETHINKING QUEER DIGITAL CULTURES IN INDIA

Rohit K. Dasgupta

When I completed my PhD on queer digital cultures in India around 2014, I was captivated by the potential of these spaces for community-making, romantic intimacy, and activism. My work, published in 2017, grappled with questions of class and region, but it was written in a drastically different political milieu, both in India and globally (Dasgupta, 2017). The years since have brought a sharper, darker turn: the rise of authoritarianism in South Asia and elsewhere; rollbacks of queer rights; renewed attacks on trans communities; and increasingly atomised queer politics in India, marked by rising Islamophobia and caste oppression (Biswas et al., 2023). It feels an apt moment to revisit what queer digital cultures can do and mean now.

For queer communities in India, the internet has long been both a lifeline and a contested terrain. In the absence of consistent offline queer infrastructures, especially outside metropolitan centres, digital spaces have offered ways to find one another, access resources, and imagine queer lifeworlds. As Sandip Roy observed as early as 2003, they allowed a young person in a small town to stumble across a supportive collective and feel a sense of wider belonging.

Yet, the digital is never neutral. It is shaped by corporate logics, subject to state surveillance, and saturated with transnational currents of both solidarity and backlash. As Paliwal (2022) has noted, for those from oppressed caste and working-class backgrounds, these spaces can be as hostile as they are liberating. Digital queer cultures in India operate in productive tensions: visibility and vulnerability; hope and cynicism.

Ambivalence, in this context, is not indecisiveness but a survival strategy. Digital platforms are both necessary and dangerous. They provide community, political education, and mutual aid, but they are also sites of harassment, doxxing, and algorithmic profiling. In politically precarious or socially conservative environments, visibility online often becomes strategically partial, through pseudonymous Twitter (now X) handles, locked Instagram profiles, private WhatsApp groups.

Moments of political crisis sharpen this ambivalence. The 2018 reading down of Section 377 generated waves of online celebration but also a flood of homophobic backlash. In Bangladesh in 2016, Facebook was used to track queer activists Xulhaz Mannan and Mahbub Tonoy, who were later murdered by an Islamist group after planning a Rainbow Rally. These incidents underscore how the same networks that carry solidarity can also carry threats (also see Ahmed & Huq, 2024).

In more recent years, right-wing nationalism has amplified these risks. Organised trolling, targeted harassment, and state-aligned disinformation campaigns have become part of the terrain. Remaining present online is thus less about ignoring danger than about navigating it. If ambivalence helps communities survive the present, imagination is about orienting toward the future. Across queer and feminist landscapes globally, declarations of better worlds, manifestos, public letters, and viral posts function as both critique and aspiration.

In India, such declarations are plentiful: Instagram platforms like Gaysi, QueerMuslim Project, and YesWeExist, amongst many others, demand trans-inclusive healthcare; Google Docs circulate reading lists on caste and queerness; hashtag campaigns call for solidarity with queer Muslims during communal violence. These acts name injustice and create entry points for those newly politicised.

But digital declarations risk dissipating without infrastructures to sustain them. As Gerbaudo (2012) has argued, mobilisation needs choreography, structures that move people from online agreement to offline action: protests, mutual aid contributions, local support groups. This must be done with intersectionality at the core. As a queer activist recently noted, there is no single 'queer community' but multiple formations with distinct priorities from marriage equality to horizontal reservations for trans people. Urban, English-language demands may not resonate in rural or regional contexts. Futures worth imagining must be built with and for the most marginalised.

In my recent work with queer organisations across India, I've often heard that online activism is 'not real' unless it produces tangible outcomes. This can be a healthy corrective to platform politics' tendency to equate visibility with change. But it raises important questions: immediate for whom? Tangible to whose experience? For someone in a small town with no queer-friendly public spaces, an online network may feel far more real than a Pride march they cannot safely attend. During COVID-19 lockdowns, many queer people in hostile households or isolated locations relied on digital platforms for connection and survival (Banerjea et al., 2022). Rather than seeing the online and offline as opposites, it is more productive to view them as interdependent. Digital spaces can amplify campaigns, coordinate action, and educate, while offline engagements can ground that momentum in place-based work.

Queer digital cultures in India are shaped by and contribute to global currents of ideas, aesthetics, and strategies. Solidarity with Indigenous, Black feminist, and Asian decriminalisation movements has inspired local tactics and broadened horizons. Yet the same infrastructures carry backlash. The 'anti-gender' discourse casting gender inclusivity as a threat to children or a foreign import has travelled from Western conservative movements into Indian right-wing politics. Such narratives, now adapted into nationalist rhetoric, frame trans rights as alien to Indian culture (also see Holvikivi et al., 2024). A discerning transnationalism is needed- one that draws on solidarities without importing frameworks that erase local histories or flatten specificities.

Access to digital spaces is also deeply uneven. Urban, upper-caste, English-speaking voices dominate, while Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi, working-class, and rural queer perspectives remain underrepresented. Barriers of language, literacy, and connectivity shape participation and narrative control. True intersectionality means structuring activism to meet the most urgent needs of the most marginalised. That may involve multilingual content, tackling casteism within queer spaces, and linking with struggles against communal violence, agrarian crisis, and labour exploitation (also see Borisa, 2020 and Shah, 2024). Queer liberation in India is inseparable from these broader fights.

A decade ago, I approached queer digital cultures with optimism, seeing them as emergent spaces of connection, imagination, and resistance. That optimism hasn't disappeared, but it is tempered by a more cautious awareness of the risks, exclusions, and contradictions embedded in these spaces. Digital queer cultures in India are neither utopias nor distractions from 'real' politics. They are dynamic, contested arenas where connection, imagination, and organising intersect in complex ways. The task is not to resolve the tensions between online and offline, local and transnational, activism and organising, but to work within them. By linking visionary declarations to the infrastructures of organising, grounding transnational solidarities in local realities, and centring the most marginalised in our digital strategies, we can move toward queer futures that are not only imaginable but liveable.

FEMINIST AND QUEER MANIFESTOS FOR DIGITAL UTOPIAS

Łukasz Szulc

All activism seeks to bring about change. While social movements often respond to present-day injustices – frequently rooted in the legacies of the past – it is equally vital to envision better futures. As Benjamin (2019) writes, you must 'imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones we cannot live within.' Today, dominant visions of digital futures are largely shaped by big tech, which promotes digital fixes for the world's problems, subscribing to technological solutionism, or the belief that complex social issues can be resolved simply through new or improved technology. It is crucial not only to scrutinise these visions but also to imagine alternative futures that transcend capitalist realism and prioritise care for minoritised communities and the natural world (Powers, 2020). What digital worlds that we cannot live without imagine feminists and queers? In this contribution, I draw on my keynote at the Digital Good Network (Szulc, 2023) to

highlight the importance of imagining better digital futures and to explore the visions put forward in feminist and queer manifestos.

Manifestos are a fertile source of 'new visions of fantastic futures,' as Legacy Russell (2020) writes in *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. They are rarely authored by figures from the private or public sectors, nor by so-called "ordinary" individuals. Instead, they most often emerge from extraordinary actors within engaged communities of activists, artists, and academics. The manifesto as a genre has a long and varied history, with countless political, literary, and artistic examples appearing across the 19th and 20th centuries (Yanoshevsky, 2009). In recent decades, it has also been embraced by countercultural and minoritised groups, including feminist and queer collectives. Notable examples include Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), ACT UP's *Queers Read This* (1990), and Lesbian Avengers' *Dyke Manifesto* (1993) (for a historical review, see Eckert and Steiner, 2025). Although manifestos resist easy definition, they are typically characterised by a challenge to existing structures, a prescriptive and programmatic stance, and the articulation of clear principles or doctrine. Their language is often rhetorical and theatrical, reflecting their frequent use as performance texts intended to be read aloud in front of an audience. As activist tools, manifestos hold great potential: they can forge new political and cultural vocabularies, provoke strong emotional responses and inspire collective action.

Because of their programmatic nature, manifestos are particularly well-suited to radically reimagining futures—or, in other words, creating utopias. Ironically, while political and social utopias are often dismissed as naïve or even dangerous, the dominant visions of the future offered by big tech bros are full of technological utopias, where the future is imagined as packed with technologies straight out of sci-fi books (Godhe & Goode, 2018). This, however, does not mean we should abandon utopia. On the contrary, it is essential to reclaim it as a tool for crafting the worlds we cannot live without. To avoid the pitfalls of naïve utopian thinking, Levitas (2013) suggests understanding utopia as a method rather than a goal – that is, as a tool to expand our horizons rather than a blueprint for the future. Utopia becomes a generative thought experiment, producing richer and more diverse scenarios for what might be possible. Similarly, Muñoz (2009), in *Cruising Utopia,* favours Ernest Bloch's concept of 'concrete utopias' – utopias that are relational, rooted in historically situated struggles and grounded in the realm of 'educated hope,' as opposed to 'abstract utopias,' which resemble banal optimism.

Digital utopias envisioned in feminist and queer manifestos have the potential to reopen the future, imagining worlds that are more liveable – or liveable at all – for those navigating an already dystopian present. One of the first things to note about feminist and queer manifestos for digital futures (or 'manifestary' texts, which, while not always explicitly labelled as manifestos, share their form and function) is their abundance. Some notable examples, presented here in chronological order, include:

- *A Cyborg Manifesto* by Donna Haraway (1985)
- A *Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century* by VNS Matrix (1991)
- *Manifesto Contrasexual (Countersexual Manifesto)* by Paul B. Preciado (2002)
- *A Hacker Manifesto* by McKenzie Wark (2004)
- *Manifesto for Queer Universal Design* by Monika Myers and Jason Crockett (2012)
- *We Are FemTechNet* by FemTechNet (2012)
- *Queer OS* by Kara Keeling (2014)
- *The Xenofeminist Manifesto: A Politics for Alienation* by Laboria Cuboniks (2015)
- *#AltWoke Manifesto*, anonymous, published by &&& Publishing (2017)
- *Crip Technoscience Manifesto* by Aimi Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch (2019)
- *Feminist Data Manifest-No* by Marika Cifor, Patricia Garcia, TL Cowan, Jasmine Rault, Tonia Sutherland, Anita Say Chan, Jennifer Rode, Anna Lauren Hoffmann, Niloufar Salehi and Lisa Nakamura (2019)
- *A Manifesto for the Broken Machine* by Sarah Sharma (2020)
- *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto* by Legacy Russell (2020)
- *Furious: Technological Feminism and Digital Futures* by Caroline Bassett, Sarah Kember and Kate O'Riordan (2020)
- *Our Frightful Hobgoblin, or, Notes Towards Full-On Fully Automated Luxury Green Diffabled Trans* Feminist Queer Inter-Species Space Communism of Color* by Mark Bould (2020)
- *Doing LGBTQ Internet Histories Justice: A Queer Web Archive Manifesto* by Jesper Verhoef (2024)
- *Imagination: A Manifesto* by Ruha Benjamin (2024)
- *Queering Data Manifesto* by Queercircle (2025)
- *We Can Do Better: Feminist Manifestos for Media and Communication* edited by Linda Steiner and Stine Eckert (2025)

The sheer number of these manifestos reflects a feminist and queer desire to live otherwise, alongside a commitment to critiquing the past and present to shape alternative futures. While a full analysis is beyond the scope of this brief contribution, a few key points stand out. Many manifestos begin with an emotional refusal of the existing reality. *Furious*, for example, positions itself 'against the masculinization of computational culture and cultural theory' (Bassett et al., 2020), while the authors of *A Cyberfeminist Manifesto* declare themselves 'saboteurs of big daddy mainframe.' Similarly, Sharma (2020) describes society as 'an already-broken machine full of the incompatibly queer, raced, classed, and sexed broken-down machines.' This refusal is not meant to be paralysing but generative. In *Feminist Data Manifest-No*, for instance, each 'We refuse' is paired with a corresponding 'We commit.' They write, for example, 'We refuse surveillance as the only condition for participation and to feel powerless in the face of "inevitable" mass technological surveillance. We commit to find our communities, hold them close, and resist together' (Cifor et al., 2019).

Unsurprisingly, gender relations are often central to these manifestos. Unlike the early enthusiasts of disembodied online communication, feminist and queer authors do not imagine digital futures without gender. Instead, they call for dismantling the gender binary and removing the social consequences of fixed gender categories (Hester, 2018). Their visions include gender hacking, gender shifting and gender proliferation, alongside aspirations for digital futures free from sexist and racist algorithmic biases (Noble, 2018) and from binary gender options embedded in drop-down menus and databases (Bivens, 2017). At the same time, they confront gendered dimensions of technological development. In *Furious*, Bassett et al. (2020) advance 'a full-hearted feminist position on automation', debunking the myth of a work-free, fully automated future. They note that dominant automation narratives privilege the automation of labour, envisioning futures filled with leisure and family life – domains still disproportionately organised and maintained by women, migrants, and people of colour. Moreover, under the prevailing trajectory toward fully automated luxury capitalism rather than communism, automation has not shortened working days or raised wages for all but has instead concentrated wealth in the hands of a few (Bould, 2020).

In critiquing current technological developments, feminist and queer manifestos are not anti-technology. Rather, they oppose biological determinism and embrace technology – including its reappropriation and repurposing – as a tool for adjusting biology. This can mean, for example, gender hacking through self-grown hormones purchased with cryptocurrency on the dark web (Preciado, 2018). In *The Xenofeminism Manifesto,* the authors call this stance 'anti-naturalism,' declaring: 'In the name of feminism, "Nature" shall no longer be a refuge of injustice, or a basis for any political justification whatsoever! If nature is unjust, change nature!' (Cuboniks, 2018). These manifestos reject rigid divisions between nature and culture, or between humans and animals, envisioning humans as cyborgs (Haraway, 1985) or avatars (Russell, 2020) – hybrid of the organic and the technological. They are not inherently anti-nature, but they resist treating nature as destiny. For activism, this means building solidarity around political affinities rather than biological identities (Haraway, 1985), with xenofeminism affirming 'solidarity with the alien, the foreign, and the figure of stranger, over restrictive solidarity with the familiar, the similar, and the figure of compatriot' (Hester, 2018).

Feminist and queer digital utopias are also intersectional, with intersectionality often conceptualised in postmodern terms. Declaring, 'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess,' Puar (2012) invites us to think of intersectionality through the lens of assemblage theory, where identity is understood as an event – a shifting configuration of identity positions whose relevance changes across contexts. Similarly, the authors of *Furious* approach intersectionality through the metaphor of clouds, bridging the natural and the technological: 'Clouds join, but their activities do not necessarily stack up. Clouds intersect, interact and constitute our everyday lives and our horizons, doing so in immensely complex and fluid ways' (Bassett et al., 2020). Shifting from manifesto to manual, *Furious* (xiv) proposes 21 demands, or theses, for 'radically intersectional feminist technofutures.' These include, for example, prioritising collectivity over data individualism and valuing scalability over sheer size (as in big data) (105-106). *Xenofeminism*, in turn, calls for 'intersectional applications' of technology 'to exceed its largely white, middle-class context of invention,' so that its potential might cut across lines of gender, race, class, ability and other axes of difference (Hester, 2018).

Feminist and queer manifestos for digital futures offer engaged visions that reclaim utopia from the technocrats. In doing so, they help lay the foundations for radically better futures. As a genre, manifestos are adept at articulating core principles, visionary programmes and authoritative doctrines – often at the expense of outlining practical steps and with the risk of universalising. The limited involvement in proposing concrete actions can be read as an invitation for activists to translate ideals into practice; the tendency toward universalism, however, is more troubling. The vast majority of manifestos I identified are authored by activists, artists or academics based in the West – with the caveat that my search focused on English-language sources. This raises important questions about who does and does not write manifestos, why and what visions are lost as a result. I do not yet know the answers. I do know, however, that we need more visions – and more provincialised and more pluralised visions – of digital utopias. We need to believe that the impossible is

attainable, that feminist and queer alternatives to digital capitalism are imaginable, and that we can dream them into being.

DIGITAL INTERUPTIONS AS A TACTIC TO INTERRUPT THE DIGITAL MUNDANE

Ahmet Atay

Regardless of the generation to which we belong, we spend most of our time in digital cultures. As media and cultural studies scholars (Atay 2021; Gajjala, 2003; Ong, 2017) have argued, digital spaces have been providing newer or alternative spaces for the members of historically marginalised communities. Since the late 1990s, both in the U.S. and around the world, queer communities have formed. First, they were on discussion boards, and later, they were formed on specialized online platforms. With the development of smartphones and digital applications, members of the queer community migrated to these platforms to facilitate connectivity among members of the different queer communities, locally, nationally, and globally. While these platforms have allowed the formation of digital communities, they have also allowed queer users to access and create content, express their opinions, display their creative and artistic work, and share their own stories. With that, they also provided different opportunities to cope with queer loneliness while they commodified queer lives.

We use digital platforms or online technologies as a form of communication, a space to form communities, a platform to consume news, information, or entertainment, to send and receive messages, or simply stay connected or wired. I know that none of these activities would be classified as digital activism in traditional or contemporary senses. Then, how could 'digital activism' be performed within the digital mundane rather than a series of acts within a political context to achieve change or educate groups of people about a political or ethical issue? In the following paragraphs, I ponder the idea of the digital mundane and explore the notion of activism within. Some of us are not able to perform activism as it is presently understood, especially in these politically complicated times. If we cannot be activists in the traditional sense, can we still be activists? Is there enough room in the digital cultures we belong to reimagine different forms of acts as forms of activism? You might already be disagreeing with me because the idea of activism as a political act is understood within particular contexts, aiming to achieve specific results. Here, instead of rearticulating what digital queer activism for political change might look like, I want to focus on digital queer activism within the digital mundane. I see digital interruptions as a queer tactic to interrupt the digital mundane.

Our lives, both work and personal, are situated in and shaped by digital cultures, whether we like it or not. We might be writing or endlessly replying to emails without thinking about the time we invest in such mundane activities. Not many of us paused and calculated the hours of labour we perform to stay connected to others in what the members of Millennials and Gen Z refer to as a form of older digital technology. If you are in the teaching profession, you will constantly attend to emails or use online platforms, such as Canvas or Blackboard, to upload documents, generate exams or discussion boards, or maintain gradebooks. Regardless of our profession, we are expected to reside and live in the digital, think digitally, breathe digitally, and be digital.

When we change our mode from work to personal, we would take on the second digital shift. This means that we continue to live on digital platforms and live digitally but perform different tasks. We might be scrolling our Instagram or TikTok accounts, checking out our Facebook community, watching YouTube shorts, following our favourite celebrities, or watching films or TV shows on Hulu or Netflix. We might be looking at porn, ordering groceries online, looking up the closest Sushi place on Uber Eats, buying products on Amazon, or shopping online for products and services. We mix the personal with the professional, leisure with duties, and work with pleasure. As we move through the digital structured chaos, we perform work, or queer work, that is often gone unnoticed.

Within the everydayness of digital culture, we often experience comfort in the digital mundane. This experience feels familiar, personal, and routine. It feels like a part of us, a part of who we are. Although we might understand that major media and digital companies control these spaces, they are surveilled, and they are not free, we try to personalise them in how we use and what we do with them. While we create and recreate digital identities and perform and represent aspects of our identities, we might also use these spaces for our own personal and professional benefits. Hence, the question is, within this digital mundane, are there pockets of opportunities to critique and challenge the structures, systems, or cultural practices around us, some of which we disagree with and some in which we might be embedded?

Here, I borrow from de Certeau (1984), Muñoz (1999), Hall (1980), hooks (1994), and other critical thinkers to conceptualise and create a fusion of ideas to explain queer activism in digital mundane. bell hooks remind us that the spaces, mainly educational spaces, that we occupy are not created for or by historically marginalised people. Although digital spaces are queer and we can queer them, they are not for the members of the queer community either. They are for the mainstream and employ a structure and use algorithms to benefit the

privileged. Hence, by using it, we learned to take something that is for the mainstream and queer it. We learned to rethink and reappropriate. In that act of active queering, we both use tactics that are bold and combatting and subtle.

To contextualise further, let me use a story from my own life. I admit that I am not a visible digital queer activist in the traditional sense. However, I try to find ways to be an activist within the digital culture that surrounds us. In de Certeau's terms, I use tactics from the practices of everyday life, from the mundane.

I live alone. Therefore, I am connected and wired most of my awake hours. I know that. I accept that. Is knowing enough? Absolutely not. However, I use myself as an example in the classes that I teach to engage with my students about the digital labour we do. I see this as a way of critiquing the digital practices that I perform within the digital and screen cultures I belong to.

It was one of those days when I spent most of the day at work, dealing with one issue after another, talking with my students, teaching my courses, and attending meetings. When I left my building, it was dark. I was too tired to go to the gym, so I drove home directly. The weather was cold, and my body knew it. Since I lived on the outskirts of my small town in the middle of nowhere, my circle of friends was limited to my colleagues in my small college. Because I lived in a small town 35 miles away from the biggest town within a 50-mile radius, I was too far away from any queer culture. Hence, my only participation in anything queer was limited to digital spaces. As I sat down on my comfortable but worn-out armchair, I jumped back into my digital ecosystem. I often work after I leave work because I never get anything done that I need to complete during my busy schedule. The first item on my to-do list for the night was grading some student papers. After grading three, I knew I needed a break. I use our online platform, Moodle, for student submissions, so I grade online. Therefore, it is easy for me to leave work behind or take a break and move on to consume entertainment. I follow several queer content creators on YouTube. Because I don't have a queer community around me, I use online communities as a way of connection. Hence, I consume their vlogs as a way of living a queer life, substituting theirs for mine. While I watch their vlogs, I also post on Facebook and scroll my Instagram feed. I interrupt my media consumption to make a cup of tea before I answer some emails and grade two more papers. I switch between work and pleasure, interrupting work with personal, and letting my work interrupt and destroy my personal life. In that moment, I realise that I have been working since 7:30 a.m. My digital presence is a result of what is available to me in my small town. Because I live alone in the middle of nowhere and I allow work to colonise my personal life, I blur the lines between personal and professional in the digital ecosystem. I take another break to look at a queer digital application on my iPhone. While I started a conversation with someone who lives 35 miles away, he told me I live too far away to be friends. But I carry on and continue to have conversations with people online. Although I work until 11 p.m., on and off, grading papers or performing queer digital work to participate in digital queer culture, I push and pull. I negotiate how to work and what to do with that work. I interrupt my work to attend to my other work. While I completely blur the boundaries of work and personal life, due to living online, I also engage with small acts of resistance and enjoyment within the digital mundane. I interrupt work at work as well to send a text message, check my Facebook account, or watch a YouTube video while I wait for my next appointment. Within this constant crisscrossing, I try to find moments of queer joy, sending a message to a queer friend, watching a queer film or YouTube video, or creating an alternative digital environment while I lived in the middle of nowhere.

Is this enough, though? Absolutely not. But I see the continual digital interruptions of work and pleasure in the digital mundane as a way of queer activism because these constant digital interruptions allow me to participate in a queer culture and queer joy within the mundane that is not made for queer diasporic transnational bodies. Hence, I create a digital collage of experiences to disturb the mundane to question critically, but I also create a momentary queer joy within the queer loneliness. While these experiences indeed increase my queer digital work, they also allow me to challenge the mundane and routine that often victimise queer individuals.

STAYING WITH AMBIVALENCE: QUEER DIGITAL ACTIVISM IN TURKEY AND ITS DIASPORA

Yener Bayramoğlu

My research explores the ambivalent meaning and function of digital technologies for the lives of queer migrants and activists. Ambivalence, as both a felt condition and a theoretical posture, is not simply a space of confusion or contradiction—it is a tension that I find very productive. It gestures toward how digital platforms can be sites of possibility and peril, proximity and exposure. Within queer theoretical thinking, ambiguity has a prominent role, and it does not weaken critique; rather, it sustains it. And in the context of digital migration, this ambivalence unsettles the binary thinking about technology as either liberatory or disciplinary. Such binaries

(new media as either 'good' or 'bad') rely on a universal subject that cannot hold the complexity of lives lived at the margins. For those whose lives unfold in the peripheries—queer migrants, queers of color, queers in the Global South—digital media does not arrive as promise or threat, but as both, simultaneously. For instance, in Turkey, queer activists continue to engage with digital platforms, not in spite of their potential for surveillance, but with a knowing intimacy of their risks particularly due to the increasing repression of queer lives. These technologies are saturated with contradictory affects. They enable connection, visibility, resistance, while also being thick with the weight of data extraction, regulation, and control. To inhabit this ambivalence is not to resolve it, but to stay with it—to see what it exposes, what it demands, what it might still make possible.

My interest in ambivalences was triggered by what happened in Turkey since Gezi Protests. Gezi Protests in 2013 marked a critical rupture in Turkey's political landscape, reshaping not only the trajectory of LGBTIQ+ rights but also the modalities of queer activism itself. What began as an occupation against the demolition of Gezi Park quickly metamorphosed into a broader insurrection against state authoritarianism, a collective refusal of the neoliberal and neoconservative logics underpinning Erdoğan's regime. In the wake of this uprising, as public space was increasingly policed, surveilled, and rendered precarious, queer activists turned toward digital platforms. Scholars have marked this turn as a migration: a migration from streets to digital; a movement toward digital entanglement. But this migration is not smooth. It carries with it a friction, a heaviness, a sense of contraction. One does not simply move online; one is also pressed, compressed, shrunk.

Digital media opens up new forms of queer world-making under authoritarianism, yes—but it also demands a cost. There is a haunting, a sense of being watched, traced, held by what Zengin (2024) terms as "violent intimacy" of state homophobia and transphobia. Platforms that promise connection are also instruments of capture. To engage them is to navigate a terrain of simultaneous exposure and erasure, visibility and vulnerability. This is the ambivalence I return to: not a failure to choose, but a structure of feeling shaped by living with contradiction.

Nowhere is this digital reconstitution of activism more palpable than in the Istanbul Pride March, which was banned in 2015 but reimagined as a dispersed, digitally mediated performance of protest. In 2016, rather than surrendering to state suppression, activists subverted the police command "Disperse!" (a word weaponized against them in countless street confrontations) by reclaiming it as an act of defiance. Under the hashtag #dağılıyoruz (#wedisperse), queer bodies, once denied their right to congregate in Istiklal Street, instead fractured across the urban terrain, occupying unexpected spaces and scattering their presence across the city's digital and physical landscapes This strategy of dispersion, at once a tactic of survival and subversion, exemplifies the networked logics of digital resistance: an activism that thrives in fragmentation, that refuses to be contained within singular geographies, and that is always in excess of the state's surveillance apparatus.

A similar strategy unfolded in 2019, when activists reclaimed Twitter (now X) as a platform of insurgent visibility. Through the hashtag #HerYürüyüşümüzOnurYürüyüşü (Every Parade of Ours is a Pride Parade), queers asserted their everyday presence by posting images of themselves walking in Istanbul's streets, recoding the banal act of movement into an affectively charged political gesture. These digital interventions do more than merely document oppression; they produce new spatial imaginaries, challenging the state's claim to regulate the visibility of sexual and gender misfits. The success of these hashtag campaigns underscores the shifting geographies of queer resistance in Turkey, where the digital is not merely a site of retreat but an active political battleground.

However, this digital turn is fraught with contradictions. As Altay (2022) notes, queer visibility in Turkey is increasingly surveilled and penalized, along the lines of a "pink line," which is a state-sanctioned boundary that frames LGBTIQ+ rights as antithetical to "Turkish values" and therefore subject to erasure. This strategy of repression is not new; rather, it operates within a long-established genealogy that demarcates queerness as a foreign, Western imposition. The 2021 withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention was emblematic of this logic, justified through claims that the treaty imposed "Western gender ideologies" incompatible with Turkey's moral fabric. In such a landscape, digital activism becomes both a refuge and a risk, a precarious space where queer subjects navigate the simultaneous affordances and constraints of visibility. Increasingly, activists have adapted by shifting from public-facing platforms to encrypted messaging apps, forging more clandestine networks of solidarity.

The escalating tide of authoritarianism in Turkey's post-Gezi landscape has not only reshaped queer activism but also significantly altered migratory currents—including among LGBTIQ+ individuals. My research is situated within this shifting terrain, attending closely to the phenomenon of queer migration and its intricate entanglements with digital media. This emergent new era of migration, which is often referred to as *post-Gezi migration*, marks a departure from earlier patterns typified by guest labour. It is characterized instead by the flight of educated, urban, and politically dissident individuals in pursuit of asylum or professional refuge, particularly in European contexts such as Germany.

Academic discourse on queer Turkish diasporas has long illuminated their strategic invisibilization within European public imaginaries. In the German context, dominant media and political narratives often cast the convergence of Turkishness—and, by extension, Muslim and Middle Eastern identities—with queerness as a cultural collision, a dissonant meeting of allegedly incompatible sexual norms. The persistent figure of the homophobic Muslim "Other" operates as a linchpin within a broader homonationalist regime, wherein invocations of sexual rights serve to rationalize anti-immigration rhetoric and reinforce racialized systems of exclusion.

As Haritaworn (2024) critically observes, this dynamic is particularly visible in the media's obsessive surveillance of young Muslim migrants' digital lives. Their online expressions are frequently constructed as troubling signs of deviance, including homophobia, antisemitism, or naïveté toward disinformation. This racialized governance of digital conduct reveals a deeper epistemological suspicion: Muslim and migrant media engagement is habitually framed as excessive, unruly, or threatening to the moral fabric of the liberal public sphere.

Amid this politically charged and toxic landscape, emergent queer migrant scenes composed of Turkish, Kurdish, and Middle Eastern individuals have begun to carve out vital counter-publics in European urban and digital spaces. These diasporic formations serve not merely as sites of refuge, but as generative arenas of cultural and political expression. For instance, researchers chart how recently arrived activists have mobilized artistic and activist practices—from diasporic film screenings to museum exhibitions on queer migration—as interventions into dominant narratives of exclusion, cultivating alternative discourses of belonging and resistance (Cabadağ & Erdiger, 2020; Kahraman et al., 2023).

My research is deeply invested in tracing the contours of queer migrant activism and its entwinement with digital technologies through an ethnographic lens. I am particularly drawn to forms of digital ethnography that resist confinement to the online sphere alone, instead including the lived, embodied experiences through which digital life becomes entangled with the everyday. While conducting fieldwork in Berlin, a catastrophic earthquake struck the borderlands between Turkey and Syria in early 2023. What emerged in its aftermath was not only a story of digital solidarity, but one of a new form of digital tansnational activism. Of particular significance was *Lubunya Deprem*—literally "Queer Earthquake"—a transnational, digitally coordinated solidarity network initiated to raise urgent funds for queer and trans survivors, whose needs remained conspicuously absent from mainstream humanitarian responses. While global solidarity campaigns mobilized aid, queer earthquake survivors remained largely invisible within mainstream humanitarian responses. Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, became crucial for amplifying Lubunya Deprem's message. At events like the queer and trans diasporic band Gazino Neukölln concerts in Berlin, QR-coded posters facilitated direct donations, while activists engaged in in-person fundraising efforts. This convergence of digital and material activism underscores the diasporic possibilities of networked solidarity—an activism that traverses' borders, articulating queer belonging across fragmented yet interconnected spaces.

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Dr. Yener Bayramoğlu is a cultural sociologist and Assistant Professor in Sociology at the University of York. Bayramoğlu's work explores the intersection of digital media, migration, queer theory, temporalities and affect. He has investigated how digital media contribute to the formation of queer diaspora across borders while also analysing how social media facilitates the spread of racism and disinformation. He is the author of *Queer (In)Visibilities* (Transcript Verlag 2018) and the co-author of Post/pandemic Life: A Theory of Fragility (Transcript Verlag 2021) both published in German. He has recently co-edited the special issue Transnational Queer Cultures and Digital Media (2024) for *Communication, Culture and Critique*. His work has appeared in journals including *Media, Culture & Society* and *Ethnic & Racial Studies*. He has conducted multi-sited and comparative research across Turkey, Germany, and the UK and his work has been supported by grants from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, the German Research Foundation (DFG), and EU-HORIZON.

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