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Identity or Solidarity? Trans Affective Publics and Identity Frames of Violence

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ABSTRACT

Transgender Day of Remembrance is a key political day of action for the trans movement, both in the USA where it was invented, and elsewhere. I attend to the frames used about violence circulating in—and intensifying—what I call trans affective publics at and around Transgender Day of Remembrance by people and organizations in a "glocal" manner. I address both looser and stable frames of violence around Transgender Day of Remembrance, the most important of which are what I call identity frames of violence. I argue that these identity frames attach transness with vulnerability to violence in a global and unifying way, bypassing intersectional reasons behind the violence, and that frames of violence solidify through circulation. I address the adaptation of these frames in Europe and Finland, as well as alternative rhetoric about the violence, which shakes these solidified frames. I propose that this alternative framing appeals to a reflective form of solidarity, inviting coalition politics between trans and sex workers movements as well as (other) feminists and a re-thinking of both the causes of violence and the "we" to which one is invited to feel responsibility to act in solidarity, in opposing exclusions and oppression.

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Transgender Day of Remembrance is a yearly day of action, originally invented in the USA in 1999, but now noted also in Europe and elsewhere by individuals and organizations, on- and offline. The purpose of Transgender Day of Remembrance is to mourn but also to politicize murders of gender-variant people. In this article, I attend to the *frames* used about this violence circulating in—and intensifying—what I call *trans affective publics* at and around Transgender Day of Remembrance by people and organizations in a "glocal" manner. I view *trans affective publics* as networked publics, which come together through "expressions of sentiment" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 125) about trans identities, trans people's lives and societal situation, and trans politics. Frames tying violence and transness together are at the centre of Transgender Day of Remembrance. In US-centred "global" culture, frames often travel from the USA to other localities. I address both slightly looser and very stable frames of violence around Transgender Day of Remembrance, the most important of which are what I call *identity frames*. I also address the personalization and adaption of these frames in Europe and Finland, as well as articulations that shake some of these frames.

I take part in the scholarly discussion over how the identity politics around violence and transness works (Lamble, 2008; Steinbock, 2019; Westbrook, 2020). Attending to the frames used by NGO:s and taken up by individuals internationally in trans affective publics, I argue, that frames of violence have affective power, which becomes stronger through repetition and circulation.

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Addressing the use of frames in trans publics at the time of TDoR, I argue that identity frames evoke trans feelings and feelings for trans people understood in a "global" and unifying manner. The circulation of identity frames of violence in trans publics facilitates identifying with vulnerability and imagining a global trans nation. Through my analysis of Finnish uses of TDoR in 2017 and 2018, I further argue, that because of their affective power, these frames attaching transness to the threat of violence are sometimes joined with national trans-political frames and adapted for trans-political uses which do not have much to do with (preventing) the violence. I address the way frames developed in the USA are circulated in a manner that evokes empathy, identity, and possibly solidarity, by Europe-wide and Finnish NGO:s, trans people and activists in online trans publics. In this, I continue the project of critically interrogating forms of "globalized" trans politics and "globalization of hate crime activism" started by Snorton and Haritaworn (2013, p. 67). I take part in interrogating of trans politics of "recognition" and heightened visibility of trans people, especially as attached with violence (Stanley, 2017, pp. 616–617;, 2021, p. 15). While addressing a call for solidarity action, I address the possibility for a "coalitional moment" (Chavez, 2013, p. 9) invited through activist rhetorical work—which could also be seen as an invitation towards reflective solidarity (Dean, 1995, 1996). I address this call for action as an instance of public-making around solidarity across identity categories.

TdoR Online and "Globally"

One of the most widely noted trans political events, Transgender Day of Remembrance (from here on: TDoR) was started by Gwendolyn Ann Smith in 1998 as a web project called Remembering Our Dead after the murder of Rita Hester. Aiming for a global, encompassing view of the deaths all over the world, the web project consists of yearly lists of people who have been killed, possibly because they were—or were perceived as—gender variant. Since 1999, TDoR has been held annually on November 20th. The offline events usually involve reading out loud the names of the people who have been killed and lighting candles. The web project of monitoring and listing the deaths of trans people has been taken up by the European non-governmental organization Transgender Europe (TGEU) in its Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) project, which started in 2009 (TGEU, 2009). Like the Remembering Our Dead website, the TMM lists deaths from all over the world. TDoR become a transnational event, nowadays also called International Transgender Day of Remembrance, and is also noted in and through digital networks.

Theoretical Background

I utilize two interrelated concepts that have been used and developed by other scholars studying online political expression: the concept of *frame*, and the concept of *affective public* (Papacharissi, 2015, 2016; Bennett & Segerberg 2012). The concept of the affective public is related to the viewpoint which emphasizes the vitality of affect and emotion for all politics (Goodwin et al., 2000; Papacharissi, 2015). Affective publics are, according to communication studies scholar Zizi Papacharissi (2015) networked publics that come together through "expressions of sentiment" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 125), or small stories, such as tweets, retweets and the like, which accumulate and create attention to an issue—attention, which not only is essential for any social movement (Tufekci, 2013) but can also result in political change, if it translates to a change in political agenda (Papacharissi & Trevey, 2018).[1]The importance of affective/emotional publics for current political landscapes has been noted by many scholars (Boler, 2021; Laaksonen & Pöyry, 2018; Nikunen et al., 2021; Papacharissi, 2015; Papacharissi & Trevey, 2018; Vainikka, 2019). Relying on Baruch Spinoza's theory of affect, Papacharissi defines affect as the intensity or capacity of bodies to affect and be affected. In empirical research on online publics, affect as in this Spinozist sense is hard to separate from expressed and evoked emotions, which are entangled with ideas and concepts (Nikunen, 2018, p. 31; Wetherell, 2013, p. 363). I address these entangled ideas, emotions and

intensities through the concept of affective-discursive practices by social psychologist and scholar of discourse analysis Margaret Wetherell (2013), p. 363; Wetherell et al., 2015, p. 58). Affective-discursive practices both express and call forth emotions towards cultural objects, as well as evoking relations between people and groups (Wetherell et al., 2015, p. 58).

In movement studies, the concepts of framing and (action) frame, derived from sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), have been often used to address the discursive work that movements do (Snow, 2008; Snow et al., 2019). Scholars have argued, that in the new "connective" action enabled by social media, framing happens in a more "personalized", or individualized and personal, manner (Bennett & Segerberg 2013; Papacharissi, 2015; Yang, 2016), when compared with the old normative ideal of collective action. The individualized and personal participation characteristic of online environments has been addressed through both the concept of a personalized (action) frame (Bennett & Segerberg 2013; Papacharissi, 2015) and the idea of cumulative storytelling of the many (Papacharissi, 2015; Yang, 2016). Even in traditional collective action, frames used by movements are not immune to change or adaptation; rather, movements articulate and shift frames creatively with regard to the cultural context (Snow et al., 2019, p. 399), and "bridge" frames with other frames (Snow et al., 2019, p. 400). In my research about TDoR, some of the frames I address are old and "chrystallized" (Snow et al., 2019, p. 400) and predate social media as we now know it, but are now used by individuals and organizations in online platforms. Still others are loose and often occur in the platform-enabled form of hashtags, but also on the streets. Addressing the frames used about violence in trans affective publics, my viewpoint addresses both the repetitive, and instances of the personalizing and adapting "global" frames by individuals and social movement organizations into new environments. Inspired by Wetherell (2013) idea of affective-discursive practices and Goodwin's and others' call for addressing emotion in frames (2000, 72), I take an affective-discursive viewpoint to frame. This means that I not only consider (connective/collective) action frames to be rhetorical tools for answering to questions like "What is going on here" (Snow et al., 2019, p. 393), for defining a "situation as 'injustice'", and for answering "Who or what is to blame" (Snow et al., 2019, p. 396). I also consider frames as devices for answering what should be felt, and what are the objects of this "proper" feeling.

Material and Method

My material and viewpoint are shaped in part by both my own geographical, societal and scholarly location and my engagement in trans publics (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 9). I am a white, middle-class, nonbinary person doing transfeminist research in Finland. I consider situatedness as a necessary part of knowledge production, as there is no pure, unmediated, or innocent vision or position for research (Haraway, 1991, pp. 192–193; Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 9). I address Finnish and European material at the time of TDoR in 2017 and 2018. Finland is a Northern European welfare state, in which TDoR has become a central yearly ritual for trans politics, even though the victims of violence remembered have until recently been people killed elsewhere. I address the rhetoric of TGEU, the key European trans rights organization, as well as Finnish trans and LGBT rights organizations' and activist's rhetoric, as found on websites and social media platforms public posts. I have collected NGO material purposefully through web engine searches and searches on Facebook and Instagram. In 2018, I queried with the hashtag #transmuistopäivä (Finnish for #transdayofremembrance) on Instagram, and analysed the results. The Instagram material that I have selected for analysis represents material that has the most "likes" among the wider material of all public Instagram posts around TDoR with the Finnish hashtag #transmuistopäivä.

My take on studying affective publics is a qualitative, micro-level analysis. The Facebook material I begin with is based on what I encountered on my personal Facebook around the time of Transgender Day of Remembrance in 2018. I have acquired permission to quote the anonymized Facebook post which I address below. Through the analysis of the NGO material, my approach

moves towards more contextualizing one (Saukko, 2003, pp. 13–14). This is my effort to take a "methodological position between the general and the particular" (Saukko, 2003, p. 23). If we were to see the level of national adaptation of the International action frames as particular in comparison to the international or global, I also move between the particular and the general in that sense. However, the very *movement* between the local/national and the global/international (in LGBT politics)—and even, the embeddedness of the one in the other, is more general than what purely "global" (or, for example, purely US) analysis would be (Castañeda, 2002; Vaahtera, 2019, p. 53).

"369 of us"

On Transgender Day of Remembrance, November the 20th 2018, someone on my Facebook friendlist wrote on their Facebook wall:

> To all those of my friends, to whom trans peoples issues aren't familiar: Today isTransgender Day of Remembrance. Did you know, that this year 369 of us has died as victims of a hate crime? During the last ten years, 2982 have died. The figure has gone up in the recent years (Anonymized source 2018). (Translation from Finnish, author, cursives added by author)

The shock of killings together with the fact that the writer mentions "us" as the group which has lost its members violently makes this plea emotionally powerful. What seems most shocking is perhaps the explicit identification of the writer with the people who have died a violent death. Addressing "my friends, to whom trans peoples issues aren't familiar", the post is addressed primarily to cis people, whose solidarity is pleaded. This plea could shake them to action; like familiarizing themselves with "trans peoples issues" or posting about TDoR on their social media accounts. This post is an example of social media-enabled storytelling, similar to the tweets using hashtags addressed by Papacharissi (2015) and Yang (2016). Here, the "personalizable" (Papacharissi, 2015) frame is not in the form of hashtag, but "Transgender Day of Remembrance" itself functions as a frame. The direct address of the reader and the term "us" makes the story personal, though the plea is otherwise made through the joint action frames of TDoR. However, "us", denoting trans people as the collective that is at threat of violence, is also already a part of the common action frame. The concept of affective-discursive practices by Margaret Wetherell (2012; 2015) helps address this expression of sentiment. According to Wetherell et al. (2015, p. 58), affective-discursive practices both express and invite emotions and their objects—"proper" feelings and their proper objects, in a given context. While the joint frame of TDoR is personalized in the post quoted above, this happens in a manner that evokes contextually conventional emotions and their objects. In this case, the object of emotion is "trans people" as a collective. The emotions invited could be shock, mourning and empathy—for "trans people", who are presented to be at risk of facing fatal violence simply because of being trans. The post takes part in the habitual framing of murders of gender variant people as singularly based on "hate" towards trans people as trans people.

Let me now get back to where these—already conventional—framings come from. Whereas the loose personalizable "action frame" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Papacharissi, 2015, p. 75) of TDoR is "Transgender Day of Remembrance", there is also an action frame with stable meaning at play here; that is, an action frame in the more traditional movement studies meaning; a "diagnostic" action frame defining not only "What is going on", but defining the situation as both unjust and changeable and involving an interpretation over who, or what, is to blame (Snow et al., 2019, p. 396). The central action frame of TDoR is to frame the deaths remembered as deaths of trans people, first and foremost, and to imply that the main cause of the killings is an anti-trans sentiment, or "hate crime" as stated in the Facebook post quoted. As sociologist Laurel Westbrook (2020), pp. 4–9) has pointed out, anti-violence activism generally, and transgender activism as a whole, have, at least in the US context, tended to focus on an "identity-based" model of activism, which in turn, tends to focus on one single identity, and to bypass intersectionality. Trans activists in the USA adopted this framing from other identity political movements, which from the

1980's onwards acted from the belief that it was the "category membership" in a stigmatized group, which in itself made a social group, such as trans people, vulnerable to violence (Westbrook, 2020, p. 9). This framing of violence developed by other movements, defined the violence as caused by "hate" towards the group in question (Westbrook, 2020, p. 9). 1990's US trans activism turned to a focus on fatal violence framed through the idea of a single identity as the cause of violence. Westbrook states that this focus was due to it being a good strategy to be noticed within the "movement marketplace" in which movements compete for attention. The very affective power of stories about violence was the reason for this focus on fatal violence in trans activism as a whole. This focus, as an "unintended consequence", works to define trans identity through vulnerability (Westbrook, 2020, pp. 3–4). An identity frame of violence works to both gain attention and prove the existence of a less-known social group, and, as Westbrook (2020, p. 3) points out, and to move the group from devalued cultural position to a position as "socially valuable" people, shifting the prevalent imagination of what trans people are from "villain(s)" to "victim(s)". Groups presented as paradigmatic victims are seen as deserving of compassion (Polletta & Chen, 2011, p. 504). However, as Polletta and Chen (2011), pp. 500–501) argue, emphasizing victimhood can come at the expense of presenting groups as singular victims, excluding agency, because these are culturally presented as excluding each other. As other scholars have pointed out, this articulation of transness with victimhood generally did not benefit the very people who were most at risk of *both* spectacular violence highlighted by the anti-violence activism, *and* structural/slow forms of violence, i.e. what Stanley (2021, p. 8) calls "paradigmatic neglect" as well as concrete physical violence sanctioned by the state, such as police violence. In other words, victimhood was attached to trans people generally, but the compassion and resources generally did not go to people suffering violence in intersections of racism, misogyny and criminalization and surveillance of sex work (see also Snorton & Haritaworn 2013, 72).

Westbrook (2020, p. 16) states that one of the ways in which the trans activists "responded to violence" from 1990s was "making victims count through enumeration of those crimes and educating others about levels of violence". In networked publics, the people "educating others" are, in addition to NGO:s, ordinary users of the platforms. Ordinary users take up the action frames that have already been made familiar by their repetition and cumulative circulation. Figure 369, originates from the Transgender EU:s (TGEU) Transgender Murder Monitoring—project website (TGEU, 2018b). Through the memory practices of TGEU and individuals in networked publics, the 369 people who have reportedly died violently, are claimed as trans. On top of the yearly death count, the press releases always mention the cumulative death count from the time of January 2008 (TGEU, 2021). Similarly, also the Facebook post quoted, mentions that "the figure has gone up". As Steinbock (2019) has noted, in the TDoR communication by TGEU, there is an emphasis on the rising number of deaths, which invites a sense of urgency to the issue of violent deaths described as trans deaths. Figures produced and visualized by TMM circulate each year in digital networks at the time of Transgender Day of Remembrance. I argue that even the numbers produced by TMM work as "personalizable action frames" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 75), to which individuals can add their own personal feelings, views and voice. Facebook invitations to TDoR events, NGO press releases over TDoR, and the death toll enumeration, infographics and maps serve as both invitations to share the information and as invitations to feel. They serve as affective-discursive (framing) practices. In the context of online platforms, in which expressing sentiment is relatively quick and easy, effective framing practices not only invite the emotions they express, but also invite taking part in the expression. These practices, taken up by the many, construct and intensify affective publics around transness and the perceived situation of trans people as a whole.

The action frames created and spread by TGEU are also adapted by other NGO:s, such as the Finnish national LGBT NGO SETA. SETA (2018) stated in the headline of their TDoR post on their website on 19th of November 2018: "The Transgender Day of Remembrance is held 20.11–369 murdered during a year". Drawing from the press release/post by TGEU/TMM, SETA (2018) uplifted the increase in the number "by 44 from previous year", and like TGEU/TMM, SETA

mentioned the (cumulative) reported death count from 2008. Commemorating trans deaths is in many places the most public form of trans activism. Remembering "our dead", or dead claimed as trans, becomes a form of proving that we exist (Lamble, 2008; Westbrook, 2020). Even though the deaths have happened on other continents—through remembering them—and claiming them *as* deaths caused by violence against trans people—the rituals of TDoR construct an imagined trans nation (Anderson, 1983; Steinbock, 2019). The people who have died are claimed as transgender in their counting (Steinbock, 2019), even if their own identity may have been something different from the anglophone and European transgender identities, for example, travesti. Simultaniouty of the TDoR events across continents—even in the Nordic countries—and in digital networks—helps create the imagined nation which is imagined as global. The practices of online storytelling about transness and violence at the time of TDoR evoke both taking part in the storytelling, and emotions towards a global "us".

I will next focus more closely on the way the international action frames created in USA and spread internationally by TGEU are mobilized for national trans politics in Finland.

Using the Global Moment for National Trans Politics

In Helsinki, the capital of Finland, TDoR is held as a part of a yearly week-long Trans Helsinki—event. It is often the most public part of the week which also encompasses "community" events or peer support. Similarly to the case of Berlin TDoR analysed by Haritaworn, the public act of remembering the dead is also one of the events in which "community" becomes political—the act is directed both inwards, towards a "trans community", which is simultaneously called into being, and outwards, towards the wider media and politicians (Snorton & Haritaworn 2013, 74). On the events page of SETA, the national organization for LGBT people, for example, the event page of Trans Helsinki week of 2017 is titled "Trans Helsinki tackles the name law and trans murders" (Seta 2017). The title links the national legislative issue of the name law, and the global issue of "trans murders".

Again in 2018, the place of the TDoR event in Helsinki was the steps of the parliament. While the SETA events page says that the event is "religiously and ideologically unattached", the place of the event at the steps of the highest political decision-making body is a form of making trans politics. As Sturken (1997), p. 14) has noted, public memory practices are often forms of "communicating to the nation". Deaths from other locations are used for Finnish trans politics which does not necessarily have anything to do with the people who are being remembered (see also Alasuutari, 2020, p. 233). In 2018, the major issue in Finnish trans politics, which the trans activists from the national trans rights organization Trasek, together with SETA and the human rights organization Amnesty, wanted to highlight, was the reform of the so-called trans law, which regulates the changing of juridical gender. In 2018, this national trans political issue was highlighted at the time of TDoR by SETA, Amnesty and Trasek; the appeal signed by nearly 18.000 people for the reform was handed over to all the political parties at the time of TDoR, on 20th of November. This use of the international day of action for national trans-politics was evident in the Instagram post of the Green MP and actor (2018), who has become known for advocating LGBT rights in Finland and for being one of the few out-gay politicians in the Finnish parliamentary politics. This post, which with 549 likes was among the most "liked" (public) posts on Instagram with the tag #transmuistopäivä (trans day of remembrance in Finnish) joined the two issues of TDoR (remembering the dead) and Finnish trans law, with the tags "#translakinyt" (translawnow) and #transmuistopäivä (transdayo-fremembrance). It stated:

> Today is the international Transgender Day of Remembrance. According to the international organizations of gender minorities, during this year, 369 trans persons have been murdered. All lives lost in vain and again one more reason for why awholesale reform of the trans law is needed (Toivola, 2018). (translation from Finnish, author).

This post uses the loose action frame of Transgender Day of Remembrance, which this time, is also in the form of a hashtag, similar to the action frames used in solidarity to support movements in the Arab Spring and Occupy, addressed by Papacharissi (2015). In this post, this hashtag is used together with another trans political action frame, specific for Finnish affective trans publics, in other words, the hashtag #translakinyt (translawnow). This hashtag probably has origins in the name of a campaign for a new trans law by Amnesty Finland, active at least from 2015 to 2017, but since then, the slogan has been used for many years by Finnish trans people and trans activists online and has been often heard slogan also on the streets, in Pride parades and other demonstrations. This example of social media storytelling joins these two loose action frames and, in that way, the international trans-political frame is merged with the national trans-political frame. Even the 549 likes of this post take part in the online expression of sentiment around transgender and violence, aligning with this message and uplifting this story in the "storytelling infrastructure" (Papacharissi, 2016) of Instagram. They are in that amplifying this framing of the violence and of the law. Combining Pedwell's (2021) idea that tiny social media acts, such as liking or sharing a post on Instagram, can also be seen as political acts, and Papacharissi's (2015) concept of affective public, I consider these tiny acts as taking part in an affective public around an issue and thus tiny online trans-political acts. This post is an example of adapting the frame to a local context. Like the use of both the national trans-political hashtag and the (translated) hashtag for the international trans political hashtag, the text of the post also seamlessly joins the issue of the violent deaths of gender variant people in various geographical locations, and the law regulating the juridical gender change of Finnish trans people. In the picture on the Green MP:s Instagram post, he and Trasek's vice president, pose together, smiling, holding together a binder which states in Finnish "Trans law now!".

On the same day, Trasek (2018) posted on Facebook a picture of Kivistö speaking in the trans law themed public event held for the political parties, with the quote:

> This is not a political game. This is our life. And all of this will stay like a shadow in the corner of the eye for us. (translation from Finnish, author) (Trasek, 2018).

Together with the picture of Trasek's vice president speaking to people in a dimly lighted room, with his hands raised, looking at the audience appealingly , and surrounded by a halo of soft light, this quote has powerful emotional appeal. As an affective-discursive practice, this post evokes both emotions and their objects. Speaking about "our life" evokes a feeling of empathy for "us" and "ours" for whoever is hailed by the identity category "trans". Even while Trasek does not in this post say anything about TDoR, the timing invites the linking of these two issues together. TDoR:s central framing of violence faced by trans and gender variant people, as "violence against trans" strengthens the emotional appeal of the quote from Trasek's vice chair, lending effective power to the campaign. As TDoR is about "our dead" – "our" deaths, our lives—the quote implicitly convays the impression that the trans law is also a matter of life and death. The cumulative affective-discursive practices around TDoR evoke emotions, which can be repurposed. The feelings about trans people—constructed as a collective of suffering—are used for national trans politics by linking local trans political concerns with TDoR. Shared on the national trans organization Trasek's page, the post with the picture and quote by Kivistö takes part in forming an affective public around transgender politics evoking bodily reactions, "expressions of sentiment" and identification.

Encountering this one post is not an isolated event. The posts about violence and trans—shared on every TDoR, and also at other times, are cumulative. I argue that Twitter streams, also Facebook and Instagram newsfeeds with posts, invitations, shares and likes "function as affect modulators for people using them to connect with others and express their understanding of a particular issue" (Papacharissi, 2015: 118). Another way to put this is that effective practices evoke objects of emotion which that through repetition. When accumulated, the online stories evoking emotions towards trans people as a collective which is presented to be in at threat of violence, gain more strength. Trans identity becomes tied with the threat of violence—which increases fear and makes

living harder for trans people (Westbrook, 2020, p. 16). The memory practices of TDoR often fail to highlight the differences between trans people, and the structural and intersectional reasons behind the fatal violence (Lamble, 2008; Haritaworn and Snorton, 2013). These include the structural violence embedded in capitalism and racism (Stanley, 2021, p. 8). Similarly, the intersection of anti-sex worker sentiment, embedded in societal stigma and transmisogyny, and anti-trans feelings and actions, most often directed at trans feminine people of Color, and especially sex workers, can be forgotten when claiming the victims of violence as "our dead" (author, 2018; Lamble, 2008). The people remembered are mostly People of Color from Latin America—most notably Brazil—and the US, whereas the people doing the remembering in places like Helsinki are mostly white trans people and allies. Snorton and Haritaworn (2013, 67, 71–74) point to the fact that black and brown trans feminine people circulate in their death and gather affective value for the activism of predominantly white trans activists or LGBT campaigns, bringing both visibility and togetherness for them. Snorton and Haritaworn (2013, 66–67) theorize this, following Mbembe (2003) as "necropolitics" in which the death of black and brown trans persons can enliven activism, which does not serve them or people like them. Feeling empathy for "us" and "ours" constructed through a single identity frame does not in itself move us into a wider solidarity. Next, I will address an articulation of violence that shakes some of the frames discussed thus far.

The Question of Solidarity

Next, I will discuss an alternative articulation of transgender and violence, shared on transgender networks online: a joint call to action by TGEU with other trans and sex workers organizations, shared by TGEU (2018a) on their website and Facebook page. While this CFA was not shared on TDoR, it is a part of the co-articulation of trans and violence in trans affective publics.

On 7 September 2018, TGEU (2018a) posted a call to action on its website with the title: "September 21 – Call for International Day of Action in memory of Vanessa Campos and against [violations of] trans, migrants and sex workers' rights". The call to action briefly tells the situation in which Vanessa Campos, "a trans sex worker of Peruvian descent", died. The text states that her murder "is part of a long list of violence against trans women, often sex workers, and migrants", referencing the figures collected by TGEU/TMM, and stating that "62%" of those "murdered globally are sex workers" and "88% in Europe" (TGEU, 2018a). Numbers work also here as part of affective-discursive practice. However, they also work to shake a conventional framing of the deaths, and a conventional invitation to feel empathy towards trans people as a unified collective body perceived to be equally at threat of violence. Here, the numbers are used to make an argument about the uneven situation of trans and gender-nonconforming people inside the perceived and imagined trans community. Highlighting the portion of the murdered people who were sex workers, calls into question the framing of the deaths as simply trans deaths.

The often implicit framing of LGBT people as a unified "community" is questioned. The text emphasizes the uneven situation within the perceived "LGBT community":

> Trans people, sex workers and their organisations have been calling for radical social and political changes to end violence against our communities. However, whilst some progress has been made for the LGBT community, the most vulnerable trans and sexworkers continue to be at extreme risks of discrimination, stigma and violence. (TGEU, 2018a)

The text implicitly makes a plea for solidarity from the parts of the "LGBT community" which are experiencing "progress". This is thus a call for reflective solidarity instead of the sort of emphatic attunement and identification, which can cause amnesia regarding the differences, and inequalities within the transgender imagined nation. While also "trans people" is mentioned in juxtaposition to "LGBT community", "trans people" is mentioned here together with "sex workers" and both are presented as having demanded "radical social and political changes". The text positions "most vulnerable trans and sex workers" as the ones who face extreme "risks of discrimination, stigma and

violence"; the text thus emphasizes the position of these trans sex workers at the intersection of several forms of discrimination, instead of presenting the issue of violence as facing all trans people equally.

The murder of Vanessa Campos is put into the context of not merely cissexism, but also the worsening legal and political situation of sex workers and migrants in Europe and France, specifically. The call to action describes the implementation of the so-called Swedish Model criminalizing the purchase of sexual services in France. The text references the results from a report by Medecins du Monde France, stating that the law has reportedly made the situation of sex workers worse, resulting in "more isolation and greater stress", and "42% of sex workers are more exposed to violence" (TGEU, 2018a). The description of stress and isolation, and the figure emphasizing drastically worsened concrete situation, could invoke compassion and sense of urgency. The call to action further states that: "The more marginalised sex workers, including trans migrant sex workers like Vanessa are the those most affected by the law change" (TGEU, 2018a).[1] The text mentions "racism and anti-migrants laws and policies" hindering migrants possibilities "to report crime and access justice" (TGEU, 2018a). Oppressive laws and state policies, as well as racism, are represented as responsible for enabling violence.[2] Through highlighting state repression against migrants and migrant sex workers especially, the call for action is a call for intersectional politics which is not based on national belonging or citizenship—even in the "transgender nation". This call to action politicizes the structures behind the concrete violence, instead of inviting an individualizing, psychologizing or merely symbolic politics, which the "hate" (crime) discourse and hate crime legislation easily end up supporting (Haritaworn 2013; Smith, 2007).

This material points to the need for solidarity across imagined communities. The call to action is explicitly directed at "LGBT, trans, sex workers, migrant, anti-racist, syndicalist and feminist organizations" (TGEU, 2018a). The aim is to evoke affect and action across identities and movements—identity based or not. This could invite "connective action", and public-making around solidarity both within trans "communities" and across identity categories. This re-articulation of transgender and violence explicitly invites solidarity across national borders and identity categories, and even though the initial bodily responses it evokes could be similar to the stories I discussed earlier. In this CFA, the rhetoric envisions a "coalitional moment" (Chavez, 2013, p. 9). Chavez (2013, p. 9) writing about the rhetorical work of activists doing queer migrant politics, states that both LGBTQ activists and migrant activists have often taken part in "politics of normalization", which has worked against the other group. However, people doing queer migrant activism find a "coalitional moment", a "possibility—fleeting or enduring—of a coming together, or a juncture, for some sort of change" (Chavez, 2013, p. 9). This thought by Chavez (2013) resonates with earlier feminist thought by women of colour and postmodern feminism on the importance of coalition politics for feminists (Anzaldúa, 1987; Butler, 1990, pp. 21–22; Combahee River Collective, 1977, 2000). Like feminists and queer migrant activists, also the movements of sex workers and trans people and gender variant people can think about their politics from the viewpoint of coalitions, "fleeting or enduring" as Chavez (2013, p. 9) writes, as is visible in the call to action addressed here. Like the activist rhetorics studied by Chavez (2013, p. 9) the CFA addressed here shows activists crafting "alternative rhetorical imaginaries". In addition to coalition building, this activist rhetoric can be seen as calling for "reflective solidarity" (Dean, 1995, 1996), an appeal to solidarity which is addressed to feminists as well as left movements in addition to sex workers, migrants and trans or gender variant people. Reflective solidarity defines it's "we" as open to adjustment (Dean, 1995, p. 127;, 1996, p. 31). This "we" is not only critical of politics which oppress and creates exclusions—it is also self-critical towards its own exclusions and seeks to be open for critique (Dean, 1995, p. 127;, 1996, pp. 31–32). This CFA resonates with the call by Sarah Lamble (2008), p. 38) to "envision practices of remembrance that situate our own positions within structures of power." Rather than restrictive forms of solidarity which rely on limiting, single identity tropes and on conventional emphatic identification attached to these identity tropes, reflective solidarity can be appealed to

(Dean, 1995, p. 121). While Dean (Dean, 1995., 116) separates rather narrowly defined "affectual empathy" from the more cognitively achieved form of solidarity she proposes, from my affective-discursive viewpoint, I would add: reflective solidarity can be invited through powerful rhetoric which combines the cognitive with the affective. Dean (1995, p. 136) cautions us to critically "attend to the histories and metaphors in which we embed our arguments". Applying this challenge to movement rhetoric is a project which I have tried to take part through this article. Alternative articulations of violence addressed here could help us "move from sympathy to responsibility, from complicity to reflexivity, from witnessing to action" (Lamble, 2008, p. 38). This can be done, as in this example, through putting the limelight on the inner inequalities within LGBT and transgender imagined nations, and stating political goals which do not stay at the level of symbolic recognition (of the imagined nation as a nation of suffering), but emphasize material results of laws and policies for people living at the intersection of oppressions, such as trans migrants who are sex workers.

Conclusions

Framing is important for any movement. In this article, I have addressed framing as a cumulative, affective-discursive practice. Through affective frames, ideas and emotions are expressed in a manner which can evoke more expression and mobilize people in the streets. In the case of trans affective publics, violence and trans identity are co-articulated in the most important frames of violence. The central frame of the deaths as trans deaths works to construct a global "us". Through repetition, identity-centring framing of violence—and framing of trans people as vulnerable—creates relations and solidifies groups as objects and subjects of "proper" emotion. In the case of TDoR, identity-centred framing positions trans people as the object of empathy and compassion, and cis people as the ones feeling compassion, and trans people as feeling empathy for "us" and "ours". This identity framing of violence highlights hate towards trans people as the cause of violence, excluding other explanations. For trans people in various locations in the world, this identity frame also evokes feelings of fear, shock and mourning. In the case of networked platforms, where expression is quick and easy, user-generated framing practices, such as posting about a story about violence at the time of TDoR, also invite taking part in expressing similar sentiment and feelings; the affective-discursive practices of online storytelling become cumulative and intensify, as they are repeated simultaneously across geographical and societal distances. In the case of TDoR, the cumulative effect is strengthened by fact that it is a yearly event, a ritual of politizing trans existence, and the repetitive circulation of the rising figures (as frames) by TGEU and by other NGO:s and individuals, online and offline.

The public remembering of the dead at the time of TDoR can evoke compassion towards trans people as a collective of suffering, and potentially mobilize people to act in solidarity with this collective entity. However, as I have shown, the emotional appeal of the imagined nation as a nation of suffering is sometimes used for national trans politics far from where the murders took place, in a manner which does little to advance the plight of those gender variant people whose situation is the worst, even while it might lend affective power to other trans political efforts. If the solidarity is directed simply to trans people as a collective of suffering, the unequal situation of trans and gender variant people depending on other power relations is forgotten. The feelings for trans "us" are a powerful force, as is the shock and compassion towards "trans people" as a collective of suffering. However, as Lamble (2008), p. 35) has stated, when feeling empathy for others suffering, "we risk appropriating another's pain for our own purposes".

My analysis could help theorize the relationship between affective alignment and solidarity within and across identity categories even beyond trans or LGBTIQ politics. Some of the most visible movements of the current moment, such as #MeToo, have come together through networked storytelling about violence—through identification, affect, and even solidarity. In as much as these affective publics come together around affective frames which emphasize a singular identity category as a collective of suffering, they too build on similar politics of vulnerability as TDoR.

Drawing from critiques of identity politics centring a singular category of identity, and from feminist theorizations over coalition politics and reflective solidarity, we should continue to critically interrogate the way popular frames centred on a singular identity group not only strengthen affective appeal, but also enable speaking for others, and might veil power imbalances within the collective of suffering.

Notes

1. Namaste (2009: 23) noted already over a decade ago, that "for many transsexual women, it is the criminalization of prostitution that governs their everyday lives" as well as the ways in which political desire to "expulsion of migrant workers" have motivated anti-soliciting law in France (Namaste, 2009, p. 26).
2. Thinking about this in line with Stanley's (2017, pp. 616–618; 2021), thought on visibility, it is possible to state that whereas the predominantly white trans movements aim for recognition and visibility, the trans/sex workers movements demanding end to Swedish model and less policing of migrancy, demand in a sense, "opacity", or, less visibility—in the form of surveillance and "clocking" by the state and the police.

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