

## Queering feminist geography I: queer/trans inclusion, exclusion, and belonging

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**To cite this article:** Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid, Sarah Fogel, Victoria Ting, Nick Koenig, Wiley Sharp, Kelsey Emard, Rowan Rush-Morgan, Markia Silverman-Rodríguez, Adanya Ella Hicks, Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta, Colleen C. Myles-Baltzly, Martina Jakubchik-Paloheimo, Ingrid L. Nelson, Heather A. Davis, Alicia Danze, Lindsay Naylor, Thien-Kim Bui, LaToya E. Eaves, Carrie Chennault & Niyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles (2025) Queering feminist geography I: queer/trans inclusion, exclusion, and belonging, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 32:8, 1290-1301, DOI: [10.1080/0966369X.2025.2513079](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2513079)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2513079>



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COMMENT



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Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid<sup>a</sup> , Sarah Fogel<sup>b</sup>, Victoria Ting<sup>c</sup>, Nick Koenig<sup>d</sup> , Wiley Sharp<sup>e</sup> , Kelsey Emard<sup>f</sup> , Rowan Rush-Morgan<sup>g</sup> , Markia Silverman-Rodríguez<sup>h</sup> , Adanya Ella Hicks<sup>a</sup>, Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta<sup>i</sup> , Colleen C. Myles-Baltzly<sup>j</sup> , Martina Jakubchik-Paloheimo<sup>k</sup> , Ingrid L. Nelson<sup>l</sup> , Heather A. Davis<sup>m</sup> , Alicia Danze<sup>n</sup>, Lindsay Naylor<sup>o</sup> , Thien-Kim Bui<sup>p</sup> , LaToya E. Eaves<sup>q</sup> , Carrie Chennault<sup>r</sup>  and Niiyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles<sup>s</sup> 

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### ABSTRACT

In this first piece of our four-part Queering Feminist Geography Viewpoint series, we explore themes of queer/trans inclusion, exclusion, and belonging in feminist geography and geography more broadly. We begin by introducing the Queering Feminist Geography Collective, a group of us that has come together to activate intellectual and political potentials between queer, trans, and feminist thought and foster inclusion of queer/trans people, perspectives, and approaches within feminist geography. We then explore the question of queer/trans inclusion in feminist geography by sharing positive and negative experiences we have had within the subfield's spaces. We close with our shared aspirations for a queer/trans inclusive feminist geography.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 13 March  
2024; Accepted 26 April  
2025

### KEYWORDS

Gender; queer; trans;  
feminist geography;  
inclusion

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This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

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## Introduction

This is the first of four *Viewpoint* articles on ‘Queering Feminist Geography’ (*Viewpoints* referred to throughout as *QFG I, II, III, and IV*). This series reflects the dialogues taking place under the auspices of the Queering Feminist Geography Collective, a group of queer, trans, and allied feminist geographers working to make more space for queer and (especially) trans perspectives and people in feminist geography and geography as a whole.

Why focus our intervention on feminist geography rather than geography writ large? Feminist geography may be more sympathetic and educated about queer and trans issues, and feminist geographers are oppressed by the cisheteropatriarchy operating in our field. Our critical intervention into feminist geography does not lose sight of these realities. Indeed, many of the divisions we experience within feminist geography are the product of the cisheteropatriarchy and coloniality of the broader discipline. Nevertheless, as feminist geographers committed to an inclusive and expansive intellectual project, we raise a friendly and constructive critique of the ongoing exclusions of our subfield. With these interventions, we aim to open a dialogue about the intellectual and political integrity of our shared feminist project and enact a feminist geography that elevates the voices of our queer and trans colleagues. We encourage our readers to hear our calls not as a demand for more care labour from feminist geographers, who likely already hold this labour disproportionately, nor as an antagonistic critique, a betrayal of our community, or an act of exposing or undermining an already marginal subfield, but as an opportunity to hear from queer and trans colleagues and their allies in the services of building a more inclusive feminist community that can resist cisheteropatriarchy in and beyond geography, and, in doing so, work toward collective liberation.

This is to say that our intervention starts—but does not end—with feminist geography. While we address feminist geographers most directly, these issues we outline certainly apply to geography as a whole, and are likely more pronounced in spaces beyond feminist geography. However, we feel that feminist geography is the best starting point for these dialogues because it is already concerned with challenging gendered power structures in the academy and transforming knowledge production. Thus, as feminist geographers committed to queer and trans liberation, we want to begin the broader work of transforming our cisheteronormative and transphobic discipline (Giesecking 2023; Rosenberg 2023) by engaging in dialogues with our feminist geography colleagues so that we can work to transform geography together in coalition and joint struggle.

While we describe in more detail what has brought us together as a collective momentarily, it is worth asking at the outset, from another angle: why ‘Queering Feminist Geography’? Is feminist geography not already queer? The answer to this question is complex. It traces lines of development of feminist geographic thought across decades, as well as convergences and divergences between feminist, queer, and trans perspectives in geography. Feminist geography and LGBT (i.e. lesbian, gay, and bisexual) geographies/geographies of sexuality developed specifically as subfields in response to the broader cisheteropatriarchal exclusions of the discipline (see collections by Bell and Valentine 1995; Duncan 1996). There have now been three decades

of sustained engagement between feminist and queer research in geography (see Browne, Nash, and Hines 2010; Knopp 2007; Wright 2010, and *QFG IV*). We note that queer and trans *gender* have seen less thorough engagements and are less well incorporated into existing feminist genealogies. (We make this distinction to call for more focused attention to queer, nonbinary and trans *gender* identities in feminist geography while also recognizing that queer gender and sexuality are often co-constructed, co-inhabited and do not represent entirely distinct identities and cultures). We celebrate our colleagues—folks like Lynda Johnston, Jack Giesecking, Kath Browne, Robyn Longhurst and others—who have provided models of sustained engagement between queer, trans, and feminist thought.

Nonetheless, feminist, queer, and trans geography remain divided in no small part because of the assumption that gender and sexuality are essentially different objects of theory and empirical research. From this view, theory can be directly mapped onto the population being researched: feminist theory is for studying women, queer theory is for studying LGBTQ2S populations, and trans theory is for transgender people (see Butler 1994 on how divisions between Women's Studies and Queer Theory mirror this logic). While feminist geography offers important tools for the study of queer and trans lives—and queer and trans life are vital for understanding feminist struggles and politics—the lingering siloed structure of our field inhibits engagement with queer, and especially trans, perspectives within mainstream feminist geography (Giesecking 2023). Moreover, there has been remarkably little work within feminist geography that engages trans perspectives to understand and trouble the core concept of our field: gender (see *QFG II* for a more detailed assessment of this problem, as well as *QFG IV* for a bibliographic reflection).

This is to say that while the queering of feminist geography is well underway, it is unfinished and in progress. Taking a nod from queer theory, we argue that feminist geography is not *already queer*—nor can it be in any straightforward sense. As José Esteban Muñoz famously argues: 'Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, *we are not yet queer*' (2009, 9; emphasis ours). This is to say that we must continue to queer feminist geography to push toward a more radical intellectual horizon. At present, feminist geography is not yet queer because of the continuing exclusion of trans scholars and trans thought. With this series of *Viewpoints*, we contribute to this ongoing project of queering feminist geography by bringing queer and (especially) transgender perspectives from the margins to the analytical centre of feminist geography.

In this series, we thus explore how we can better include, support, and contribute to the liberation of our queer and trans colleagues in the intellectual and embodied spaces of feminist geography and beyond. We also extend these efforts to the liberation of all of our minoritised colleagues who are impacted by the conjoined logics of racism, coloniality, sexism, ableism, and queerphobia that shape geography (systems of oppression that, we emphasise, are encoded in the workings of cisheteronormative gender [see *QFG II*]). Across this series, we echo calls for intersectionality (Mollett and Faria 2018, Falconer Al-Hindi and Eaves 2022; Cahuas 2023) and build on critiques of geography's whiteness and calls to decolonize the discipline (Pulido 2002; Joshi, McCutcheon, and Sweet 2015; Jazeel 2017; Zaragocin and Caretta 2021) because we see the marginalization of geography's racial, gendered, sexualized, and otherwise

minoritized subjects as linked in shared struggle against a 'cis white colonial geographic imagination' (Giesecking 2023).

In this spirit, and as scholars committed to critical reflexivity, we must acknowledge that feminist geography has not been immune to the broader problems of our discipline. Its histories and cultures are also marked by racism, whiteness, and cisheteronormativity. Genealogical debates aside, we understand that our intellectual commitments and principles do not always translate into practice in academic spaces. The disjuncture we want to point out here is how, even in professional spaces shaped by these intellectual traditions and principles, we can experience exclusion and a lack of belonging, partly because of the lack of translation of our principles and ideas into practice. We are focused on this moment of translation, and that is where we urge our colleagues to reflect more.

In the remainder of this *Viewpoint*, we introduce ourselves and our collective aspirations. In *QFG II*, we consider how feminist geography might respond to the rise of transexclusionary feminism and interrogate its own cisheteronormativity, coloniality, and whiteness. In *QFG III*, we call upon our feminist allies and accomplices to advocate for queer and trans geographers through forms of feminist praxis, care, and allyship. In *QFG IV*, we consider the lineages linking feminist, queer, and trans geographies and the intellectual and political potentials of a trans-feminist geography.

### Who is the Queering Feminist Geography Collective?

We are a collective of queer, trans, and queer-positive feminists working within and adjacent to geography. We describe ourselves (not exclusively) as queer, trans, cis, straight, bisexual, nonbinary, genderqueer, genderfluid, transfemme, and transmasculine. Beyond our gender and sexual identities, some of us describe ourselves as white, BIPOC, working class, disabled, and neurodivergent. We are faculty, students (including first-gen), postdocs, and independent scholars. Members of our broader collective are mainly but not exclusively located within the Anglophone Global North.

We recognize that this collective location limits our perspective and replicates the limitations of the epistemological vantage points of the (sub)fields from which we write. We are working to address this issue by situating our reflections within critiques of white feminism and the whiteness and coloniality of our broader discipline and working toward an intersectional vision for feminist geography. We are also an ever growing collective and invite the participation of all of our feminist colleagues worldwide and/or support the proliferation of similar groups in various national and regional contexts.

The following series of *Viewpoints (QFG I-IV)* represent the reflections and aspirations that we have collectively developed. These articles were composed through a collaborative process, including: zoom meetings with facilitated discussions; google docs and jamboards to gather input and feedback asynchronously; collective review of academic literature; and iterative co-writing processes of drafting, feedback, revision, and elaboration (for more details on the collective and how it works, see 2025). These interventions also exist as zines, hosted on GEOZONE, the Geography Zine Organizing Network (<https://geoz.one>). Stitching together our voices, experiences, and contributions, we sketch out a shared, but differently inhabited and enacted, vision for feminist geography.

## Why we have come together

From across our various identities and locations in geography and allied fields, we affirm that queer and trans people belong within and are a vital part of feminist geography and geography as a whole. We desire a feminist geography that reflects the value and vibrancy we see in queer and trans life—whether that be in queer/trans intellectual traditions and methodologies, in the insights, experiences, and humanity of our queer/trans colleagues, or in the mundane and more spectacular geographies of queer and trans life. (Note: Henceforth we will use ‘queer/trans’ to signal non-normative gender and sexual identities. This is to be read as ‘queer and/or trans,’ in recognition of our overlapping identities and positionalities and our shared marginalisation in relation to cishetero norms and cultures. Where more specificity is required, we use more specific terms).

We have come to feminist geography not only because it reflects our political and intellectual orientations, but also to find a sense of belonging and support in a generally hostile discipline (see Kinkaid 2024). Those of us who are queer and/or trans people, can feel isolated, invisible/hypervisible, marginalised, and unsupported in the discipline of geography as a whole. In a cisheteronormative, and often queerphobic and transphobic, discipline (see Gieseking 2023; Rosenberg 2023; Kinkaid 2024), we look toward feminist geography as a potential space of recognition, mentorship, commonality, and support in our personal, professional, intellectual, and political lives. In other words, for many of us who identify as queer and/or trans in this collective, feminist geography has been, or holds promise as, an intellectual and political home for us.

However, some of us have also experienced feelings of exclusion, non-belonging, erasure, and misrecognition in feminist geography spaces. Even where we haven’t experienced these problems, we can see how much more feminist geography could do to embrace queer and trans life than it has. We have thus come together to create more space for incoming generations of queer and trans people within feminist geography. We hope that our feminist geographer colleagues—specifically our cisgender and/or heterosexual colleagues—will join us in working, learning, dialoguing, and fighting to make space for queer and trans people in this discipline and this world.

Those of us who are cisgender and/or heterosexual come to this collective dialogue ready to learn from, support, and uplift our queer and trans colleagues. (Henceforth we use ‘cis/het’ for brevity. This term is meant to signal non-queer gender and sexual identities. It is to be read as ‘cisgender and/or heterosexual,’ not as a monolithic conflation or necessary pairing of the two, as many of us are cisgender and queer). We are thus listening to the calls of our queer and trans colleagues and responding to the broader queer- and trans-antagonistic political moment by turning inward to reflect on how we, as cis/het feminist geographers and colleagues, may be failing queer and trans people within our professional spaces and the wider world, and how we might support them better. We take it upon ourselves to decentre our egos, listen to our colleagues, amplify their voices, and change to meet the demands of the current moment. All of us—regardless of our gender and sexual identities—endeavour to enact this praxis to learn about (and unlearn) our relative privilege and ignorance across our differences of race, geography, class, ability, career stage, gender, and sexuality.

## What's working: inclusion and belonging

In the rest of this *Viewpoint*, we describe how feminist geography spaces have enabled and supported us as queer/trans people while also identifying where our collective commitments fall short and create barriers for queer/trans geographers. We identify specific actions that have potential to make space for queer/trans people in feminist geography and advance generative dialogue and collaboration among us (see also *QFG III*).

As members of this collective, our experiences of feminist geography are varied depending on our intersectional identities, geographic locations, career stage, and other factors. However, those of us who have turned up for this conversation see much to celebrate in feminist geography. Within feminist geography, we have found a place to explore our intellectual interests which weave together and connect feminist, queer, and trans thought, including themes of gender, embodiment, epistemology, identity, power, subjectivity, and oppression, as well as emotion, performativity, care, violence, and everyday life. We recognise that feminist geography paved the way for queer/trans geographies to emerge in our discipline and want to honour those genealogies and longstanding dialogues (Browne, Nash, and Hines 2010; Johnston 2018; Knopp 2007; Wright 2010). We are also keenly aware of the political commonalities that draw us together, including struggles for bodily autonomy, public space, freedom of gender expression, and the dismantling of white supremacist cis-heteropatriarchy (discussed in *QFG IV*).

We have also been supported through the mentorship and professional development activities of feminist geographers, the Feminist Geographies Specialty Group of the AAG, and various networks and gatherings of feminist geographers (e.g. Feminist Geography Writing Group). We appreciate how feminist geography spaces are interested in dismantling hierarchies and distinctions between scholarship and activism, between different career stages and ranks, and other binaries and categorisations that shape and constrain our bodies, relations, and worlds. We are drawn to these spaces because they are spaces premised on recognition, solidarity, and care, forms of support and political praxis that queer and trans people urgently need in our personal and professional lives (Malatino 2020; Naylor 2025). As queer/trans people *and* feminists, we want to show up to these spaces as our whole selves—with full recognition of our humanity and our place in feminist struggles—and contribute to building and cultivating them together.

## What needs to change: exclusion and marginalisation

While we affirm the commitments and principles of feminist geography and work toward their realisation, we also know that feminist geographers (ourselves included) and feminist geography do not always live up to these principles and commitments. In particular, those who are queer and trans among us acutely register the individual and collective failure of feminist geographers to holistically and authentically include queer and, in particular, trans people in the project of feminist geography. Sometimes we feel overlooked, marginalised, and excluded in ways large and small, embodied and structural, which can lead us to doubt our belonging in feminist geography.

We worry that if we cannot achieve some sense of belonging and recognition in feminist geography, there is not much hope for surviving and thriving in the larger discipline.

We do not see enough of our lives and identities reflected in feminist geography conference spaces, syllabi, scholarship, and other professional spaces. While some feminist geographers do a better job incorporating queer and trans perspectives, some of us have sat in feminist geography classrooms where our lives feel like a glaring omission, footnote, or afterthought. For example, in many discussions we have been a part of, binary conceptions of gender are reproduced, meaning that we literally cannot see ourselves in the frame of feminist geography. Even when some syllabi and scholarship engage with these queer and trans life, the depth of engagement can feel thin.

We also notice when our teachers fail to recognise the needs of queer/trans students in classrooms and field courses. We experience failures to demonstrate empathy, awareness, and allyship, for example through repeatedly mistaking our pronouns and misuse or superficial use of inclusive language. We notice that many cis/het feminist geographers do not appear to have enough knowledge and practice around queer and trans issues to engage queer/trans issues on social, cultural, political, and intellectual registers. However, we recognise that every person has the opportunity to learn and grow, increase our knowledge and compassion, and improve our pedagogical and interpersonal practices—work which we should undertake with care and responsibility.

As queer and trans people, we are often burdened with introducing queer/trans thinking into feminist geography (whether this be complicating cisheteronormative frames of 'gender' as a concept, or being the only people to introduce ourselves with pronouns). We should not be the only ones talking about queer/trans issues in feminist geography, just as women of colour should not be the only ones talking about race in feminist geography. We worry that our cis/het feminist colleagues are not doing the work—or not doing enough or moving quickly enough—to be effective allies in both intellectual and professional spaces. Regardless of the underlying reasons, we need cis/het colleagues to equip themselves to teach about our lives and to educate others to be effective allies (see *QFG III*).

We affirm the need to honestly and directly address the shortcomings of feminist thought and praxis, and we value the labour of our colleagues in doing that vital and challenging work. However, we worry about the sustainability and effectiveness of that work when these colleagues are sometimes met with resistance, dismissal, and defensiveness within feminist geography spaces. We recognize that these issues do not pertain to all feminist geographers and all spaces, yet we need to bring them to light to make all of our spaces more inclusive. To aid in addressing these issues, we have identified practices that reproduce queer and trans exclusion in feminist geography. These examples are drawn from our personal experience. They are not to be taken as generalised traits of feminist geography as a whole per se (though this relation is undoubtedly worth reflecting upon). We have experienced:

- Cis/het women expressing resistance to including and collaborating with queer/trans people in feminist projects and treating their perspectives on gender as 'out of scope' and a disruption or detraction from the work at hand;

- Attempting to silence or discredit the perspectives of queer and trans people speaking up about exclusions;
- Including queer/trans people in tokenistic ways, for example by including us in a panel but cutting us off from sharing our experiences;
- Portraying queer and trans issues as outside of the scope of feminist geography, and instead the domain of other subfields;
- Repeatedly misgendering queer/trans people and/or failing to intervene in misgendering
- Choosing not to incorporate queer and trans perspectives into feminist geography syllabi or doing so in a tokenistic manner;
- Resistance to considering how their behavior could be transphobic;
- Refusing to listen, apologise, or participate in healing processes for harm intentionally or unintentionally done to queer and trans colleagues.

As shown by our collective experiences (though we acknowledge we do not represent *all* experiences), there is work to be done to make feminist geography more responsive to and inclusive of queer and trans people and invested in our liberation. We urge our colleagues to learn to see blatant *and* passive forms of exclusion—namely silence and inaction of our professional community—as a collective failure and abdication of responsibility and accountability to our shared principles (see *QFG III*). We also worry that the lack of representation and inclusion of queer/trans people in feminist geography’s intellectual and professional spaces will have long-term effects: lack of mentorship and visibility stymies emerging generations of queer/trans scholars. We can break this cycle now.

While we have noted the problems specific to queer and trans people here, we also want to make clear that these omissions are part of a broader problem: the failure of feminist geography to take up a robust intersectional approach and relatedly, the field’s incomplete break from white feminism and its historically narrow focus on the experiences of white, middle class women in the Global North (see *QFG II*). White feminism shapes the mainstream feminist movement in much of the Global North, despite long traditions of intersectional feminisms that consistently offered more expansive visions of feminism (see Trask 1996; Goeman 2009; Hamad 2020; Schuller 2021; Zakaria 2021). The subfield of feminist geography emerged from and is inflected with white feminism (Peake 1993; Valentine 2007; Mollett and Faria 2018). We must continue to reorient feminist geography toward intersectional feminist genealogies; our field still has much to learn from rich histories of intersectional women of colour feminisms that developed with and alongside queer thought and movements (see Fawaz 2022). Despite much groundbreaking scholarship by women of colour and queer and trans people in the field, women of colour feminisms, queer/trans feminisms, and their intersections remain marginalised in feminist geography (see *QFG II* for more discussion).

We express these concerns in the spirit of building on and refining the political potentials of feminist geography and translating it for a new generation. We offer these friendly critiques while considering the momentous battles that our feminist geography forebearers led against sexism in the field. We do not seek to displace those struggles or minimise their accomplishments. Nor do we mean to portray feminist geography as monolithically straight or white; we acknowledge our

positionalities are much more complex than that while also affirming the need to attend to the structuring logics of our broader discipline and society with clarity. Our vision is aspirational; we recognize the political challenges of intersectionality and joint struggle. Yet we also hold that we must find our way to a more integrated, intersectional and liberatory feminist geography if it is to deliver on its promise.

### Our collective aspirations

While some of us continue to encounter these various problems as queer and trans people in feminist geography (and geography more broadly), we are hopeful that we can collectively address them, building on intersectional work and more queer and trans-inclusive work within feminist geography cited throughout this series. Only then—picking up strength and momentum from decades of critical interventions into the geographic tradition, much of it led by feminist geographers (Naylor 2025; Kinkaid, Parikh, and Ranjbar 2022; Eaves 2020; Hawthorne and Meché 2016; Mahtani 2014; Kobayashi and Peake 2000, 1994)—will we be able to work together to transform our broader discipline and world.

We think coming together—as queer/trans feminists and cis/het feminists—to identify these problems and dialogue around them is a critical first step in this collective work. We are confident that feminist geographers have the conceptual resources and political and ethical commitments required to address these problems and create more inclusive intellectual and institutional spaces for queer and trans people and minoritised people more generally (see *QFG III*). So what are our aspirations for a queer/trans inclusive feminist geography? Across our identities and positionalities, we affirm the following aspirations for feminist geography.

We want a feminist geography where queer/trans thought is not seen as the sole purview of queer and trans people but represents more generalised knowledge—about gender, embodiment, space, nature and society—that is incorporated into our methodologies and epistemologies (Rosenberg 2023; Brice 2023). We want a feminist geography that begins from an intersectional lens, centering those most impacted by white supremacist cisheteropatriarchy. We want a feminist geography that takes on and works to dismantle intersecting forms of oppression premised on social difference—racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, coloniality—that does not subordinate all other forms of difference to a gender/sex binary. We want feminist geography to stop reproducing straight, white, and cis feminisms.

We want our cis/het feminist geographer colleagues to join our struggles, within and beyond the academy. We want our feminist colleagues to demonstrate their commitment to the liberation of queer/trans people, and all people impacted by the oppressive system of binary gender, which is always-already colonial and racist (see *QFG II*).

We want our feminist colleagues and mentors to have an awareness of the struggles queer/trans people face in our personal and professional lives (see *QFG III*) and how this shapes the way we navigate geography and the feminist project. We want effective and responsive allyship in our departments and other professional spaces that we can rely on. We want competency in mentorship and teaching around queer/trans issues so we can support a next generation of queer/trans feminist geographers. We want inclusive syllabi, classrooms, field trips, and professional spaces.

In other words, we want to achieve, but also go beyond, inclusion; feminism is about resistance, action, justice, transformation, and liberation. We want our colleagues to make it obvious to queer/trans students and colleagues that we belong within and are a vital part of feminist geography. We want our colleagues to demonstrate their willingness to learn and grow in their perceptions of, understanding of, and action against the ideas and systems constraining our bodies, careers, and lives. We need relief from the immense emotional labour required to educate everyone, including cis/het feminists, about our lives and the threats to them, specifically those who are trans among us. We want and need meaningful, engaged, responsive acts of solidarity. We need our allies to prioritise and attend these conversations and take up our call. We want cis/het feminist geographers to be our allies in transforming geography and fighting for a more feminist future.

While our hearts are set on a queer/trans inclusive present and future for feminist geography, we also want to make space for humility and uncertainty in this project and how to get there. We want to hold a collaborative space for hashing out this project and activating strategies for realising our aspirations. Will you join us?

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank editors Hanson Nyantakyi-Frimpong and Lena Grip for making space for this series in *Gender, Place, and Culture*. In particular, Hanson has been incredibly responsive, patient, and supportive in handling this unconventional series of submissions. We are also grateful for the feedback of various anonymous reviewers. Finally, we wish to acknowledge all of the participants in the *Queering Feminist Geography Collective* from which these articles have emerged, as our collaborative work extends beyond the list of authors formalized here.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Notes on contributor

*Queering Feminist Geography Collective* We are a collective of queer, trans and allied feminists working within and adjacent to geography. We represent a diversity of gender and sexual identities and positionalities and describe ourselves as queer, trans, cis, straight, bisexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, transfemme, and transmasculine. Beyond our gender and sexual identities, we describe ourselves as white, BIPOC, working class, disabled, first-gen students, and neurodivergent. Whatever our identities, we are committed to creating, holding, and contributing to a space that centres the experiences and perspectives of queer and trans feminist geographers toward a more inclusive and self-actualised feminist geography. We work collaboratively to discuss, research, and write about our experiences in geography, the relations between queer, trans, and feminist geography, and our collective aspirations for feminist geography.

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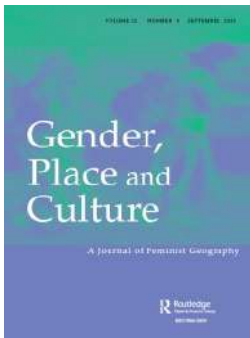
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# Queering feminist geography II: working through and working against trans-exclusionary feminisms

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To cite this article: Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid, Wiley Sharp, Sarah Fogel, Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta, Gabi Kirk, Lindsay Naylor, LaToya E. Eaves, Nick Koenig, Ingrid Nelson, Niiyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles & Kelsey Emard (2025) Queering feminist geography II: working through and working against trans-exclusionary feminisms, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 32:9, 1445-1455, DOI: [10.1080/0966369X.2025.2516848](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2516848)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2516848>



Published online: 30 Jun 2025.



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VIEWPOINT



## Queering feminist geography II: working through and working against trans-exclusionary feminisms

Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid<sup>a</sup> , Wiley Sharp<sup>b</sup> , Sarah Fogel<sup>c</sup>, Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta<sup>d</sup> , Gabi Kirk<sup>e</sup> , Lindsay Naylor<sup>f</sup> , LaToya E. Eaves<sup>g</sup> , Nick Koenig<sup>h</sup> , Ingrid Nelson<sup>i</sup> , Niiyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles<sup>j</sup>  and Kelsey Emard<sup>k</sup> 

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### ABSTRACT

In the first Viewpoint in our Queering Feminist Geography series (QFG), we introduced our queer, trans, and feminist geography collective. We described how we have been brought together by our shared commitment to support queer/trans life within feminist geography, geography as a whole, and the wider world. In this second Viewpoint, we develop another key context for understanding why, as feminist geographers, we have come together: the rise of trans-exclusionary feminism, which we understand as one facet of white feminism. We have been alarmed – as feminist scholars and activists – by the global rise of feminist movements premised on trans exclusion and cisnormativity. As a coalition of cis, queer, and trans feminists, we feel it is our responsibility to critically reflect upon these developments and equip ourselves to work against them. In this Viewpoint, we open up a space for a much needed dialogue in feminist geography: the question of where trans people fit in our tradition and our political visions. In the following Viewpoints, we discuss strategies for queer/trans allyship (QFG III) and the scholarly and activist potentials of trans-feminist coalition within and beyond geography (QFG IV).

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 March 2024  
Accepted 7 April 2025

### KEYWORDS

Feminist geography;  
Queer; trans;  
transphobia;  
trans-exclusionary  
feminism

## Introduction

As we write this *Viewpoint*, we are witnessing a broad attack on LGBTQ rights, specifically trans rights, around the world. From where most of us are writing – the Anglophone Global North – we are inundated with daily news about legislation attacking trans people directly and leveraging various institutions to undermine trans life (see Sharp et al. 2025).

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This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

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Similar struggles are unfolding around the world. The 2019 Trans Legal Mapping Report (ILGA 2019) provides a global snapshot of trans rights and recognition around the world, demonstrating that, in the last decade, there has been stagnation or regression of trans rights in countries including Guatemala, Hungary, Mongolia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay (though there has been progress in countries including Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Pakistan). Similar issues confront LGB people around the world, with recent negative developments (e.g. in Uganda) and positive developments (e.g. in India) (see the ILGA 2020).

As queer and trans people and their allies, we are deeply troubled and angered by the recent upsurge in anti-trans activism and legislation around the world. What is particularly distressing is that, in some contexts, we are seeing feminist scholars and activists emerge as vocal advocates of transexclusionary policies and attitudes. As we try to make sense of this political moment and find ways to work against it, we must critically interrogate the relationship between feminism and trans lives in order to understand how so-called feminists could become allies a rightwing movement to undermine trans rights.

We, the Queering Feminist Geography Collective (QFG), have come together as queer, trans, and allied feminist geographers in the midst of these attacks on trans people to imagine a feminist geography capable of responding to forms of anti-trans violence and fostering trans liberation. Through a collaborative dialogue and writing process, we have authored a series of interventions, of which this article is one part. In *QFG I*, we describe the problem of queer and trans inclusion and belonging in feminist geography and the ways the subfield has both supported and fallen short of supporting queer and trans people. In this second intervention, we consider how to rethink and remold our intellectual genealogies to respond to struggles for trans liberation as feminist geographers. In *QFG III*, we provide strategies for how feminist geographers can be meaningful allies and accomplices in the struggle for trans liberation within and beyond geography. In *QFG IV*, we envision the intellectual and political potentials of a trans-feminist geography.

As feminist geographers, we commit ourselves – and we invite our colleagues – to take this moment as an opportunity to reflect on the visions of feminism that animate our subfield. Some questions that we have been grappling with as a collective include:

- What is the place of trans people in the political and intellectual project of feminist geography?
- What aspects of our tradition support trans inclusion? Which aspects of our tradition might hinder a holistic embrace of trans people and trans experiences (see *QFG I*)?
- Are there any echoes of, resonances with, or silences about transexclusionary feminism in feminist geography?
- How does cisheteronormativity shape feminist geography?
- How can we challenge exclusionary norms with our theory, research, and pedagogy (see *QFG III, IV*)?

Needless to say, we cannot provide comprehensive answers to these complex questions in this short series of *Viewpoints*. In line with the goals of the *Viewpoints* format,

our goal is to raise these questions and begin to imagine how we might answer them as an intellectual community – not only with arguments about genealogies and priorities for our field, but with a shift in awareness and praxis that can make clear that feminist geography is a place for trans feminists (see *QFG III* and *IV*). We hope this moment can serve as a call for us to critically examine the exclusions of our feminist project and develop a more expansive and liberatory vision of feminism that includes all of us who are harmed by white supremacist cisheteropatriarchy.

### Trans-exclusionary feminism and the long arc of liberal white feminism

There are several historical and contemporary movements we might consider ‘trans-exclusionary feminisms.’ The most widely-circulated example of trans-exclusionary feminism is captured in the term ‘TERF,’ which stands for trans-exclusionary radical feminism and refers, originally at least, to debates within 1970s era radical feminism about the place of trans people in feminist movements. Although this era is often recognised as the origin of trans-exclusionary feminism, we do not wish to erase the presence of trans people in feminist organizing and flatten the politics and perspectives of this era, which was not monolithically transphobic (Enke 2018; Schuller 2021; Williams 2016). In recent years, the term ‘TERF’ has gained wider traction for describing trans-exclusionary feminists more generally.

More recently, a deeply transphobic intellectual movement called ‘gender critical feminism’ has emerged most vocally within feminist scholarship and activism in the United Kingdom. Gender critical feminist activists reject trans identities by equating (binary) gender identity with (binary) sex assigned at birth. This equation not only reinforces a conjoined sex/gender binary, but, through other discursive moves, reproduces conservative and patriarchal ideas about the gender roles of women and their place in society (Bassi and LaFleur 2022). Trans women are the main target of these attacks and are portrayed, in a well-worn trope, as ‘invading’ (cis) women’s space and threatening the safety and liberty of cis) women (see Butler (2024). In this way, the moral panic over trans gender is a spatial phenomenon, often framed as a violation of ‘women’s only spaces’ such as bathrooms or children’s spaces such as schools (see Doan 2010), and frequently overlapping with broader geographies of racist, carceral, and state power (Stryker 2021). These transmisogynistic logics (see Gill-Peterson 2024; Serano 2007) are common in TERF and gender critical discourse.

These political formations are growing louder and spreading around the world. Discussions in the 2022 *Transgender Studies Quarterly* special issue on trans-exclusionary feminism include engagements with trans-exclusionary feminisms in Italy, Belgium, Germany, Japan, South America, the US and the UK, while tracing transnational, cross-cutting currents connected to fascism, evangelical Christianity, Zionism, and other global right-wing movements. Given this momentum at multiple geographic sites and scales, trans-exclusionary feminism should be on the radar of feminists working in a diversity of geographic contexts.

At the same time we note these more recent developments, we recognize that trans exclusion is not new to feminism. As Schuller describes, ‘trans exclusion is part of the tradition of white feminist politics’ (2021, 213). Bassi and LeFleur echo,

gender-critical movements are consistent with 'the *longue durée* of liberal, bourgeois, white feminist exclusions perpetrated along racial and class lines' (2022, 317). Indeed, anti-trans politics have found a home in feminist activism precisely because certain strands of feminist thought have advanced cisnormative, racist, and colonial notions of gender derived from white feminism (see Da Costa 2021; Hamad 2020; Heaney 2024; Zakaria 2021).

Cisheteronormative feminism presents various obstacles to forging a genuinely intersectional feminist project. For one, it logically excludes the experience and knowledge of trans people, which leaves significant gaps in our theories of how cisheteropatriarchy operates. More broadly, cis feminism reinforces white supremacy and coloniality, as cisheteronormativity has been historically defined in opposition to colonized people, Black people, and Indigenous people (Ferguson 2004; Lugones 2007; Oyèwùmí 1997; Snorton 2017; Stoler 1995). When entire populations have been defined outside of cisheteronormativity by racializing and colonial logics, a feminist project that has cisness as its foundation – intentionally or not – reproduces the very interlocking systems of oppression that it purports to challenge. We reject both trans exclusionary feminisms and also cisheteronormative feminisms because they cannot empower us to overturn the intersectional hierarchy of values that enables gender-differentiated—and thus racialized and colonial—exploitation, extraction, and violence. Cis feminisms will never forge intersectional feminist futures.

### Reckoning with the exclusions of our own tradition

How can we read these contemporary debates over the meaning of feminism into our own tradition, feminist geography? We are not aware of outrightly transphobic feminist scholarship being articulated in feminist geography; nevertheless, we wonder how suitable dominant orientations of feminist geographic thought are for contributing to trans liberation. It is not our goal to argue that feminist geography is monolithically and outrightly transphobic. Rather, our personal observations and collective reflections have attuned us to *de facto* forms of trans exclusion that emerge, in part, from the founding premises, central concepts, and cultures of feminist geography that emerge from the field's white feminist genealogy. In this vein, we ask: to what extent is cisness or cisnormativity embedded in feminist geography?

As feminist geographers, we recognize that the feminist geographic project was, and continues to be, a radical intervention within the masculinist spaces of mainstream geography. We sense the scale and magnitude of feminist geography's interventions when we revisit the work of trailblazers like Monk and Hanson (1982), Jan Monk (2004), Gillian Rose (1994), and Linda Peake (1994) and consider the history of *Gender, Place, and Culture* (Domosh and Bondi 2014). Yet when we survey this history, we also register its limitations. Indeed, if we look at the origins of feminist geography as an intellectual project we see a troubling and persistent conflation of 'gender' and 'women,' pointing to a constitutive cisnormativity, and often cisheteronormativity in early work. In overviews of the field from the last twenty years, the conceptual purview of feminist geographies is often expressed broadly as examining the relations between gender and geography/space. This vision would ostensibly include trans people. Yet upon closer inspection, the terms 'gender' and 'women' have often been

used interchangeably, positioning the project of feminist geography as ‘making women visible,’ tracing ‘women’s geographies’ (Pratt 2009a, 246), asking ‘where are the women?’ (Thomas 2006, 157), and ‘foregrounding women as a subject of study and gender as a social and spatial process’ (Nelson and Seager 2005, 7).

These explanations *do* reflect the history of the subfield, because early feminist research almost exclusively focused on the lives of women—*cis* women. However, this genealogy continues to limit the conceptual imagination of the subfield. This early focus on the lives of *cis*, and often white, women in the 1970s gave way to more complex negotiations of identity and difference in the following decades. In the late 1980s and 1990s, intersectionality, race, and postcolonialism entered the frame of feminist geographies and began to trouble the monolithic category of gender operating in feminist geography. Yet in feminist geography, this attempt to destabilise ‘gender’ was actually an attempt to complicate the *category of woman*, not gender *per se*, and took the form of analyzing differences *between* *cis* women, rather than analyzing the multitude of gender embodiments beyond *cis* womanhood. For example, Pratt describes

Feminist geographers were increasingly attentive to the difference in the construction of gender relations across races, ethnicities, ages, (dis)abilities, religions, sexualities and nationalities; to exploitative relations *among women* who are positioned in varying ways along these multiple axes of difference... (Pratt 2009a, 247; our emphasis)

In this passage, ‘gender’ is not seen as an assemblage of difference, or as a diverse category in itself, but rather as a foundational axis around which other ‘differences’ – race, sexuality, ability, etc. – revolve. Destabilising this category of gender to include non-*cis* identities seems to be analytically out of reach at this time. In another instance, the entry on ‘gender’ in the *Dictionary of Human Geography* describes gender as the ‘categorical distinction between men and women’ (Pratt 2009b, 268). While these examples abound, there are also counterexamples; for instance, Kath Browne’s (2006) *Encyclopedia* entry on Gender and Geography contends that ‘gender and geography, alongside feminist geographies, does not focus solely on women,’ and ‘Neither is the inclusion of men and other forms of gender/sex (e.g. transgendered/transsexual individuals) the segregating feature’ of the field (175).

We begin with these older passages because these reference entries are indicative of the genealogy of feminist geographic thought that has laid the foundation for our emergence as feminist geographers today. While we recognize we have moved away from these origins to some extent, we still feel that feminist geography – as an intellectual and professional community – has incompletely and unevenly moved beyond this limited conception of gender. We still observe this limited conception of gender being deployed in our seminars, syllabi, conferences, professional spaces, and feminist geography scholarship.

Moving beyond these origins and early work, how do these issues show up in more recent work? More contemporary work has challenged the persistent conflation between gender and *cis* women. In the last fifteen years, we have seen the growing influence of queer and trans research in geography, which are sometimes occurring under the banner of or alongside feminist geography (though we perceive these subfields as being curiously disconnected; see *QFG IV*). For example, Browne, Nash, and Hines’s (2010) special issue in this journal, as well as Lynda Johnston’s recent

(2019) work advances a queered feminist geography by rejecting a cis conception of gender and engaging the lived experiences of trans people. Nevertheless, a considerable gulf remains between emergent trans geographies and the broader subfield of feminist geography. As Todd (2021) notes, even ostensibly critical research by cis geographers often tokenizes trans experiences, flattens differences within trans communities, and employs outdated and problematic language.

Even recent texts, like the *Routledge Handbook on Gender and Feminist Geographies* (Datta et al. 2020) reproduce some of these problems. The introduction proudly lists 'transgender and gender-variant geographies' as one of the 'new subject areas' that feminist geographers, namely Browne, Nash, and Hines (2010), Johnston (2019), and Doan (2010) have inaugurated (2020, 3). Yet, it is telling that only two of the 48 chapters of the *Handbook* concern empirical research on trans lives, while only three others substantively engage the literature on trans geographies. Of these, Devin Oliver and Caroline Faria's (2020) chapter exemplifies a conceptually and methodologically rigorous engagement with trans lives, employing ethnographic research with queer and trans of color youth to re-frame urban violence and counterpublic place-making practices. In contrast, other chapters take a more discursive approach to trans lives, abstracting the trans geography literature to further 'queer' feminist geography. The most direct treatment of the literature on trans geographies comes in a chapter about geographies of *sexuality*, replicating a longstanding confusion about the category of transgender. This conflation of gender transitivity with sexuality is a longstanding problem with queer appropriations of trans scholarship that is misinformed and problematic: the sexualization of trans gender expression, specifically that of trans women, has been used as justification for violence against them and has motivated the pathologizing of trans femininity (Berlin, Brice, and In 2022; Chu and Drager 2019; Heaney 2024; Stryker 2004; Todd 2021).

Deeper engagement with the emergent field of trans geography—and, in particular, the work of trans geographers themselves—is needed to unmake the 'discipline' of geography and its exclusion of trans lives (Giesecking 2023, 572). This requires that feminist geographers read and learn from trans geographies, not as a niche subfield or 'alternative viewpoint' but in order to fundamentally rethink gender – transgender experience illuminates the workings of gender and the operations of cisheteropatriarchy that we all live under (Rosenberg 2023).

Reflecting on the history and present of geography, Giesecking concludes: 'most of the work on gender in this field has tended to presume cisheteronormativity in its research subjects and populations' (2023, 581). In his 2023 paper, 'Reflections on a Cis Discipline,' Giesecking makes this point by counting the usage of particular terms in the abstracts of this journal, *Gender, Place, and Culture*, over its lifetime (see 581–582). In the results, the term 'gender' appears in ~45% of abstracts. The term 'women' appears in ~45% of abstracts. The terms 'trans' and 'queer' are included in 5–6% of abstracts, while the terms 'lesbian,' 'gay,' 'bisexual,' and 'LGBTQ' appear in less than 5% of abstracts. The term 'cisgender' appears in .2% of abstracts, suggesting a lack of awareness and engagement with cisgender as a concept within feminist geography. (It is also worth noting that none of the the terms 'Black,' 'Indigenous,' 'Asian,' 'Latino/a' or 'disability' reach the 5% mark, with several barely appearing on the graph.) The figure shows this data for pre-2008 and post-2008 to give a rough sense of how

these trends have changed in more recent years. There is surprisingly little change in the relative proportion of articles engaging these concepts between these time periods (see *QFG IV* for more discussion). While a more detailed longitudinal study would shed more light on these trends, the study is a good starting point for visualizing the relative lack of engagement with (gender)queer and trans perspectives and issues in feminist geography and the broader historical constitution of feminist geography as a white cis women's project, an origin that echoes into the present in intellectual, political, and cultural registers.

We are eager to find a definition of feminist geography that does not reproduce these issues and one that puts forth a vision of a feminist geography in which all of us working against cisheteronormative, racialized, and colonial systems of gender oppression can see our work and our struggles reflected. Recent volumes are moving in the right direction: Gökariksel et al.'s (2021) *Feminist Geography Unbound* centers women of color and trans perspectives, Doan and Johnston's (2022) *Rethinking Transgender Identities* collects research on trans and gender-nonconforming lives from across the globe, and Peake, Datta, and Adeniyi-Ogunyankin (2024) *Handbook on Gender and Cities* begins to problematize cisness in feminist urban research. Nevertheless, much work remains to address the trans-exclusionary genealogy of feminist geographic thought. As a field, we must collectively redefine gender as the central analytical object of feminist geography, engaging the insights of trans, women of color, and decolonial feminists to develop a truly intersectional feminist geography that can reckon with gender as a complex and intersectional mediator of difference.

### Intersectionality as a response to feminist exclusions

The project of feminist geography has, over the decades, been pushed to expand its imagination and community beyond the myth of a singular womanhood and a universal subject of feminism (Mohanty 2003). Implicitly or explicitly, calls for intersectionality have been a recurring response to feminist exclusions. The aforementioned turn to 'difference' in feminist geographies is the product of bold interventions into the self-conception of feminist geographies led by women of color. For instance, in 1990, Rickie Sanders pointed to how a myth of universal womanhood limits the revolutionary potential of feminist geographies and called for an integrated racial and gendered analysis (Sanders 1990). Despite such interventions, by the end of the 1990s, a single-axis focus on gendered power remained the focus of feminist geographies (Mollett and Faria 2018, 569). More than thirty years later, calls for intersectional analysis continue to be voiced within feminist geography (Cahuas 2023; Falconer Al-Hindi and Eaves 2022; Mollett and Faria 2013, 2018).

Intersectional feminist geographies are rooted within Black Feminist thought – led by scholars including Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990; Collins and Bilge 2016). The Black feminist project is not limited by the 'single axis' approach of white feminisms (Falconer Al-Hindi and Eaves 2022, 76). A multi-axis approach to dismantling oppression was articulated by Black feminists many decades ago. For example, in 1977, the Combahee River Collective famously wrote: 'we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression,

and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking' (1977, np).

A commitment to multiple-axis thinking means that this vision of Black feminism includes gender expansive people and men (Falconer Al-Hindi and Eaves 2022) because it is understood that oppression is produced through interlocking systems of race, gender, sexuality, and class under white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks 1988). Intersectional feminist geographers are keen to point out that 'interlocking violence of racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and capitalism constitute a spatial formation' (Mollett and Faria 2018, 566), one that ought to be the analytical object of feminist geography. To understand these formations, we cannot sustain an exclusive, or even primary focus on gender (specifically not on 'women' per se). Rather, we must expand our imagination to see gender as always already intersectional and linked to forms of racial, colonial, carceral, and state power (Stryker 2021).

We join our voices in these calls for intersectionality, specifically urging our feminist geographer colleagues to destabilize the concept of gender more fully to unravel these entanglements. It is imperative to expand the intersectional frame within feminist geography to include a critique of cisheteronormativity not only because doing so will bring trans people into the frame as subjects of gendered oppression, but also because cisheteronormativity has a bearing on all forms of gendered and racialized oppression. As many scholars have demonstrated, a cisheteronormative concept of gender has been central to colonial and racist logics of domination (Ferguson 2004; Lugones 2007; Oyěwùmí 1997; Snorton 2017; Stoler 1995). An expansive intersectional approach requires that we refocus our feminist project toward the abolition of systems of oppression based on the multiple forms of difference that become encoded in the category of gender, due to its racist, colonial, cisheteronormative history. Undoing cisheteronormativity, then, can allow us to challenge interlocking systems of oppression and truly deliver on the promises of an intersectional feminist geography.

## Conclusion

Let us continue to build a truly intersectional feminist geography, and not leave cisness untroubled. In this moment of trans-antagonistic political and intellectual backlash, there has never been a more urgent time to affirm the place of gender expansive, nonbinary, and trans people within feminist thought and practice. To do so, we must reckon with the origins and ongoing practices of our subfield in which trans people have too often been an afterthought. We urge feminist geographers to ask: What is a feminist project without gender non-conforming and trans people? How can feminist geography engage trans knowledge and experience to develop more nuanced and robust conceptions of gendered power, and, in turn, better challenge gendered oppression and violence? What is the cost of (re)producing a cis feminist – and a white feminist – geography? In this moment of resurgent anti-trans politics, superficial gestures of inclusion, tokenistic citations, and (non)performative allyship are not enough. We must take this moment to examine and renovate our foundations – that is, to purposefully and intentionally redefine gender and the feminist geographic project – if feminist geography is to be a force for gender liberation in the academy and in the world at large.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank editors Hanson Nyantakyi-Frimpong and Lena Grip for making space for this series in *Gender, Place, and Culture*. In particular, Hanson has been incredibly responsive, patient, and supportive in handling this unconventional series of submissions. We are also grateful for the feedback of various anonymous reviewers. Finally, we wish to acknowledge all of the participants in the Queering Feminist Geography Collective from which these articles have emerged, as our collaborative work extends beyond the list of authors formalized here.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Short biography

We are a collective of queer, trans and allied feminists working within and adjacent to geography. We represent a diversity of gender and sexual identities and positionalities and describe ourselves as queer, trans, cis, straight, bisexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, transfemme, and transmasculine. Beyond our gender and sexual identities, we describe ourselves as white, BIPOC, working class, disabled, first-gen students, and neurodivergent. Whatever our identities, we are committed to creating, holding, and contributing to a space that centres the experiences and perspectives of queer and trans feminist geographers toward a more inclusive and self-actualised feminist geography. We work collaboratively to discuss, research, and write about our experiences in geography, the relations between queer, trans, and feminist geography, and our collective aspirations for feminist geography.

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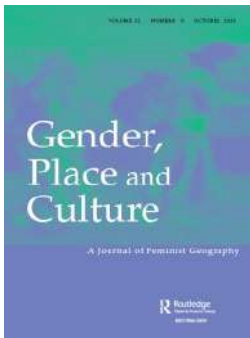
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## Queering feminist geography III: calling all allies and accomplices

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**To cite this article:** Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid, Cristina Diamant, Nick Koenig, Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta, Rowan Rush-Morgan, Kelsey Emard, LaToya E. Eaves, Colleen C. Myles-Baltzly, Wiley Sharp, Julia Wagner, Markia Silverman-Rodríguez, Jennifer Langill, A. Marie Ranjbar, Thien-Kim Bui, Alicia Danze, Heather Davis, Ingrid Nelson, Lindsay Naylor & Niyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles (29 Sep 2025): Queering feminist geography III: calling all allies and accomplices, *Gender, Place & Culture*, DOI: [10.1080/0966369X.2025.2559901](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2559901)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2559901>



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VIEWPOINT



## Queering feminist geography III: calling all allies and accomplices

Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid<sup>a</sup> , Cristina Diamant<sup>b</sup> , Nick Koenig<sup>c</sup> , Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta<sup>d</sup> , Rowan Rush-Morgan<sup>e</sup> , Kelsey Emarf<sup>f</sup> , LaToya E. Eaves<sup>g</sup>, Colleen C. Myles-Baltzly<sup>h</sup> , Wiley Sharp<sup>i</sup> , Julia Wagner<sup>j</sup> , Markia Silverman-Rodríguez<sup>k</sup> , Jennifer Langill<sup>l</sup> , A. Marie Ranjbar<sup>m</sup> , Thien-Kim Bui<sup>n</sup> , Alicia Danze<sup>o</sup>, Heather Davis<sup>p</sup> , Ingrid Nelson<sup>q</sup> , Lindsay Naylor<sup>r</sup>  and Niyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles<sup>s</sup> 

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### ABSTRACT

In this third piece in our Queering Feminist Geography Viewpoint series, we discuss allyship for queer/trans scholars within and beyond geography. We consider when and why queer/trans geographers need allies and accomplices in our personal and professional lives. We then turn to feminist principles and praxis to guide our work to become allies for queer/trans colleagues. Finally, we make recommendations and suggest strategies for allyship.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 19 March 2024; Accepted 14 December 2024

### KEYWORDS

Trans; feminist; queer; allyship; praxis

In our previous two *Viewpoints*, we described how queer and trans inclusion and belonging remains an open question in feminist geography (*Queering Feminist Geography [QFG] I*), as well as how exclusionary histories and troubling contemporary trends in feminism necessitate reflection and action to address transphobia in feminist spaces (*QFG II*). Given the stakes of queer and trans exclusion in geography and in feminist spaces, we now turn to allyship. The following questions guide our reflections: What constitutes allyship? When and why do queer and trans people need allies and accomplices in geography and their professional lives? What intellectual and political resources exist within feminist geography that can guide and actualise our commitment to queer and trans inclusion and liberation? What can we—in particular, the cis and/or het (hereafter cis/het) feminist geographers among us—do to be better allies?

## The need for support

In this *Viewpoint*, we are 'calling in' (Ross 2021) our cis/het feminist colleagues to become attuned to the experiences and needs of queer/trans people. If queer and trans people (hereafter queer/trans people) are to persist and flourish in geography, we need active and committed supporters. As outlined in *QFG I*, the cultural and professional problems confronting queer/trans geographers are many (see also Gieseking 2023; Rosenberg 2023; Kinkaid 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). Speaking from trans experience, Sage Brice encapsulates the intersecting crises, uncertainty, and risks that shape the personal and professional existences of trans and nonbinary people:

To take one example: repeatedly uprooting our lives and relocating for short-term insecure contracts is a challenge for anybody. But it hits particularly hard when at each new juncture you have no idea whether or when you will be able to access healthcare, housing, or even just safe access to toilets in the workplace. When you do not know if you will encounter hostility from your institutional leadership...When it might take months or even years to find other trans and nonbinary colleagues in your workplace, by which time you will likely be leaving again. (2023, 3–4)

This brief passage highlights some of the major obstacles facing trans geographers. It highlights how those of us who are queer/trans inhabit cisheteronormative cultural environments that are exhausting to navigate. As discussed in *Queering Feminist Geography I*, we are often made to feel isolated, invisible, or hypervisible, and face specific forms of discrimination, harassment, and unfair treatment in our professional spaces. Commonplace professional activities can be exclusionary, even unsafe; for example, fieldwork in the social and natural sciences for queer/trans people can be dangerous in ways that converge and diverge from the experiences of cisgender women (see Wölfle-Hazard 2022). We experience compounding forms of marginalisation within interlocking and co-constituted power structures, including racism, ableism, and other forms of oppression and discrimination as they intersect with our queer/trans identities. Being one of only a few queer people, or the only trans person, in our professional spaces means we often encounter obstacles that are not visible to our cis/het colleagues, mentors, and peers. Intellectually, our work is routinely marginalised by masculinist and cisheteronormative forms of knowledge production that position our lives as niche and irrelevant to broader geographic debates (Rosenberg 2023).

As we encounter these problems in professional spaces, we hope that our colleagues will learn to both recognise and help remove these barriers. Given our precarity and vulnerability within the dominant power structures, we are not always in a position to advocate for ourselves without placing our professional standing, jobs, or our personal safety at risk. Standing up for ourselves can be one of the most risky actions we can take in the academy. This is why we need advocates; we need our fellow geographers to step in and support us so we do not have to make ourselves hypervisible and vulnerable by having to identify and call out oppressive anti-queer/trans actions or inequitable policies.

We are acutely aware that our conditions will not improve until there is a sea change in geography. This requires ongoing work to transform our institutional and intellectual cultures. While we focus here on queer/trans issues, we also recognize

the need for allyship for those who are minoritized by race, disability, and other social identities—in part because queer/trans people occupy these intersectional identities but more generally because we are committed to joint struggle to transform our discipline for all minoritized people.

### Allies and accomplices

This need for support leads us to call upon our colleagues to become allies and accomplices—active and engaged advocates for us. Allyship has become a common term within academia and activist spaces to refer to people who advocate for others facing discrimination or violence, when they do not personally face those challenges. Allyship involves various supportive activities, like being a sympathetic listener, speaking up for someone, and advocating for changes to policies and practices that affect a particular group negatively. Allyship is a vital form of support for queer/trans colleagues.

However, allyship has its limitations. We acknowledge that allyship can be performative—people in positions of privilege might claim the identity of ally and do little to advocate for their minoritized colleagues. It may also evoke a savior complex where allies become self-important and overemphasize their role in the struggles and liberation of minoritized people. Others have called allyship superficial, assimilationist, or wedded to the status quo, demanding instead *accomplices* that use their privilege and power to disrupt systems of oppression, *engaging in joint struggle* and sharing the risks (Indigenous Action Media 2014; Jones 2021). Ultimately, this is indeed what we are asking for: allyship that is risk-taking and reckons with privilege. We use both terms—allies and accomplices—because we recognize the need for support and potentially disruptive advocacy. What is crucial is that our allies/accomplices *act* and they act because they understand our liberation and humanity are intertwined and relational (Kinkaid, Parikh, and Ranjbar 2022). Allies and accomplices also engage in careful listening and collaboration to guide their actions on behalf of their minoritized colleagues while acknowledging their mistakes and taking accountability if their well-intended actions inadvertently create adverse impacts.

Joining us in solidarity means taking risks to make a more equitable, ethical, and liberatory space for all of us. In speaking up for queer/trans people, people of color, and other minoritized colleagues, we may very well cause discomfort and get into ‘trouble’, being labeled as ‘killjoys’ (Ahmed 2023) or ‘troublemakers’. The fact that vocal advocates for justice are treated in this way shows us the pernicious workings of cisheteronormativity and white supremacy within our institutional cultures. While it may feel uncomfortable or risky to speak out, the risks minoritized people routinely encounter in these spaces, and in their everyday lives, far outweigh those of their potential allies who occupy positions of relative privilege. So let us all learn to be courageous and raise our voices.

### Our shared commitments

Indeed, our commitments as feminist geographers require that we challenge these systems. We argue that queer/trans allyship and allyship for all minoritized people is an obvious extension of intellectual and political commitments we already collectively

hold. Here we highlight three shared feminist commitments and concepts—care, epistemological politics, and praxis—that can guide our collective work as feminist geographers and help us become stronger advocates for our minoritized colleagues, including queer/trans people.

First and foremost, feminist geographers have developed an ethics of care that can guide our modes of relating to each other (e.g. Caretta and Faria 2021; Lawson 2009). Feminist care ethics can be a political praxis to resist exclusion, oppression, and harm in academic spaces (Bartos 2021, Puawai Collective 2019). While feminist care ethics hold great potential, these discussions have often centered largely white, cis/het, and/or Global North locations and priorities. They can thus reproduce forms of erasure, oppression, and exclusion and cause harm (Raghuram 2019; Malatino 2020). To support queer/trans people in geography and beyond, we suggest that feminist care ethics be expanded to attend to the particular contours of queer and trans life in the academy and beyond (see Malatino 2020 for a great start). If feminist ethics requires us to care for marginalised colleagues, intervene in forms of symbolic and institutional violence, and create spaces for more caring relations, the struggles of queer/trans people and all minoritized people in the academy should certainly be a part of feminist ethical praxis.

Second, our shared epistemological principles provide us with key intellectual and political resources that can contribute to allyship for queer/trans and all minoritised people. Concepts of positionality (Kinkaid, Parikh, and Ranjbar 2022; Rose 1997), reflexivity (England 1994; Faria and Mollett 2016; Sultana 2007), and intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; Mollett and Faria 2018) equip us to recognise how we occupy different social locations based on our race, gender, sexuality, ability, and other forms of social difference, how this influences our interpersonal and professional relations, and how it shapes the worlds we individually and collectively inhabit. These concepts can thus help us reflect on how a diversity of feminist geographers may share a political project, while inhabiting different locations within it. These concepts can help guide the internal work of allyship described in this article, as they require reflexivity about our locations and their limitations, while learning from the experiences of others to fill our epistemological gaps.

Third, we draw inspiration from a longstanding, multidimensional and creative dialogue about feminist praxis (e.g. Cahuas 2023; Mohanty 2006; Swarr and Nagar 2012). Praxis, as the merging of theory and everyday practice, can help us turn a critical eye toward practices within our intellectual and professional spaces to evaluate how well we enact our principles in our relations to each other and our broader professional and political communities. Attention to relational forms of identity, privilege, and vulnerability can inform a feminist anti-oppressive praxis (Kinkaid, Parikh, and Ranjbar 2022; Emard 2022) and build feminist geographies that embrace queer/trans and other minoritised perspectives and identities. In calling for allyship and care, we ask our colleagues to continue deepening their commitment to praxis within our institutional and intellectual spaces.

### Strategies for allies and accomplices

Effective support for queer/trans people means that we will have to work to activate these principles, undertaking both personal work and institutional work to make more

safe, inclusive, equitable, and just spaces for queer/trans people in geography and in the wider world. We are especially advocating for reflexive and responsive mentorship that attends to the salience of our intersecting identities, the professional obstacles linked to those identities, and our psychosocial and embodied needs. Due to the shortage of queer/trans professors, this mentorship must come in part from queer- and trans-literate cis/het allies.

Allyship begins with gaining the knowledge and skills to act in the interest of those different from us. Lack of exposure and collective ignorance is a major obstacle to queer/trans inclusion in geography (see *QFG 1*). Luckily, this obstacle is easily surmountable by reading books and articles about queer and trans life, including queer/trans histories (see Stryker's 2017 *Transgender History* for a start). Alternatively, one could listen to a queer/trans podcast while commuting or during other activities (e.g. *BGD Podcast*, *QueerLit*, *Gender Reveal*, *Beyond Gender*) to learn about queer and trans culture. Aspiring allies can follow content creators on social media to stay informed about queer and trans issues (e.g. on Instagram: @alokvmenon, @transempowerment-project, @well\_hello\_dollyjaye). These resources can be adopted into course materials, creating important spaces within the classroom for queer and trans students. Allies can support campus LGBTQ groups, join book clubs and discussion groups focused on queer and trans issues, or incorporate queer/trans authors and stories into their existing groups. For example, our collective, *Queering Feminist Geography*, is a space for queer/trans people and allies to come together to learn, listen, and engage. So join us! (Reach out the corresponding author to join our dialogues).

Learning about queer/trans issues should be relatively straightforward; many of us study gender and have the resources, critical capacities, and motivation to learn. What is often more difficult is deeply reckoning with how this knowledge transforms one's existing worldview and sense of self. Learning about queer/trans issues may challenge one's cis/het privilege, which can produce unproductive and reactive emotional responses that perpetuate systems of oppression.

It is crucial that, as allies for minoritised people, we learn to sit with the discomfort that dialogues about privilege and exclusion may prompt and the pressure they put on our sense of self and our espoused political identities (see Gokariksel et al. 2021). This entails resisting and working against the emotional response patterns of cisgender fragility (Oaster 2019) and white fragility (Hamad 2020). Challenging conversations push us to grapple with our privileges, shortcomings, and complicity. During these conversations, we recognise the importance of sitting with our difficult feelings and unlearning common emotional responses that prioritize our privilege and comfort over accountability and justice. If we are feeling aggressive, defensive, excessively ashamed, or shut down when confronted about our own biased perspectives and behaviors, we are learning to ask ourselves why we are responding that way and seeking to learn more. This personal reflective and emotional work requires learning about and unlearning cis/het white fragility, internalised cisheteronormativity, and queer/transphobia, as well as stabilising and rerouting our emotional responses when having challenging conversations. Allyship also requires removing oneself from the centre of the work being done. What we mean by this is that people who wish to be allies should be willing to do so even if they are not at the forefront of visibility in their allyship, or when allyship carries with it risks to one's social capital or standing in dominant power structures.

Alongside this personal work, we encourage feminist allies to reach outward to engage in institutional and intellectual work in support of queer/trans inclusion and liberation. Here we present some ways to support queer/trans belonging, contribute to the visibility and career advancement of queer/trans scholars, and create more equitable and just institutional environments for queer/trans people. A great start is incorporating queer/trans perspectives into our intellectual awareness, work, teaching, and mentoring. We can cite queer/trans scholars and engage queer/trans work in a meaningful manner, avoiding reproducing binaries and problematic language in our work (whether or not it focuses on queer/trans people). We can invite queer/trans people to speak on our panels, in our departments, at our feminist geography events, or other events that align with their specialisations (as not all queer/trans geographers research queer/trans issues!). We can teach about queer/trans lives and perspectives in our classes (if not yet equipped to do so, we know how to find resources to get equipped) and challenge assumptions in the classroom and in students' work. We can learn, like any other skill, how to mentor queer/trans students and connect them to appropriate support structures.

While learning to better advocate for queer/trans colleagues and other minoritized colleagues, it is critical to take stock of our institutional setting, who is centred in it, and what cultures shape it. Allies can learn how to notice the absence of minoritized people and perspectives in our institutional and intellectual spaces and practice being vocal about queer/trans issues in our departments and in the discipline, even if there are no queer/trans people in that space yet. Let's not wait for our queer/trans colleagues to become mired in conflict and trauma or leave before registering that there is a problem. The real problem is not 'queer/trans inclusion' per se, but cisheteronormativity, which is already ubiquitous and active in our professional spaces. We can start intervening in this culture today.

Let's also find ways to acknowledge violence and the political climate affecting queer/trans people in our professional community. We can look for and act upon opportunities to create awareness in our departments (e.g. sharing resources during Pride Month, National Pronoun Days, Transgender Day of Visibility, etc., where they exist). We can find ways to keep informed around queer/trans issues to respond to and support our students and colleagues (e.g. subscribing to university LGBTQIA+ newsletters, attending and organising gender and trans inclusion trainings, mobilising around new initiatives, joining protests and crowdfunding for queer and trans causes). All of us can begin by joining groups (like this one!), even if just to listen and learn from queer/trans people.

It is also crucial to learn how to recognise transphobia in all its subtleties, noticing when our trans colleagues are being subjected to stereotypes, microaggressions, and transphobic tropes (e.g. trans individuals as outsized threats to order and convention, predators, space invaders, bullies, aggressive, angry, contagious, navel-gazing, self-indulgent, infantile). Important opportunities to intervene in these dynamics include supporting the creation of conflict mediation structures and restorative justice in our departments and on campus. Well-functioning conflict mediation structures create healthier cultures for all, and they are vital for minoritised people because we are subject to transphobic, racist, sexist, and ableist systems of perception, which shape how we are treated and responded to in these institutions. Without informed advocates to intervene in these social dynamics, we are often subject to further harm.

Returning to Brice's (2023) powerful account, concrete forms of allyship go beyond 'diversity' recruitments of queer/trans scholars, instead focusing on the conditions

necessary for minoritised students, staff, and faculty to flourish within geography departments. This requires institutional change within and beyond the department. It requires our allies and departments taking leadership on issues related to healthcare equity, gender-neutral spaces (e.g. restrooms), and trans inclusion training to address implicit bias and transphobia on campus.

Finally, the cultivation of meaningful and authentic relationships with queer/trans colleagues enables our work as allies and accomplices. We must extend our caring relations not only through intellectual and political structures, but through our everyday relationships and the care we show for each other.

### Calling all allies and accomplices

The practices of allies and accomplices are crucial to furthering queer/trans inclusion, belonging, and flourishing within geography. Allyship can be activated with awareness, care, grace, humility, and courage. What is important is not perfection, but accountability by learning to listen, respond, try again, repair relationships, and recognise that this is an ongoing and long-term commitment to intersectional justice and equity. It may very well be uncomfortable at times. Yet aspiring allies and accomplices can develop the emotional skills, cultural awareness, and political will to be dependable sources of support for queer/trans as well as other minoritised scholars as we navigate and collectively work against geography's exclusions.

In closing, we affirm that effective allyship—and the care, recognition, and solidarity that it demonstrates—is crucial to building an inclusive, intersectional, and coalitional feminist geography, for queer/trans people and for all minoritised people, whether or not they are queer and/or trans. Making space for queer/trans people in feminist geography and geography as a whole is a crucial step in unlocking the intellectual and political potentials that could radically reshape our field. We explore these intellectual and political potentials of feminist geography in our final *Viewpoint* in the series, *Queering Feminist Geography IV*. We hope you will join us, as colleagues, allies, accomplices and fellow feminists in bringing this vision to life.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Notes on contributor

We are a collective of queer, trans and queer-positive feminists working within and adjacent to geography. We represent a diversity of gender and sexual identities and positionalities and describe ourselves as queer, trans, cis, straight, bisexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, transfemme, and transmasc. Beyond our gender and sexual identities, we describe ourselves as white, BIPOC, working class, disabled, first-gen students, and neurodivergent. Whatever our identities, we are committed to creating, holding, and contributing to a space that centres the experiences and perspectives of queer and trans feminist geographers toward a more inclusive and self-actualised feminist geography. We work collaboratively to discuss, research, and write about our experiences in geography, the relations between queer and feminist geography, and our collective aspirations for feminist geography.

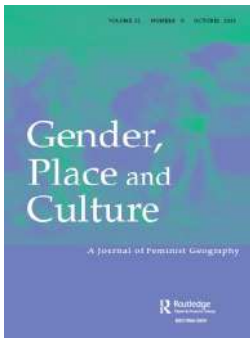
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# Gender, Place & Culture

A Journal of Feminist Geography

ISSN: 0966-369X (Print) 1360-0524 (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/cgpc20](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/cgpc20)

## Queering feminist geography IV: toward queer and trans-feminist coalition

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**To cite this article:** Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid, Nick Koenig, Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta, Wiley Sharp, Adanya Ella Hicks, Dylan Moore, Thien-Kim Bui, Alicia Danze, Kelsey Emard, Jennifer Langill, Lindsay Naylor, Cleo Wöelfle-Hazard, Kendra Strauss, Carrie Chennault, LaToya E. Eaves, Ingrid Nelson, Julia Wagner, Lauren Fritzsche, Niyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles & Rowan Rush Morgan (01 Oct 2025): Queering feminist geography IV: toward queer and trans-feminist coalition, *Gender, Place & Culture*, DOI: [10.1080/0966369X.2025.2559903](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2025.2559903)

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VIEWPOINT



## Queering feminist geography IV: toward queer and trans-feminist coalition

Queering Feminist Geography Collective, Eden Kinkaid<sup>a</sup> , Nick Koenig<sup>b</sup> , Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta<sup>c</sup> , Wiley Sharp<sup>d</sup> , Adanya Ella Hicks, Dylan Moore<sup>e</sup> , Thien-Kim Bui<sup>f</sup> , Alicia Danze<sup>g</sup>, Kelsey Emar<sup>h</sup> , Jennifer Langill<sup>i</sup> , Lindsay Naylor<sup>j</sup> , Cleo Wöelfle-Hazard<sup>k</sup> , Kendra Strauss<sup>l</sup> , Carrie Chennault<sup>m</sup> , LaToya E. Eaves<sup>n</sup> , Ingrid Nelson<sup>o</sup> , Julia Wagner<sup>p</sup> , Lauren Fritzsche<sup>q</sup> , Niiyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles<sup>r</sup>  and Rowan Rush Morgan<sup>s</sup> 

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### ABSTRACT

In this fourth and final piece in our Queering Feminist Geography *Viewpoint* series, we turn toward the possibility and potentials of queer and trans-feminist coalition building. We reflect on work in our field that brings together queer, trans, and feminist perspectives and concepts by reviewing the historical relations between feminist and queer/trans thought in geography and assessing the present landscape of engagements between these realms. Seeking to build on these connections, we then present areas of intellectual and political commonality between feminist and queer/trans scholarship and praxis, outlining potential areas of further work. We close with our vision of queer and trans-feminist coalition and the obstacles that might get in the way of this vision.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 March 2024  
Accepted 13 December 2024

### KEYWORDS

coalition; feminist; praxis;  
Queer; trans

In our preceding *Viewpoints* in this series, we outlined the problem of queer/trans inclusion in feminist geography (*Queering Feminist Geography [QFG] I*); examined the deeper entanglements between feminist thought and projects of trans exclusion (*QFG II*); and considered strategies for allyship (*QFG III*). In this final *Viewpoint*, we lean in toward the possibility for queer/trans-feminist coalition in geography and beyond. In envisioning queer and trans-feminist coalition, we explore the linked genealogies and shared concerns between queer/trans and feminist thought through the years while identifying areas for more critical reflection and exploration. We call for a feminist

geography that embraces transfeminist approaches and welcomes queer and trans people into the feminist project.

## Shared genealogies and projects

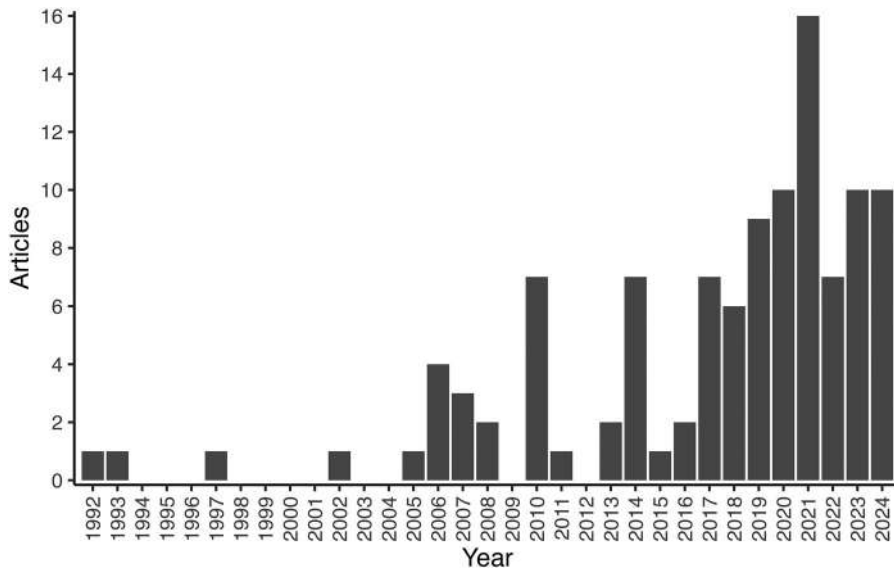
Feminist and queer geographies are connected by intertwined genealogies and shared intellectual and political commitments (see Wright 2010 and Knopp 2007). As intellectual projects, feminist, queer and trans geographies are concerned with the relationships between gender, sexuality, embodiment, space, and place. They are concerned with how power and gender – at its intersections with race, sexuality, ability, class, and other forms of social difference – co-produce space, place, and broader geographies. Due to linked origins within and beyond geography, these subfields also share many theoretical orientations (e.g. poststructuralist/social constructivist concepts of performativity, discourse, embodiment, subjectivity) and epistemological principles (e.g. positionality, reflexivity). There are thus countless areas of potential overlap and engagement between them.

At the same time, we note disjunctures and disconnects between the fields, political and intellectual rifts which have shaped feminist, queer, and trans theorising within and beyond geography. Wright provides a useful account of the histories between these subfields and their ‘rocky’ relations (2010, 58). Early perceptions that sexuality studies did not attend to sexism/patriarchy and that feminist geography did not attend to heteronormativity – alongside competition and false dichotomies between sexuality and gender as analytical foci – produced intellectual and political tension and even calls for a ‘divorce’ between the two subfields (Bell and Valentine 1995, 11). We think much is lost in this divergence. After all, ‘what are feminist and queer theory without each other?’ (Wright 2010, 58).

We also recognise that place matters to the production of knowledge. We recognize that queer, trans, and gender identities more generally are complex, variegated, and place-specific (Doan and Johnston 2022). As a collective, we are predominantly situated within the U.S. and U.K. contexts. The status of dialogues between feminist, queer, and trans geographies vary within different national contexts. For instance, work from New Zealand (Johnston 2018; Johnston 2019) demonstrates stronger linkages between queer and feminist genealogies.

Nonetheless, we seek to strengthen these connections, rekindling our common concerns with an explicit eye toward collaboration and synergy. To get a sense of how feminist and queer perspectives are being brought together within geography, we reviewed bibliographic records that included feminist, queer, and trans perspectives, methodologies, and scholarship. To obtain these records, we performed a Web of Science search within geography journals using the following search terms: ‘feminis\* AND queer,’ ‘feminis\* AND gay,’ ‘feminis\* AND transgender’ ‘feminis\* AND lesbian’ and ‘feminis\* AND LGBT\*’. We removed articles that did not appear, from the abstract, to be substantively engaging queer/trans and feminist approaches. This yielded 109 records spanning the years 1992–2024 (see Figure 1). We identified these major themes in this body of work:

- *Gendered spaces*: family and domestic space, digital space, and public space through a gendered and/or sexual lens.
- *Intersectional identities and queer cultures*: gendered identities at the intersections of disability, race, nationality, and other identities; queer cultures.



**Figure 1.** Articles engaging queer/trans and feminist perspectives over the years.

- *Urban geography*: gendered analysis of gentrification, development, and urban space.
- *Epistemology and methodology*: production and marginalisation of knowledge, autoethnography, body mapping, power relations, collaborative work, storytelling.
- *Academia and pedagogy*: reflections on geography as a discipline, gendered academic cultures, and teaching gender and sexuality.
- *Political geography*: gendered analysis of borders, geopolitics, and related themes.

These intellectual foci have become more numerous and diverse over time. [Figure 1](#) shows the increase in scholarship that mobilises both queer/trans and feminist theories over the past three decades, with a modest surge in publication. While we recognize these diverse engagements, we do want to note that the majority of this work pertains to queer sexualities and/or queer theoretical lenses, not queer and trans gender per se. Specifically, engagement with trans work is very limited and an area with much growth potential; our search turned up only 20 articles, some of which include the term ‘transgender’ in the searchable fields but do not have particularly deep engagements with transgender perspectives.

### Intellectual commonalities and synergies

We want to build on these trends and areas of growth. In what follows, we propose some more specific areas for deepened engagement between feminist, queer, and trans geographies, including social reproduction, feminist political ecology/queer ecologies, and political geography. These brief examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but to provide a glimpse at the potentials for queer/trans/feminist thought in these areas.

## *Social reproduction*

As both a concept and a political orientation, social reproduction influences feminist geography in important ways. Feminist geographers understand social reproduction as a framework for exploring how reproductive labour – both feminised and as performed by women – is essential for economic production, but is invisibilised and devalued (Mullings 2021). Feminist geographers utilise social reproduction to articulate masculine biases in understandings of space, place, scale, economies, labour, geo/politics, the urban, and more, and the impoverished and partial analyses they generate (Gibson-Graham 1996; Marston 2000; McDowell 2001; Wright 2006).

However, feminist geographers in this realm have often failed to account for other categories of social difference and their structural underpinnings. Race and racialisation, heterosexism and heteronormativity, and their fundamental imbrication with the ideas of gender and sex in capitalist social formations, have received far less attention than the devaluation of cishetero women's reproductive labour, both paid and unpaid. Heteronormativity shapes gendered divisions of labour, ideas of family, the production of space, the policy priorities of nation states and international institutions, and economies of production and reproduction (Nguyen 2023; Oswin 2019). Calls to queer social reproduction in geography (Andrucki 2017) respond to these issues by not only making space for queer, trans, and non-binary subjects, households, and modes of reproduction in feminist social reproduction theory, but also by examining binaries that feminists identified as problematic in social reproduction theory, including the production/reproduction binary and binary understandings of gender. Transfeminist and queer approaches make visible the role of hetero- and cis-normativity in structures of dominance that are also racialised, classed, and gendered (c.f. Muñoz 1999; Eng 2010; Beauchamp 2019).

## *Queer and feminist ecologies*

We also see great potential in bringing together feminist and queer environmental thought. Feminist political ecology (FPE) and queer ecologies (QE), although emerging through distinct scholarly lineages, are both deeply informed by early work in ecofeminism and feminist work on nature. These two subfields share concerns with embodiment, gendered systems of power and heteropatriarchy, and the impacts of binary thinking on minoritised gender and sexual communities. FPE emerged as a critique of political ecology in the 1990s for the field's neglect of gender, intrahousehold relations, and the body as important components of power relations in environmental degradation and resource access (Rocheleau et al. 1996). FPE has pushed environmental scholarship to attend to how gendered norms and systems shape human-environment relations through the intersections of these gendered systems with racism, classism, coloniality, and other power systems (Elmhirst 2015; Mollett and Faria 2013).

QE emerged out of queer theory and ecofeminist work that examined ideas of the 'naturalness' of gender binaries and heterosexual norms (see Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson 2010). Both FPE and QE share core interests in how a patriarchal capitalist system simultaneously produces both the degradation of the environment and the domination of women, queer, and trans people. Similarly, both emphasise the importance of the body and embodiment in understanding human-environment relations (e.g. Sandilands 2002; Chen 2012; Woelfle-Erskine and Cole 2015; Barad 2015; Wölfle

Hazard 2022). The different contexts in which each field has taken form have led to different contributions to a set of concerns shared by FPE and QE: FPE offers more significant attention to the ways that gendered systems intersect with global colonial and racialised power systems to shape human-environment relations, while QE brings greater attention to the problematic posed by the human/non-human as well as gender binaries. We believe greater dialogue amongst FPE and QE scholars, such as those begun by Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi (2015), would benefit the goal of both subfields to produce more just socio-ecological relations.

### *Queer and feminist political geographies*

Political geography is another area where feminist and queer/trans synergies are abundant. There are examples of feminist political geographic scholarship that productively mess with essentialised categories, statist spatialities, and white masculinist epistemologies, ‘breaking open binaries’ to reveal the embodied, complex realities so often hidden from view (Christian, Dowler, and Cuomo 2016, 65). Despite this emphasis on ‘disruption,’ some of this work risks reproducing the binaries and divisions called into question (Johnston 2016). Calls have been made within feminist geopolitics, for example, for more imaginative framings that challenge ‘the subtle exclusions that existing terms and categories unwittingly make’ (Hyndman 2019, 6; see also Wright 2010; Peterson 2017; Gökarıksel et al. 2021). Here, we see opportunities to deepen engagement with intersectional queer and trans geographies to avoid slippage into (cishetero) normative framings and other limited perspectives that function to uphold oppressive structures and logics.

More intentional dialogue with queer and trans scholarship can invigorate feminist political analysis, for instance, by including queer theorisations of transgressive mobilities (Puar 2017; Oswin 2013); migration, asylum, refugees, and resettlement (Luibhéid 2008; Rouhani 2016; Bhagat 2018; Sandoval 2018), carceral and legal spaces (DasGupta 2019; Rosenberg and Oswin 2015), and porous spatial and bodily boundaries (Beauchamp 2013; Hiemstra 2021), to name a few. Secor, Ehrkamp, and Loyd (2022) provide one example in which queer theory is integrated into feminist political analyses of migration. In their examination of the spacetime of resettlement, they demonstrate how refugees are ‘queered’ vis-à-vis displacement and placed ‘outside the linear trajectories that secure white, bourgeois, heterosexual privilege’ (Secor, Ehrkamp, and Loyd 2022, 512). In this sense, the category of queer extends beyond LGBTQ subjects to look at questions of normativity and biopolitics (see Puar 2007).

Queer approaches challenge existing social and political structures (e.g. citizenship, borders) and seek to disrupt linear and binary modes of thought. Queer interventions not only complicate how we understand the processes, systems, and practices around us, but seek to transform existing social and political structures (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005). In short, feminist and queer geographers alike have much to say on the sexualised, gendered, racialised, classed and colonial-imperialist structures of power in scholarly work on the state, militarism, territoriality, and migration, creating potential for further synergistic projects.

Beyond these three brief examples, there are myriad other areas in which queer, trans, and feminist intellectual work share common ground. For instance, themes of

intimacy (Oswin and Olund 2010; Smith 2020), care (Malatino 2020), and precarity (Butler 2004; Johnston 2018) are topics of concern in feminist, queer, and trans thinking.

### **Political commonalities and synergies**

Within and beyond geography and the academy, feminist and queer/trans projects also share much political ground. Here, we focus on two areas of overlap and shared concern: institutional politics and embodied struggles for autonomy.

#### ***Institutional politics and disciplinary transformation***

Between feminist, queer, and trans geographies there is a shared project of transforming geography and its intellectual and institutional spaces – what we refer to as an ‘institutional politics’ or praxis. This project of creating a feminist and/or queer geography requires grappling with the exclusionary histories of the discipline of geography as shaped by intersecting forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, colonialism, and queerphobia (see Giesecking 2023; Kinkaid, Parikh, and Ranjbar 2022; Kinkaid 2023). Queer, feminist, anti-colonial, and anti-racist pedagogies and curriculum intervene in the reproduction of geography’s status quo and dominant social and political orders (DasGupta et al. 2021; Kinkaid and Fritzsche 2022; Daigle and Sundberg 2017). Practices of conscientious engagement and citational politics seek to rework embodied and intellectual hierarchies in the academy (Mott and Cockayne 2017; Giesecking 2020; Smith et al. 2021; Liboiron and Li 2022). Feminist and queer approaches to mentoring seek to address the exclusionary and harmful spaces of the academy and embrace the perspectives of minoritised people (Adams-Hutcheson and Johnston 2019; Caretta and Faria 2020; Singh and Mathews 2019). Care, vulnerability, and relationality are developed into a form of praxis to make geography a more inclusive and liberatory space (Brice 2023; Emard 2022; Naylor forthcoming). Feminist and queer/trans scholars are thus united in their commitment to cultivating these practices toward a less exclusionary university and geography. Making this alliance explicit could open up more space for concerted action to transform geography for all minoritised people.

#### ***Bodily autonomy***

Bodily autonomy is also an obvious shared concern between feminist and queer/trans politics. The concurrent waves of anti-trans and anti-abortion politics in and beyond the United States are part and parcel of a reactionary politics of gender regulation. As feminist scholar Sophie Lewis (2023, n.p.) argues, ‘The Anglo-American panic over trans people can be thought of as a reproductive crisis, specifically, over the educative functions of biological and social reproduction.’ Faced with the possibility of alternative modes of social reproduction, right-wing groups are working to reassert control over biomedical modes of bodily transformation – namely, abortion procedures, birth control, hormones, and transition-related surgeries – and, in turn, of the bodies of trans people and cis women.

This political juncture demands a renewed *transfeminist* politics of bodily autonomy. Trans movements have long identified the connections between reproductive rights

and trans rights, not least of which being that forced sterilisation remains a condition for legal gender recognition in many parts of the world (Koyama 2020; Lowik 2018). Recent transfeminist movements in Argentina are indicative: as trans geographer Francisco Fernández Romero (2021) explains, trans activists shifted the terrain of Argentinian reproductive rights by situating abortion within a broader conversation of bodily autonomy from medical and judicial institutions. Today, Argentina has one of the most expansive abortion rights laws in South America (Law no. 27610, 15 January 2021, B.O. 34.562). The coalitional politics of bodily autonomy, then, constitutes one important avenue for transfeminist action.

The focus on embodiment and its political contours need not only be about constraint and struggle; we can also engage in resistance, pleasure, and eroticism. For example, we take up adrienne maree brown's conceptions and collection of essays around pleasure activism (2019). We can also use pleasure activism in ways to 'activate' the feminist killjoy in our everyday geographical praxis (Ahmed 2023), study the role of the erotic in feminised communities of queer and trans celebration (Lorde 1978), or concentrate on land relations and taking pleasure in 'cockblock[ing]... entitlement' (Liboiron 2021, 139). While increasing the visibility of feminised and queer/trans embodiment, we also want a critical geography that highlights joy, euphoria and empowerment, not one focused solely on the structural constraints, fear, and insecurity that shape our lives (Tuck 2009).

## Our vision

Throughout this *Viewpoint* series, we have discussed various obstacles that frustrate the vision we outline here. To this list we add a few other concerns specific to the question of queer/trans-feminist coalition. We worry that there are no institutional or cultural incentives for doing this kind of work; at present, we work within a feminist geography where there are no strong incentives for engaging gender beyond a binary, nor are there necessarily disincentives for continuing to reproduce cisheteronormativity. We also worry that the origins of feminist geography as a project of and about white cis women frustrates coalitional and intersectional thinking. While these foundations have certainly been revised and expanded, these origins still inform the shape of feminist geography and are a site of tension and negotiation. We need to work to revise and expand upon feminist geography if it is not to reproduce these exclusions.

We are hopeful that we can overcome these barriers (and the barriers we have addressed in the rest of this series) to forge more robust dialogue and engagement between feminist, queer, and trans scholarship and practice. We are energised by the potential for a more expansive geography of gender that brings feminist, queer, and trans perspectives together, along with critical lenses on race, ability, and colonialism, to diagnose and challenge how forms of social difference – forms of difference that are encoded in the term 'gender' – constrain our lives and the broader world.

This intellectual project must be accompanied by sustained institutional work, coalition building, and praxis. It requires that we activate the strategies we have described throughout this *Viewpoint* series to make more space for queer and trans people within feminist geography. For example, a simple starting point would be to build stronger relationships between queer/trans and feminist geography

groups in our various national contexts, planning events together, supporting each other's work, and engaging each other on social media to create visibility for our work.

Through this work, we aim to expand the intellectual and political vision and practice of feminist geography. We want to continue to extend feminist efforts to transform regressive disciplinary formations and subvert the oppressive systems enacted in geography and the academy. We want to come together to build other worlds and queer futures in and through geography. We are excited by the prospect of engaging in deep and continuing dialogue and enacting shared projects shaped by humility, grace, care, accountability, messiness, joy, and pleasure and the deeply held commitments that have shaped us and brought us together as queer, trans, and feminist geographers.















### Queering Feminist Geography Collective biographical statement

We are a collective of queer, trans and queer-positive feminists working within and adjacent to geography. We represent a diversity of gender and sexual identities and positionalities and describe ourselves as queer, trans, cis, straight, bisexual, gender-queer, genderfluid, transfemme, and transmasculine. Beyond our gender and sexual identities, we describe ourselves as white, BIPOC, working class, disabled, first-gen students, and neurodivergent. Whatever our identities, we are committed to creating, holding, and contributing to a space that centres the experiences and perspectives of queer and trans feminist geographers toward a more inclusive and self-actualised feminist geography. We work collaboratively to discuss, research, and write about our experiences in geography, the relations between queer and feminist geography, and our collective aspirations for feminist geography.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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