



What do the terms “multiple belongings” and “multiple discriminations” mean?

Lesbian and bisexual women and trans* people¹ do not only experience discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As a human being, they also have an origin, a skin colour, a body with a particular ability or impairment, a gender/sexual identity (or identities) or belongings. They belong to multiple social groups, and therefore have “multiple belongings”. We conduct our work in empowerment, anti-discrimination and anti-violence from the perspective of **multiple belongings**. In doing so, our goal is to emphasise the diversity of ways of life, with their particular experiences and resources.

Due to a combination of various belongings, lesbian and bisexual women and trans* people are often affected “by more than one form of discrimination, as in racism, sexism, ableism (discrimination based on disability/impairment), age discrimination, classism (discrimination based on social status), homophobia and transphobia. They always find themselves at different intersections of identities and forms of discrimination. For example, in the following statement, one person is discriminated against in multiple ways: “She didn't find a real man in her cultural circle, that's why she became a lesbian!”. In that case, multiple discriminations, as in racism, homophobia and

¹ Trans* designates all those who cannot or do not want to live as the gender which they were assigned at birth. This includes individuals who are transsexual, transgender, drag queens and kings, transidentities, crossdressers and many more.

(hetero)sexism, are interwoven together. They are not separable from one another and occur on multiple levels. This form of discrimination combines a degradation of an "other" cultural circle as well as same-sex ways of life. In doing so, the concept that being a lesbian is a self-determined way of life is denied and not taken seriously. This homophobic and racist form of discrimination occurs based on the actual or assumed multiple belongings. The result is a specific experience of discrimination that is not comparable to discrimination which "only" occurs based on one factor. This specific kind of discrimination is called **multiple discrimination**. It can take many different forms, as in for example:

- Physical and mental violence: defamation, harassment, threats, degradation, debasement and the like
- Exclusion from or limited access to education, the job market, the housing market, health care services, rights
- Exclusion from or limited access to political and cultural involvement
- Exclusion from literature, educational materials, media, or exclusionary stereotypes, degrading portrayals.

Political demands and anti-discrimination work

It can be necessary and expedient to principally focus on one particular belonging in order to express political demands and effectuate social transformation. However, focussing on one individual belonging most often leads to ignoring the interests of those who have multiple belongings and their specific experiences of discrimination. Individual experiences of discrimination are hierarchised and played against one another: one example

of this would be the claim that homophobia is worse than racism and therefore homophobia should be dealt with first. Our goal is to stand up against all forms of violence and discrimination. We believe that it is important to include the various life realities of lesbian, bisexual and trans* people's ways of life, as in migration background, social origin, age, skin colour, social status, impairment. We want people with multiple belongings to be able to show and live out their whole personality. In the case of identity, there is no either-or.

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