CHAPTER 3

‘Enough Is Enough’: Strike, Affective Solidarity and Belonging Among Migrant Women from Poland Living in Trondheim

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Introduction

It was October 24, 2020, just two days after the Polish Constitutional Tribunal had issued the anti-abortion ruling, and massive anti-governmental protests were spreading in many cities, towns and villages in Poland and abroad. It was a chilly, late-autumn day in Trondheim, Norway: the sky was covered with dark clouds, the wind pierced the bones, the seagulls were noisy as usual and it felt like it would rain again. We, women and men from Poland—students, construction workers, academics, waitresses, retired women—but also a few people from Norway, gathered under the Olav Tryggvason statue with handmade banners, various slogans on pieces of cardboard, an analogue internet. Almost everyone carried banners inspired by the language of memes, feminist slogans

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and local interventions with messages to the Norwegians which read: 'Our girls just wanna have FUNdamental human rights', 'Kvinner I Polen dømt til tortur' ('*Women in Poland sentenced for torture*'), 'Kjære Norge, vi og våre søstre trenger deres støtte' ('*Dear Norway, we and our sisters need your support*'), 'Solidarity with Polish women'. Some women carried black umbrellas; others brought coat hangers or pinned on their jackets the image of a blood-red lightning bolt—all symbols for the fight for abortion rights. Women and men in the crowd gave spontaneous speeches about illegal abortions, lack of sexual education and the need for Norwegian support. We were about fifty people, but we made a lot of noise on this otherwise sleepy Sunday. We shouted trenchantly together: 'This is a war on women!', 'My body, my choice!' and '*Wypierdalać!*' ('fuck off!'), which became the main slogan of the strikes and direct message to the Polish government. We wore masks because of the Covid-19 pandemic and kept the prescribed distance, but still greeted each other and exchanged some comments. It felt good to be physically with others when these collective sensibilities were pulsing around. Some people passing by the square joined the gathering. Local journalist came to take photos. One photo, of the women of the strike holding a banner reading 'Abort the government', became the picture of the day in the local newspaper. It was accompanied by an interview with a male co-organiser of the strike, under the title '*Her demonstrerer de uten tillatelse på Torvet*' ('Here they demonstrate without permission in the square') (Addresseavisen 2020, online version). The picture became the background image for the online organisational group that was created that day, where it was decided to organise a bigger, more professional strike in order to raise the awareness of Norwegian society and politicians of the Polish case.

The vignette described above took place while unprecedented strikes in Poland resonated through the streets, on social media platforms and in homes in Trondheim, Norway. Two days earlier, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal had deemed abortion due to an unborn's foetal defects to be unconstitutional. Abortion remained legal merely in two cases: if the pregnancy threatened the mother's life and health, or if a woman became pregnant following rape or incest. In practice, the decision meant that most of the abortions performed legally up until then in Poland became illegal.[1] In

[1] According to data from the Polish Ministry of Health, in 2019, 98% of abortions were carried out on grounds of foetal defect, meaning that the ruling banned the vast majority of pregnancy terminations. https://federa.org.pl/dane-mz-aborcje-2020

Trondheim, migrant women from Poland connected online, as well as offline through pre-existing social networks, to share their feelings of disappointment, anger, but also hope. They organised two strikes and occupied a public space in the main square of the city. In total 200 women and their allies organised themselves, in the middle of the pandemic, speaking publicly about gender violence and their despair, and asking Norwegians for support. Life's everyday routines were suspended and new temporalities, spaces and possibilities for alliances opened up.

Based on the ethnographic material and my own engagement in the strikes, this chapter is written from within this organisational dynamic, political process and affects that were mobilised. I was involved in the organisational meetings from the beginning, and my own experience informed my epistemological and methodological choices. I look at the solidarity strikes as a *lens* which allows me to understand the situated point of view, experiences and expectations of women from Poland living in Trondheim. In the analytical sense, the strike and assemblies it produced were places where feminist diagnosis of the crisis and mapping of the living conditions were elaborated (Gago, 2020: 141).

The main research questions inspired by that diagnosis are: What type of commonality of feelings was produced by women during the strikes in Trondheim? What questions were asked when the strike resonated through Norway? What is the role of temporality and space in practices of solidarities and (un)belonging?

Temporalities, Space, Affective Solidarity and Belonging

This chapter is situated at the intersection of the concepts of temporality, space, affective solidarity and belonging. Recently, we observed a comeback of interest in solidarity as a significant organising principle in different parts of the world (Carty & Mohanty, 2015; Çağatay et al., 2022; Gago, 2020; Littler & Rottenberg, 2020; Riley, 2000; Vachhani & Pullen, 2019). Examining the solidarity mobilisation in Trondheim, I draw on feminist thinker Clare Hemmings' theory of affective solidarity,[2] which positions embodied knowledge at the centre of solidarity (2012).

[2] See the conversations on various understandings of the notion of feminist solidarity: Ahmed 2014; Hemmings, 2012; Littler & Rottenberg, 2020; Mohanty, 2003; Salem, 2018; Wiedlack et al., 2020.

Hemmings argues that affective solidarity emerges from affective dissonance derived from a troublesome relationship between ontology and epistemology: 'in order to know differently we have to feel differently' (2012: 150). Affective dissonance is a feeling of discomfort, negative emotions that come from a divergence between the ways in which we see ourselves and the social and political conditions that limit our actions and expression. As such, solidarity emerges from situated experience and uneasiness in relation to dominant norms and relations of power and can potentially lead to a desire for social transformation (Hemmings, 2012). I will draw on affective dissonance as an important aspect of mobilisation and everyday experiences of gendered and racialised women from Poland living in Norway.[3] While thinking about solidarity mobilisations, I am inspired by the notion of weak resistance (Majewska, 2018, 2021; Scott, 1985) that focuses on everyday matters and ordinary forms of resistance that sometimes constitute forms of counterpublics and where the oppression and resistance take place simultaneously (Fraser, 1990; Majewska, 2021). Research shows that, while practising solidarity, there is a possibility of reproducing or subverting nationalist/assimilationist projects and various inequalities (Çağatay et al., 2022; Pedwell, 2012). In the context of migration, solidarity practices have their own characteristics, related to a politics of place and local asymmetries of power that shape migrants' struggles in the urban context. To understand these complex intersections, the question of spatiality and its relations to belonging and struggles is important to unpack. I am inspired by feminist thinkers who have called for attention to be paid to the politics of location as a form of situated dwelling (Lorde, 1984; Rich, 1985; Haraway, 1988; Collins, 1998). Through the text, I will highlight the relational role of space, which can go beyond geographical boundaries and can be reshaped in the digital realms. As such, a space is open and unbounded (Massey, 1994, 2005) and forms a complex assemblage of local, transnational, online and offline interactions.

[3] I am inspired by the critical race and whiteness studies and explore the experiences of migrants from Poland: how they are seen, read and positioned by the norms of Norwegian whiteness. Whiteness is a relational category, which means that in different locations bodies can move in and out of it during the process of racialisation. I understand racialisation as a process of differentiation of various social groups by essentialising, and sometimes biologising, them, which re-enacts and stabilises the boundaries and hierarchies in the world. See the discussions in the Scandinavian context: Guðjónsdóttir, 2014; Leinonen & Toivanen, 2014; Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012; Runfors, 2021; van Riemsdijk, 2010.

I am interested in the processes of inclusion and exclusion caused by solidarity practices and their role in the feelings of (un)belonging. I approach belonging 'from below' and focus on everyday social interactions and agencies across racialised, gendered experiences of Polish migrants. Following Nira Yuval-Davis, I analyse belonging as a multilayered and multiscalar process. She highlights the importance of studying relationships between positioning, identities and political values as central to studies of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). I find it interesting to combine a dynamic, multilayered and intersectional approach to belonging with temporality and space. Attention to temporality, understood as a lived and subjective experience of time that is socially experienced and dynamic (Bryant & Knight, 2019; Hoy, 2009), illuminates different power relations, processes of othering as well as various forms of resistance (see Amrith, 2017, 2021; Cwerner, 2001; Çağlar, 2016; Jacobsen et al., 2021; Lilja et al., 2019; Knight, 2012; Sutherland, 2019). Saulo Cwerner in his pioneering analysis 'The Times of Migration' argued that 'the focus on the temporal experience of migrants can illuminate the nature of migration itself, its twists and turns, meanings and ambivalence, and the way that, in a diversity of ways, it displaces, and re-embeds people and communities around the world' (2001: 32). I bring in the perspective of temporality[4] to understand characteristics of solidarity mobilisations and explore moments in which women rescaled their views, emotions and practices of belonging in Trondheim.

Methods and Positionality

This chapter is informed by my own activist experiences and has inspired questions I ask in academia. Such a combination of academic work and political involvement has been called 'activist research' or 'engaged research' (Hale, 2008). I am both an anthropologist doing research about informal networking spaces of migrants in Norway (Kochaniewicz, 2021) and an activist who has been engaged in the women's movement in Poland for many years. I am also a migrant woman from Poland living in Norway for the last five years. Besides academia, I have worked as a cleaner,

[4] Time and temporality have recently been receiving more attention in migration studies, reflecting a so-called 'temporal turn' where researchers engage with temporal dimensions of migration (Baas & Yeoh, 2019; Cwerner, 2001; King et al., 2006; Robertson, 2015; Collins & Shubin, 2015; Griffiths, 2014; van Houte, 2019).

dishwasher and waitress in the hospitality industry. The radicalising political climate in Poland was one of many push factors, but an important one, to leave there. When the strikes exploded in Poland, I joined the mobilisation in Trondheim and engaged in many organisational activities. I participated in the collective writing of a manifesto that we read out during the strike and took part in creating a playlist for the demonstration. Together with a friend, I published a short article about the strike, in the Norwegian newspaper *Klassekampen*. This chapter is situated in the moments of the mobilisation. Affects that were evoked in my own activist actions become sources of useful data (for the role of emotions in the research process, see Blee, 1998; Ellis et al., 2011). As such, the study is an autoethnography, as I follow the development of my imagination forged in collective moments.

The chapter is a record of conversations, events, discussions in the meetings and the process of planning the strike. In addition, I conducted in-depth interviews with thirteen women and two men who were actively engaged in the events.[5] The majority of them live in Trondheim, come from different social and cultural backgrounds and work in various sectors such as construction, sales, hospitality, academia and healthcare. Although there were many allies taking part in the solidarity strikes, who are acknowledged in this chapter, I decided to focus on women and LGBTQ+ persons: in the male-dominated political arena, I considered that they were crucial in shaping feminist counterpublics.

'Resonant Body': Situating the Strike

The all-pervasive presence of digital technology facilitates the rise in transnational solidarities in many parts of the world (Chamberlain, 2017; Fotopoulou, 2016; Tufekci, 2017). It is necessary to emphasise the connections between different solidarities and struggles, their pluralities and how they create spaces of resistance beyond different scales, from local to regional and global (Çağatay et al., 2022; Chamberlain, 2017; Majewska, 2021). Solidarity has served as a spark for recent transnational movements like Women's March, the International Women's Strike, SlutWalk and Black Lives Matter to mention just a few. For instance, the International

[5] My research follows the regulations and requirements for data protection by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). Regarding issues of anonymity and confidentiality, all names and backgrounds of my research participants have been anonymised.

Women's Strike originated from October 2016's 'Black Monday', which was a nationwide women's strike against the ultraconservative right-wing Polish government's consideration of criminalising abortion in Poland,[6] and from expansion of the protests led by Ni Una Menos ('Not One Woman Less') against feminicide in Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, El Salvador and many other countries (Gago, 2020; Littler & Rottenberg, 2020: 871).[7] The speed of communication through the Internet made it possible to be aware of global issues very quickly and enabled new forms of collective feelings and modes of acting (such as online groups, petitions, new archival practices, fundraising forums)—what is now often called the 'fourth wave' of feminism (Chamberlain, 2017; Retallack et al., 2016; Rivers, 2017). Verónica Gago, a professor of sociology and feminist activist, who writes about Ni Una Menos strikes and contemporary feminism in Argentina, compared these connections to the 'experience of vibrating sound that formed what psychoanalyst Suely Rolnik has called a massive "resonant body"' (Gago, 2020: 22). Strikes with their resonance opened up new possibilities and connections. The expansion of these forms of feminist solidarity was a reaction to the wider interrelated contexts which are authoritarian forms of neo-nationalism, defined by misogyny, with attacks on equal rights, the LGBTQA+ community and women's reproductive justice, aggressive forms of patriarchy and continuing effects of neoliberalism and its augmented inequalities, racisms and gender regimes (Brown, 2019; Gago, 2020; Ghigi & Rottenberg, 2019; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Korolczuk et al., 2019; Król & Pustułka, 2018; Littler & Rottenberg, 2020; Majewska, 2021). As such, these surges were organised not around essentialist identities, but around issues. Although those include general elements, they define some pivotal commonalities that countries like Poland, Norway, the United

[6] Protests were in reaction to the 'Stop Abortion' Legislative Initiative Committee, which in the draft amendment called for a complete ban on abortion under all circumstances and its criminalisation (Król & Pustułka, 2018; Nawojski, 2019). Poland already had one of the strictest abortion laws in Europe, and access to abortions was severely limited: only in the case of rape, threat to a woman's life or serious malformation of the foetus. Protests in 2016 led to political success and parliament finally stopped the proceedings on the abortion ban (Dynda, 2021; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Korolczuk et al., 2019).

[7] For example, the webpage of the UK branch of Women's Strike states: 'From Argentina to Poland, from Ireland to Kurdistan, women are making connections, building alliances and taking action against our current conditions of womanhood.' Retrieved May 5, 2022, from https://womenstrike.org.uk/about

States, Argentina, Ireland and many others recently experienced (Gago, 2020; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Majewska, 2021).

The protests of autumn 2020 in Poland and abroad cannot be described separately from the history of the 2016 All-Poland Women's Strike, a feminist independent social movement, which was called Black Protests.[8] The Black Protests had produced a structure for further actions and feminist political consciousness and had reshaped the public debate in Poland. This had been combined with mass mobilisation against the ruling by the national-conservative Law and Justice party. The informal movement and networks had been created, gathering women often never politically engaged before (Dynda, 2021; Graff, 2020; Korolczuk, 2020; Ramme & Snochowska-Gonzalez, 2019). Many of the women who organised the solidarity strike in Trondheim mentioned their experience of the political and collective transformation from the Black Protests. For some of them, that had been the moment when they decided to migrate to Norway. Some were supporting Black Protests from Norway either by travelling to demonstrations in Poland or by supporting the movement from a distance.

The 2020 mobilisation was connected not only to the defence of reproductive justice but to queer solidarity as well. The latter was a reaction to a court's decision to detain Margo, an activist from the queer collective Stop Bzdurom ('Enough of This Nonsense') earlier that year,[9] when a wave of protests had led to dozens of brutal detentions by the police in Warsaw. Protests in the streets of various Polish cities and locations abroad, including Trondheim and Oslo, opposed a prolonged anti-LGBTQI+

[8] In opposition to that law proposal, more than 150,000 people took part in the Polish Women's Strike in 140 cities, towns and villages in Poland and abroad (Korolczuk et al., 2019).

[9] Margo was sentenced to two months in police custody for damaging a truck belonging to the conservative NGO The Right to Live Foundation, which was driving around the city broadcasting homophobic and anti-LGBT messages through loudspeakers, displaying posters and broadcasting slogans that associate homosexuality with paedophilia. Another charge was related to draping rainbow flags on Warsaw monuments.

campaign by politicians from the Law and Justice party,[10,11] the Catholic Church and some media personalities. Norwegian queer activists organised a solidarity protest in front of the Polish consulate in Trondheim in August 2020. This sudden connection between the Norwegian and Polish queer activists, feminists and their allies resulted in two public events during Trondheim Pride: a panel discussion entitled 'Queer and Polish' and the invitation to Margo and Lou from the collective Stop Bzdurom to be keynote speakers opening Trondheim Pride.

Hence, both the 2016 Black Protests and the queer solidarity mobilisations of summer 2020 were important as to how the 2020 strike would unfold. When, on October 22, 2020, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal declared abortions of malformed foetuses to be unconstitutional, people took to the streets across Poland, in more than 400 cities, towns and villages, forming the biggest wave of political dissent since the solidarity movement that brought an end to communism in the 1990s (Dynda, 2021; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Korolczuk, 2021; Kwiatkowska, 2021). It was a response to the backlash against gender equality, sexual rights and LGBTQI+ communities related to the rise of populist, far-right, nationalist and xenophobic ideologies in Poland in recent years (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022). To protest against this, countless crowds of mostly young women blocked the streets in 'spontaneous strolls'—walking, cycling or slowly driving their cars around, honking, playing drums, making as much noise as they could. Also in protest, thousands of women didn't go to work. Women in Poland were no longer just saying 'enough is enough' or 'shame on you' or asking for their fundamental rights.[12] The main slogan of the strike this time was '*wypierdalać*' ('fuck off')—an act of resistance and

[10] In 2020 and 2021, Poland was ranked as the worst country in the EU for LGBT people in the *Rainbow Europe* index produced annually by ILGA-Europe, a Brussels-based NGO that advocates for LGBT rights. Retrieved May 5, 2022, from https://www.ilga-europe.org/rainbow-europe; see also Poland Anti-LGBTI Hate Timeline by ILGA-Europe. Retrieved May 5, 2022, from https://ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Poland-Anti-LGBT-Timeline.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3Kz64Ag0Kxx3LPZCtaGtiOr3N4-2ocpMW7FIWkSW7yXShF7UgF9HOpQ6M

[11] Poland's current populist leader, Andrzej Duda, came to power on a platform decrying an 'LGBT ideology' that he alleged was spreading throughout the country at the expense of traditional family values and, thereby, to society at large. Such discourse has led to an adaptation of anti-LGBT resolutions and family charters by numerous local governments in Poland.

[12] These were the most common slogans in the October 2016 demonstrations when women in Poland went on strike against the criminalisation of abortion (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Iwasiów, 2021).

delegitimisation of the power of the state in its present shape (Chaciński, 2021; Czapliński, 2021; Korolczuk, 2021; Majewska, 2021).[13,14] The social and political conditions which limited different groups in society produced the affective dissonance that changed the way they perceive reality, stirred the affects of anger and disbelief in current government and mobilised masses of women and their allies. These revolutionary events and atmosphere opened up a temporality of the here and now among women from Poland living in Trondheim. But the 'here and now' began in a different way there. The local encounters brought different diagnoses and asked different questions. In the next section, I will situate the strike in Trondheim.

Affective Dissonance from Afar

Polish women in Trondheim and their everyday lives were affected by the contemporary politics of the Law and Justice party, although in a different way from in Poland. Most of the women had been raised and socialised in Poland; they were all politically engaged, albeit in different ways, and aware of the patriarchal gender order, continuous dominance of the Catholic Church and the new restrictive abortion legislation. They worried about their sisters, mothers and friends in Poland, who would not have access to safe abortion. Some of them had been engaged in the 2016 protests in Poland and felt desperation when the Constitutional Tribunal decision was announced. The first comment on Trondheim's solidarity group's Facebook page was 'to coordinate our dissatisfaction', which reflected the emotional climate of the time. In our conversations, women mentioned feeling restless, sad, ashamed, angry and hopeless. They could not focus on their work and were addictively following, through social media, what was happening on the streets of Poland. Katrina, who

[13] Women's protests in Poland influenced the views on abortion held by the Polish population at large: in 2016, only 37% of respondents were of the opinion that the current law should be liberalised, but in 2019 over 50% of respondents declared that abortion should be available 'on demand'. Hence, the population's outrage at the government for not respecting their views was huge (Majewska, 2021).

[14] Vulgar and negative slogans were also a reaction to the widespread use by politicians from the Law and Justice party of contemptuous, exclusionary and hateful language against various social groups ('rainbow plague', 'LGBT-free zone', 'Migrants carrying disease'), including their parliamentary opposition ('murderers', 'criminals', 'sewers', 'rabble') (Chaciński, 2021; Kwiatkowska, 2021).

identifies as a queer person, is a PhD student at the university in Trondheim. She had migrated from Poland in 2019 because of the government's xenophobic and homophobic ideologies. She described the first days of the women protests, while being stuck in Trondheim, as follows:

> When I saw the decision of the Tribunal, I was crying for the first few days: all the protests I went to in Warsaw were all for nothing—again they [the government] do what they want. […] Then I followed the situation online in different cities and these images of the streets and thousands of women … so radical, so playful and brave, entering the churches. I wanted to be there, let the police gas me! […] you know, it is also terribly inconvenient to have so many negative thoughts and associations about your roots. It is probably not psychologically healthy that you have such a great sense of detachment from something that should give you strength in your identity, not just a constant feeling of shame. The strikes gave me hope and diminished a bit the feeling of internal migration from the time when I lived in Poland; it was a dream about a better Poland. I wrote to my friend, 'Let's do something!' I wanted to experience it here in Trondheim with other people who understand this context.

Katrina mentioned frustration about the government's decision and hopelessness related to her past activism in Poland. In her case the negative thoughts were a form of critique but also made her feel uncomfortable while living in Norway (Chamberlain, 2017). The negative affects were counterbalanced by the positive ones that were associated with hope, change and belief in other politics in Poland. The virtual presence, through digital platforms, allowed her and many of the women to follow the strikes in Poland not in space but in time. This temporal copresence (Gray, 2016; Pink et al., 2015) was important in producing affects and readiness to act.[15] It built a strong collective feeling of injustice and, in turn, into a desire to change the situation. The engagement in the strikes from afar created the affective relationship for Katrina and led her to participate directly on the streets of Trondheim and to be part of the organisation's assemblies.

The political events in Poland were also discussed during random meetings in the grocery shops, 'over the garden wall' with neighbours and in

[15] There is a body of literature where researchers who participated in-person and online in the various protests discuss what bodily presence and absence means in the fieldwork (see, for example, Gray, 2016; Kilic, 2021; Tufekci, 2017).

other spaces. Natalia, a single mother, works in a beauty salon in Trondheim. She came to Trondheim five years ago and participated in the strike there. She uses her working space to share information about women's protests and politics in Poland with her clients. With the anti-abortion ruling, she was greatly worried about her sister and daughter:

> I have two sisters in Poland and they both have children. I talked to my younger sister: she has three children, and she gave birth to all of them by caesarean. She says that she would like to have a fourth, but there is a high risk that she may not carry a child or of a complicated pregnancy, and because of that she is afraid of getting pregnant in Poland, because she doesn't know how it could end … So sad.

When talking about her future plans, Natalia also mentioned how it affected her decisions:

> For sure I will stay here until my daughter finishes school or goes to university. I feel good here and I think in this respect that it is a good place to raise a woman, a girl, a human with a uterus {*laughter*}. Here she will be safer.

Natalia pointed out how violent politics in Poland directly affected the reproduction decision made by her sister. She empathised with her, and the whole situation made her sorrowful. She was also afraid that attempts to subordinate women in Poland could affect her daughter and her future if they wanted to return. Her case shows that the 'shifting temporal horizons' (Cwerner, 2001), which unfold during migration journeys, are gendered and can change the relation to future decisions and affect 'imagined return' (Bivand Erdal, 2017). Plans might be remade over time as a result of changing political-economic conditions (in the country of origin and/or in the current place of living) as well as through emotional experiences and relational encounters (Amrith, 2020, 2021).

The feelings of discomfort with politics in Poland were also simmering in the everyday, ordinary life of women in Trondheim. Kasia identifies as a lesbian and works in a restaurant. She had moved to Norway with her parents when she was a teenager. Prior to the solidarity strikes, she had avoided other migrants from Poland in Trondheim. During an interview in her apartment, she said:

> I feel very pissed off when I read the news about the situation in Poland. I feel a breakdown, maybe even some form of depression […]. When I am with my girlfriend in a shop and we hear someone talking Polish, we go silent. It's because of our experience both in Poland and here [Trondheim]. Somehow, we don't want to talk with Poles, especially now, when we know what is happening politically in Poland. I prefer not to risk it.

Kasia talked about her strategies of controlling herself as a Pole, which reflected how politics of gender and anti-LGBTQI+ discourse in Poland can affect life in Norway. Her case shows how the embodied struggles of multiple non-dominant positionalities—as lesbian, cis-woman, migrant from Poland—are experienced in everyday life and networking practices. At times when anti-gender politics characterise government and a part of Polish society, Kasia resisted talking in Polish, fearing to meet with potential hostility. She navigated dynamics of invisibility/visibility and silence/speech in her workplace, social media and everyday encounters. Such ordinary affects are 'public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, but they're also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of' (Stewart, 2007: 2) and highlight the relations between public and personal.

In this section, I have explored what it meant to resonate with the strikes in Poland as a migrant woman from Poland, being stuck by pandemic restrictions in Trondheim. Women's experiences of temporalities during the strikes in Poland instigated a complex assemblage of past, present and future ambitions, shame, anger, hopes, failures, and political anticipation (Knight, 2012). Hemmings sees the role of affects and affective dissonance 'as necessary for a sustainable feminist politics of transformation, but that does not root these in identity or other group characteristics. Instead, affective solidarity is proposed as a way of focusing on modes of engagement that start from the affective dissonance that feminist politics *necessarily begins from*' (Hemmings, 2012: 148). The negative affects felt by migrant women illuminated different aspects of their intersecting positionalities: as women, mothers, sisters, activists, members of LGBTQI+ communities. The basis for the surge in solidarity went beyond such naturalised forms of belonging as ethnicity or nationality and revealed gendered and sexual lives and liveabilities (Bhambra, 2014; Çağatay et al., 2022). This highlighted the importance of examining the basis for solidarities, as emphasised by feminist researchers Selin Çağatay et al. 'to go beyond the particularities of individual actors or groups, and explore solidarities across differences situated within contexts of national

assimilationist projects and demarcations of borders infused by ideas of homogeneity/sameness' (2022: 65). In the next section, I will explore the tensions within the different forms of belonging related to the specific situatedness of women migrants from Poland.

Deconstructing Conditions of Temporal (Un)belonging

I will turn now to practices of solidarity and what they revealed about the seams of temporality in the context of (un)belonging and local power asymmetries. What types of new questions were addressed when the strike 'travelled' to Norway?

During the solidarity strike, women shared feelings of connection, affection and desire for transformation, together with frustration, anger and disappointment. For many of them, the strike had a therapeutic function of acting out emotions. Women were meeting online, but also in their homes, creating new relationships and networks. In the time of the pandemic, isolation and political crisis, the strike brought a recognition of the importance of being together physically. It produced temporal proximity between participants who together were involved in the concrete action and shared common affects. They often mentioned surprise that there were so many diverse Poles living in Trondheim in terms of age, profession, class, sexuality and political affiliation. Prior to the strike, many of them had avoided other Poles, because of the assumptions of their 'imagined conservative political affiliation'. Another aspect was the experience of online hostility or hate speech in social media networking groups run by and for the Polish community in Trondheim.[16] For instance, when organisers of the Pride event during the 'Queer and Polish' discussion shared the link to the event with those groups, they received homophobic comments and death threats, which they reported to the police.[17] Olga, who moved to Trondheim with her son in 2007, is very active on social media, also in groups dedicated to the Polish community. She works at a

[16] Such web-based communities, based on maintenance of transnational ties, are often used by migrants for different forms of local inclusion and to facilitate local networking and support (Plöger & Becker, 2015).

[17] The Internet's anonymity, in the form of fake accounts and fake names, allows trolling with a certain amount of impunity. The police did not push the case forward on any charges.

press agency in Trondheim. When we talked about why Poles in Trondheim avoided each other, she said that it is about how social media works:

> If you look at all these groups on Facebook, you think 'What is this?' These hate comments, probably all [from] anti-vaxxers who do nothing else, just sit in these groups and write their comments. And these nice people don't seem to have any reason to speak up, or they think it doesn't make sense, but there are more of them here [in Trondheim]. Only they are just quiet, which I feel a little sorry for, because we create a bad impression on the Internet when others keep quiet. That's why I enter these discussions: also to show the quiet ones that, 'Hello, you are not alone with it, you are not crazy; it is not what you think'. It's not like everyone votes for Law and Justice and warms up a pew in church.

Such experiences on digital platforms often created a distorted and homogeneous image of the Polish community in Trondheim. Some people imagined the Polish community as conservative, right-wing, homophobic and xenophobic as well as sympathetic to various conspiracy theories. Olga's comment also illuminated that such transnational digital platforms are important sites of shaping stability, affects and (un)belonging and can disrupt or obscure practices of engaging with the local community (Boyd, 2010; Cover, 2022: 7; Pink et al., 2015). At the same time, it also reflected the political climate of polarised Polish society: distrust and strong mutual antipathy between those holding competing political views.[18] The ambiguity evinced by members of the Polish community towards each other shows how experiences of national belonging are complex and can be in contradiction with an individual's own sense of identity and their lived reality, producing affective dissonance. It also shines the light on social media spaces and the Internet in general, not only as facilitating and engaging with feminist movements, but as spaces of the trolling culture, speaking to the idea of simultaneous backlash (Chamberlain, 2017; Penny, 2013). It creates a complex assemblage of affinity, togetherness and positive affects, together with dissonance and conflict, which produces possibilities and obstacles for solidarities across positionalities and belongings (Çağatay et al., 2022).

Participation in the strikes was a way to encounter members of the Polish community in another context. One of the results of the solidarity mobilisation that appeared in conversations with women was a

[18] See, for instance, Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Kósa et al., 2021.

destabilisation of the homogeneous understanding of the Polish community in their own eyes. Thanks to the assemblies and new networks, it became clear that the situation of Poles living in Trondheim is much more complex than the stereotypical image fed by social media and informal talks, but also, which I will discuss now, by narratives within Norwegian society.

The strike, through its visibility, was a tool for protesters to bring to the attention of Norwegian media, organisations, institutions, politicians and individuals the violent politics occurring in Poland. Women in Trondheim hoped that, by advertising the situation across the online and offline spaces, they would influence a reaction from Norwegian politicians. Marta came to Trondheim three years ago for economic reasons, but also because she began to suffocate in the political climate in Poland. She works as a manager in a shop. At first, she idealised Norwegian society, because she felt more equal and comfortable as a woman there. Over time, though, she realised she does not like the way people often approach her in Norway because of her nationality. In a conversation at my home, she relates this to the solidarity protests:

> I saw an educational function to it, which is to let the Norwegians and other nations find out what is going on. In front of the Norwegians, it gave me such a sense of strength that they could see us not only as a crowd of people like Poles are always presented in the media, as digging ditches somewhere. The Norwegians could see us not only as Poles who go to church and shine their shoes, but also how we want to express our opposition to something we disagree with that is a violation of human rights. There were people who have something to say and also remodel such a narrative about who the Poles in Norway are. I was feeling less ashamed of being from Poland, because I could talk about the resistance which I became part of.

Here Marta emphasised one result of the strike and organisational assemblies, which is opening up a discussion of working and living conditions in Norway and how these affect migrants. The mobilisation has evoked the wider issue of (mis)representation and (mis)recognition of migrants from Poland in Norway. Women complained about how they are portrayed in media either as 'workers' or as the ones cheating the Norwegian welfare system.[19] They mentioned stories in which Norwegians were surprised

[19] The construction of Poles as particularly hard-working, and the superior 'work ethic' of Polish labour (mainly male) migrants, was widely discussed in the Norwegian public debate, creating a division between 'Polish jobs' and 'Norwegian jobs' (Friberg, 2012: 1919).

when they learnt that Polish women worked in other jobs than cleaning or nursing. As Gago points out, the 'feminist movement is not something external to the question of class and working-class politics […]. Nor can it be separated from the question of race' (Gago, 2020: 206). Women diagnosed different forms of exploitation in their workplaces too.[20] They also criticised the fact that issues of their desires, plans, interests, achievements and political engagement are rarely discussed in the Norwegian media. The wish to be seen as a diverse, politically engaged and valuable community, as expressed by Marta, could be analysed using sociologist Beverley Skeggs's concept of respectability (Skeggs, 1997). Respectability for Skeggs is a mechanism by which some groups are othered and pathologised and is felt important by groups who feel that they lack it (Skeggs, 1997). She points out: 'Respectability contains judgements of class, race, gender and sexuality and different groups have differential access to the mechanisms for generating, resisting, and displaying respectability' (Skeggs, 1997: 2). Although Skeggs was referring to the white working-class women in Northwest England, the concept can be useful to understand experiences of migrants from Poland as they struggle to find validation and capital in the hegemonic Norwegian society.[21] Being respectable is in their case a recognition of their political engagement and struggle in relation to their homeland and destabilisation of homogeneous, often discriminatory, views of the Polish community. In the context of the strike, it was about representation of Poles with a whole spectrum of interests, class backgrounds, sexualities and political affiliations. The desire for respectability was expressed in Marta's words when she distanced herself from the negative narratives of working-class Poles as 'digging ditches' but who instead 'shine their shoes', and their supposedly inferior position in the society. She defines the strike through what it is not

[20] The stories reflected what researchers had already identified: that migrants from Poland are a group vulnerable to precarisation in Norway. There is research on precarity and discrimination experiences of Polish nurses in their workplaces (van Riemsdijk, 2008; Goździak & Main, 2021), and experiences of women with diverse social capital being overrepresented in the cleaning sector, health service and children's day care centres (Erdal, 2014; Main & Czerniejewska, 2017). According to the study about the labour market, career options for Poles continue to be limited, with Poles, but also other migrants, who work in less attractive positions than Norwegians do, experiencing de-skilling (Iglicka et al., 2016).

[21] See Ewa Sapieżyńska's *Jeg er ikke polakken din* ('*I am not your Pole*') (2022) about experiences of racism but also the complexities of belonging for Poles living in Norway.

representing, as a form of (dis)identification (Skeggs, 1997: 75–79). A struggle for respectability was also seen in the preparation for the strike, when women discussed in chat online if it were appropriate to use the popular slogan of the strike, 'fuck off', publicly. They were worried about the 'reputation' of migrants from Poland in Norway, which in their opinion was already not good. This concern is related to the role imposed on them as women ('you should not use vulgar language') but also as migrants, guests and bodies out of place (Ahmed, 2004).

The possibilities for performing and generating respectability in the local context appeared to be limited. The only article in *Adresseavisen* published after the first strike, under the title 'Here they demonstrate without permission in the square', focused mainly on the lack of permission from the police for the public gathering and on migrants from Poland not knowing the legal system. The author dismissed the importance of the political movement that was unprecedented and meaningful for migrants from Poland, the biggest minority in Trondheim and Norway in general (SSB, 2022). This reflected the tendency in the Norwegian public debate to obscure the political values and complex position of migrants from Poland. It focuses mostly on the issues of migrant labour, precarious work, temporary contracts and social subsidies (Czmur, 2014; Friberg, 2012; Iglicka et al., 2016; Obojska, 2018; Slåke, 2018). Here, it is important to differentiate between 'belonging' and the 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). According to Nira Yuval-Davis, who introduced that distinction, belonging is rather about subjective and emotional attachment. Then, the politics of belonging is understood as 'specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectives that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by these projects in very particular ways' (2006: 197). The politics of belonging within Norwegian society, and lack of recognition of the diversity of experiences of migrants from Poland, shaped migrants' affective dissonance and feelings of discomfort. As an answer to the misrecognition of the importance of the strikes by the local newspaper, women took the initiative and produced the content about the next strike themselves. They informed all local media about the strike, wrote opinion pieces to the local newspapers, talked on local radio and invited feminist organisations and political parties to participate. As a result, they created new spaces and expanded spaces occupied by their bodies, producing new alliances in Trondheim.

Temporal Alliances

The political temporalities that the strike produced were filled with unpredictable events, conversations and unprecedented encounters. It was a ground for unusual alliances and forging new collectivities (Cvetkovich, 2003; Gago, 2020). Events like 'Queer and Polish' during Trondheim Pride and Women Solidarity strikes were sites of solidarity practices where connections were made. One of the results of such temporal alliances, this time between the organisers of Trondheim Pride and a few members of the Polish community, was a speech by activists Margot and Łania from the collective Stop Bzdurom ('Enough of This Nonsense') from Poland as keynote speakers, opening Trondheim Pride. The video with their message to the Trondheim LGBTQI+ community about 'witch-hunting of queer people in Poland' was circulated on digital platforms and read out by Pride organisers through megaphones at some train stations around Trondheim.[22] At the end of their speech, Margot and Łania provocatively asked the queer community in Norway: 'Do you even have any anarchist queers, or are you just playing it so safe that you don't radicalise? […]'. This performance gave a possibility to talk about multiple temporalities (Griffiths et al., 2013), and to emphasise the struggles of the LGBTQI+ movement in Poland, while at the same time challenging different positionalities within the queer community in Norway.[23] Then, in the 'Queer and Polish' discussion during Pride, three speakers shared stories about different experiences of being a queer person from Poland living in Norway and how it influenced their migration decisions, everyday life practices and their relations with families and friends. The participants in 'Queer and Polish' highlighted in our conversations that, after the event, their Norwegian friends were more interested in their experiences and politics in Poland. It turned out to be important for them because they felt that LGBTQI+ persons from Norway do not empathise with their struggles. Ketil, one of the Norwegian organisers of Trondheim Pride and solidarity with Polish queers' events, said:

[22] Because of pandemic restrictions, Margot and Lania were unable to come to Trondheim and recorded a video message instead.

[23] The Pride organisers had to monitor their social media account and for a few days delete the many hateful, anti-LGBTQ comments the video received.

> The topic of the Pride was International Solidarity, which was very much 'inspired' by the LGBTQ-free zones in Poland,[24] and this time there was much news about Poland and Hungary in the sense that 'our Norwegian' values are being threatened very close to our country.[25] We wanted to connect this to Norway and bring up issues of antiracism. We wanted to show to Polish people in Norway that someone notices, someone cares about their situation. […] I think that migrants from Poland are so invisible in Norwegian society, and that's very much connected to how a large part of that group comes from labour immigration and the working class. For me it was important to make Norwegians more aware, because we don't recognise that Polish migrants are part of the cultural map and work landscape in Norway. We need to hear experiences of people who are part of our society, let it be queer stories or abortion struggles.

Ketil expressed what has already been highlighted by women in the meetings: that the diversity of stories and backgrounds of migrants from Poland is invisible. Involving Polish queer migrants in the Pride debates, and inviting the current political collective that embodied resistance towards anti-LGBTQI+ politics in Poland, expanded the debate to what was happening in Poland. The organisers, under the banner of 'International Solidarity', recognised the importance of their neighbours' struggles and the politics by which some members of the biggest migrant minority are affected. The solidarity events made visible the intersections between contemporary capitalism's forms of exploitation of migrants, involving the class dimension and violence against women and the LGBTQI+ community (Gago, 2020). The practice of alliance, as understood by Ketil, was to challenge the mono-dimensional, flat portrayals of migrants from Poland, reduced to the issue of labour, as well as pointing to conflicts that structure Norwegian society. Solidarity events worked as an invitation to reinvestigate what working-class bodies in Norway are today and to produce connections between different experiences.

Other important alliances that emerged from the Women Strike were between migrant women from Poland and local political leftist parties and

[24] The anti-LGBT campaign in which the local and regional authorities in some 25% of the regions of Poland have proclaimed themselves to be 'LGBT-free zones' under the pretence that 'LGBT ideology' is a threat to children and families (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Dynda, 2021; Majewska, 2021).

[25] Norway is in various ways presented as a country that is exceptionally progressive with regard to gender equality and LGBTQ rights, a process critically analysed as 'gender exceptionalism' (on the production of Scandinavian gender exceptionalism, see Larsen et al., 2021).

feminist organisations. For the second strike, women invited representatives from Rødt, Socialistisk Venstreparti, Arbeidernes ungdomsfylking political parties and two local feminist organisations. Women from these organisations supported the protest by giving speeches and sharing photos and information on their social media about the political situation in Poland. Networks established during the strike created a sense of stability and potential for more collective actions. For women involved in the process, they were also a source of empowerment. Norwegian feminist Mia from the feminist organisation Kvinnefronten ('the Women's Front') mentioned in her speech during the strike that the current antifeminist backlash is but a moment in history preceded by other moments. She recounted that before 1975, when abortion had been illegal in Norway, Norwegian women who could afford to do so had travelled to Poland and England to have an abortion.[26] For her, participating in the strike and meeting women from Poland was an eye-opening experience:

> It was important for me to learn about the situation in Poland and to connect with Polish women, to get to know each other. We were, and we are, also struggling for abortion rights in Norway; it is not something that is a given. I see a general tendency to roll back women's access to abortion. When we had a conservative coalition in government a few years ago, they also tried to limit access to abortion again.[27] So, I understand the struggle of Polish women. […] We want to make our feminist house more multicultural, include other voices, but until now we hadn't done much about it. So now that we know each other, if you want to organise something in our house, you know where to find us, and we've also directly invited a few of the women from the strike to our events. So, it is slowly changing.

Mia mentioned the continuous struggle for abortion rights in Norway, recognising how activism is constantly touched by the past. As such she situates herself, and more broadly non-migrant women in Norway, in the

[26] In Norway, women have the right to abortion on demand within the first twelve weeks of gestation. If they wish to have an abortion after the twelve-week time limit, they must apply to a special medical assessment board—called an *abortnemnd* or *primærnemnd* ('abortion board' or 'primary board')—that will determine whether or not to grant them an abortion. Retrieved May 6, 2022, from https://www.helsenorge.no/en/sex-og-samliv/information-for-anyone-considering-having-an-abortion

[27] In 2017, the Christian Democrats' part was negotiating to delete paragraph 2c of the Abortion Law, which would mean making an abortion illegal after 12 weeks' gestation, even if the life of the mother or the child is in danger.

same temporality, emphasising that it is not a problem limited to women from Poland. This is a significant way to overcome the migrant/non-migrant binaries in which migration categories have been exceptionalised and often differentiate migrants through a denial of coevalness (Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018; Fabian, 1983). This can influence the understanding of when and how solidarity is produced. For Mia, the strike generated space to connect with women from Poland and a potential starting point for further collaboration. In the conversation after the strike, she problematised the situation of the feminist organisation she represented. They lacked a diversity of women's voices and represented mainly the struggles of non-migrant women from Norway. State-sponsored local actors like Kvinnefronten are important support for spontaneous movements such as the Solidarity with Polish Women, because they can represent issues of marginalised communities through their already established political channels. In this sense, they have political power to bring attention to women's rights, migration and racialisation in public debate.[28] The initial idea of inviting feminist organisations and a political party was to receive support in the local landscape thanks to the recognition that those organisations and parties enjoyed. The case of this collaboration, which continued after the strike, showed the importance of the relations of power between feminist activists, but also of the construction of alliances that recognise different positionalities (Gago, 2020; Littler & Rottenberg, 2020). Here, the solidarity emerged 'in the doing', in a dialogic process where 'we' was produced (Çağatay et al., 2022; Dean, 1996; Mohanty, 2003).

There were other examples of local alliances and feminist solidarity with the strike as well—some large scale, and some small. A local printing company supported the women's strike and printed fliers for free. The local socialist party, located in Trondelag municipality, invited women to talk about the anti-abortion ban in Poland at one of their regular monthly meetings. Some months later, the organiser of the project Literature for Inclusion in Trondheim, together with some organisers of the strike, created a cultural event with the translator of books by the Polish Nobel Prize-winning writer Olga Tokarczuk.

In this section, I have aimed to offer examples of multifaceted alliances formed in Trondheim that represent different forms of feminist solidarity.

[28] On the topic of civil society in Norway, see the chapter 'Scandinavian Countries: Civil Society as Extended Arm of State and the Invisibility of Marginalized Actors' in Çağatay et al., 2022.

The alliances grew partially from the initial marginalisation of the Polish community and of its political struggles. The new networks were the fruit of women's and queer people's agency and collaborations which gave them tools for further actions. As a result, some of the categories of inclusion and exclusion were, at least temporarily, reshaped and contested. Togetherness in political organisation brought attention to the importance of acting in common and belonging, which is often hindered by different forms of precarising processes, pushing many into instability that makes it hard to act (Majewska, 2021). It is important to explore how these appearances of alliances dis/continued, and when they opened a window of possibilities and hope. The final section of this chapter will be dedicated to such an exploration.

'Hope Is a Muscle That Allows Us to Connect'

Strike as a process has a power to transform and shape counternarratives. It is important to understand how it can challenge but also reproduce differences situated within the context of the politics of belonging, often blended with ideas of sameness (Çağatay et al., 2022; Gullestad, 2006). Affects and temporality were crucial in the way the (un)belonging took shape in Trondheim. As we now know, the solidarity strikes did not change the anti-abortion ruling that entered into force, the effects of which are painfully experienced by women in Poland. However, the resonance in the local context of Trondheim affected not only women's and LGBTQI+ people's hope but also expectations for the future. It opened a production of political time and shaped new alliances across differences. It was an important collective elaboration of the social conditions in which they live, highlighting the division between the mainstream discourses and the social realities. Through the acts of weak resistance and solidarity mobilisations, women and LGBTQI+ people made visible the connections between gender, migration and economic violence, linking the anti-gender right-wing politics in Poland with the labour exploitation and (mis)recognition of their position as migrants in Norway. Their stories revealed, often missed in literature on migrants' daily lives, migrants' multiple simultaneous forms of relationality and participation in political, economic, social and cultural processes (Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018). Solidarity was produced from the affective dissonance, creating a sense of urgency and force, and 'in doing' through the plurality of local alliances. The rise of conservative and nationalist forces worldwide demands further cooperation by 'the

resonant bodies' through sharing experiences and building additional alliances. The mobilisation of women asks for recognition of shared temporal rhythms of displacement, rather than exceptional stories of 'political crisis'. Recently we saw that Poland is not the only case of a European 'backwater' but part of the wider rise of ultraconservative and fascist movements around the world. That is why it is important to learn from heterogeneous forms of resistance and their local situatedness. The production of embodied knowledge, collective hope and anger is an important part of political mobilisations in the search for social change. To borrow from Icelandic musician Björk's song *Atopos* about collective optimism, the politics of transformation needs the muscle of hope that will allow us to connect beyond differences.

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