A Countryside Perspective of Queer

- queering the city/countryside divide

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This thesis contributes with a countryside perspective to queer research by highlighting the countryside as a context where queer lives are lived. In the thesis I problematize the city/countryside divide with a view of the concept of queer as dependent on space and time. The empirical materials are generated through a workshop on queerness, gathering people living within a countryside context; the materials consist of a discussion and written responses to questions on queerness and the city/countryside binary. Theoretically and methodologically, the thesis is inspired by the notion of agential realism (Barad 2007) and situated knowledge, (Haraway 1988); the use of creative writing, inspired by Richardson (1994 and 2000), has also been central to the development of the thesis. The analysis is carried out within themes focusing on conditions for queerness within city/countryside experienced by people situated in the countryside. The analysis shows how space, time, contexts and intersections are entangled and queering the city/countryside divide.

Key words: queer, countryside perspective, city/countryside, spacetime, intra-activity, creative writing
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STARTING POINTS

Introduction

I was leaving an academic context by train, stopping by a railway station with lesser people and ending up alone on a bus into the forest, into a non-academic context. During this trip I could feel that the queerness was intensified while I was moving, depending on where I was. It was not just the gazing, eyeing or gestures around me, but also that my words became less understandable for the people around me. I had Karen Barad’s concept “queer critters” (Barad 2011:33) in my head the whole trip home, and the critters became the multiplicity of elements, by which I became more or less queer; as small moments in which individuals identify themselves or are identified. (A rural queer’s creative writing, 2013)

This text is written between the city and the countryside and it was during this trip that the idea of this thesis developed. This thesis was supposed to be an autoethnographical study written between the two spaces “city” and “countryside,” a phenomenological writing on trains and busses with a view of queer as something in-between the embodied self and how it relates to and intertwines with its surroundings. These reflections remain between the lines, as bubbles of thoughts to situate myself within this thesis.

Since I moved from a big city to a little village in the countryside, the concept of queer has become important to me and gotten a different meaning; from being an academic concept, it has become a concept that I myself relate to; my actions, my being, doing and my perspectives. I have noticed that my perception and definition of queerness change when I am outside of my countryside context. I started to think about queer in relation to space when I moved to a rural context, living in the city it never came to my mind that queer could be a process. Through a workshop, which I organized, on the concept of queer in the rural context where I live, I wanted to learn about other people’s experiences of queerness in relation to the spaces city/countryside. With this workshop I have generated the empirical material for this thesis. As part of organizing the workshop, I have written a research diary describing the process.
I am writing this thesis in the light of feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti’s theory of the nomadic subject (Braidotti 1994) and a posthumanist stance implying that the subject is seen as a process “constituted in and by multiplicity” (Braidotti 2013:49). Another important starting point is feminist theorist Karen Barad’s theory of intra-activity, which suggests that phenomena are in constant transformation due to their surroundings. It is from this theoretical angle that I try to make sense of the meaning of queer considered from my own countryside perspective.

In my countryside context I experience that it is easy to break norms and to experience queerness; structures of heteronormativity seem very clear in my context, and sometimes it feels like a political action just to live here, a political action which I would call queer. At the same time, queer as a concept has become positively charged for me since I moved from the city. The countryside is for me a place where change can happen, in which the structures are solid but transparent and can be challenged. In this thesis I want to explore how queer behaves in relation to space in general and from a rural perspective in particular.

For a long time I have, in accordance with queer theorists, like Judith Butler, (1993 and 1990); Agnes Bolsø (2007), thought of the concept of queer as a political action rather than as an identity and a theoretical perspective [queer theory] which challenges socially constructed binary pairs of concepts such as hetero/homo and woman/man. These meanings of the concept are still relevant for me but because of my change of context and new way of living I have felt a need to challenge the concept with a point taking departure in experiences from a countryside perspective. I consider queer not as an identity, but rather as acting “opposing all normative logics” (Edelman 2011). A search for the word queer on the internet shows that the term tends to become synonymous with fixed sexual identities. I want to discuss queer as an act and being against all forms of normativity. I think it is a pity that a word without etymological roots in Swedish tends to be fixed. With this thesis, I aim to emphasize queer as an important political tool not only reserved for individuals’ sexuality. I will argue that queer must be contextualized in order to achieve political power.

This thesis is written on the Swedish countryside and takes its starting point from a rural perspective, a perspective that I consider to be neglected within queer research. The city seems to be constructed as a norm for queer research, and for that reason I want to put focus on the countryside as a place where queer lives are lived. A construction of queer into an
urban context tends to narrow down and delimit the concept. Trying to understand and define the concept of *queer* only from an urban context would mean to narrow it down and delimit it.

I bring many intersections and experiences into this thesis; women, white, preschool employee, vegetarian, queer, villager and an incurable interest in linguistic structures. All my experiences design my epistemologies which will be the foundation which this thesis is written on. That I relate myself to the concept of queer means that I am someone who has reflecting this issues for a long time. My body, my materiality and how it is contextualized in the world, how it has been fitted into language and norms (Butler 1993:10) has made me oriented in different directions (Ahmed 2006). This constitutes my perception of the world, and what I will write in this thesis.

Before I started this programme I saw the world through established discourses, I saw limits of language, I always wrote about these limits in my essays and in my theses. First within the field of linguistics, then in the field of literature studies and then in the field of gender studies, every field gave me new perspectives. When I started to study through an intersectional perspective it became obvious to me that there are no formal limits, everything is intertwined and produces new things; ideas, theories, positions. Even if I have crossed different fields of inquiry, even if I have been stuck in one perspective, and locked myself into theories – especially discourse theory – I have never doubted that the subject is in flux, always depending on where the subject is, when the subject is and who the subject meets. It has been a red thread through my grown up life to fight essentialism, to think of environment instead of heredity. Without that idea I wouldn’t be here in academia at all.
Aim and research questions

The overarching aim with this thesis is to contribute with a countryside perspective to gender studies in general and to queer studies in particular. With this thesis I want to emphasize the countryside as a space where queer life is lived and can be lived, and challenge the metronormativity (Halberstam 2005:34). The tension between notions of queer as an urban based identity (Ching & Creed 1997; Gray 2009; Baker 2012) and conceptions of rural queers as incomplete (Gray 2009; Weston 1995; Halberstam 2005) has motivated me to explore the notions of city and countryside from a countryside perspective. In order to problematize this tension I have generated a material through a workshop with people living within a countryside context with the aim to discuss differences between queer in relation to city and countryside. The following research questions are based on this aim:

- What does queer mean for people positioned in the countryside?

- How do people situated in the countryside, but with experience of queer lives in the city, articulate the difference between the two contexts city/countryside?

By using the framework of the logic of intra-activity (Barad 2003; 2007) and queer phenomenology (Ahmed 2006), my aim is to discuss queer as dependent on space and time, and to argue for a contextualization of queer in order to achieve political power. I claim that queer tend to become a fixed identity centered in an urban context, this I believe delimit queer as a political tool. Based on this purpose, I intend to discuss the question:

- How does an understanding of context contribute to reinforce the potentials of the notion of queer as a political tool?
Previous research

The search for previous research for this thesis has been challenging, since I have not found research conducted from a countryside perspective, discussing queer as depending on space and time. Neither have I found research from a countryside perspective viewed with an intersectional approach.

In this section, I will put my focus on previous research regarding queer and countryside, which are mainly found in other disciplines than gender studies, most of the research has been done within the ethnographic, cultural geographic or anthropological field. Since I have not formally studied these disciplines, my orientation into these has been guided by the key words queer and countryside, which has resulted in a narrow entrance in these broad disciplines.

Most of the research I have found connected to queer in relation to the two contexts city/countryside assumes queer as synonymous with non-heterosexual categories. In contrast to such conceptualizations of queer, the thesis is shaped by an understanding of queer as fluid and dependent on context instead of fixed identities. Queer in relation to a gay and lesbian discourse, becomes thus important to the thesis, since this understanding of queer appears in the empirical material.

While the previous international research has been based on keywords, to a lager extent I searched for Swedish studies. This was done because my thesis is written within a Swedish context and I assume that the notion of city and countryside are depending on geographical aspects such as the number of inhabitants. The main reason behind this choice is that rural perspectives within Swedish queer research is almost non-existent, and in order to give a glimpse of the sociocultural context that both I and my participants are situated in, I found it necessary to introduce the limited research undertaken.

Rural queer studies

Research on rural queers has mainly been made within the field of rural queer studies in North American and Australian contexts. Within the field the main perspective lies on queer as related to a gay and lesbian identity; Baker (2011, 2012), Gorman-Murray et al. (2008), Gray (2009), Johnson (2013) are examples of researchers within the field of rural queer studies who
uses *queer* as referring to the identity of non-heterosexual people. This view differs from my own, since I do not aim to insert queer in any category that constructs queer exclusionary.

In *Just Queer Folks. Gender and Sexuality in Rural America* (2013) Colin R. Johnson is describing queer lives in the North American rural context in the first half of the 20th century. Johnson questions the metropolitan space as significant to the story of “modern lesbian and gay identity formation” (Johnson 2013:18) and recognizes the experience of queer lives in rural communities. In the article “Taking New Directions: How Rural Queerness Provides Unique Insights into Place, Class, and Visibility” (2012) Baker uses *queer* as an umbrella term for GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) and describes how it was to grow up as a “queer teenager in a rather conservative, homogeneous community” (Baker 2012:2). According to Baker (2012:2) “rural queerness has been either misrepresented or unacknowledged, and so the realities of rural queer individuals has been largely ignored.” With a focus on queer identities “in-place, and how attachment to place (which are themselves often classed) can actually frame the development of queer subjectivity,” (Baker 2012:3) Baker discusses queerness from a rural perspective. Baker states that queer subjectivity has been embedded in a “hegemonic urbaneity,” (Baker 2012:2) this conceptualization implies an assumption of rural and urban as fixed locations, whilst I assume these contexts as differentiated in relation to each other. Through their perspectives on queer as an identity for non-heterosexual people, both Baker and Johnson risks to construct hetero/non-hetero as binary terms. With the thesis I intend to discuss *queer* as opposed to all normative structures, not delimited to specific categories.

*Queer geographies*

In *A queer time and place. Transgender Bodies, Subcultural lives* (2005) the queer theorist Jack Halberstam states that “rural and small-town queer life is generally mythologized by urban queers as sad and lonely, or else rural queers might be thought of as ‘stuck’ in a place that they would leave if they only could.” (Halberstam 2005:36). Halberstam argue that the rural gay/lesbian subjectivities have been ignored and coin the term *metronormativity* which “reveals the conflation of ‘urban’ and ‘visible’ in many normalizing narratives of gay/lesbian subjectivities” (Halberstam 2005:36). By connecting “rural queers” to “rural gay/and lesbian subjectivities,” Halberstam’s understanding of “rural queer” is similar to Johnson (2013) and Baker (2012). Within the framework of metronormativity Halberstam thematises queer geographies in terms of migration between the two contexts city/countryside:
[T]he meteronormative narrative maps a story of migration onto the coming-out narrative […] the meteronormative story of migration from “country” to “town” is a spatial narrative within which the subject moves to a place of tolerance after enduring life in a place of suspicion, persecution, and secrecy. (Halberstam 2005:36-37)

Halberstam’s ideas deal with a completely different context than mine, but although Halberstam’s notion of meteronormative narrative is based within a U.S context, with population and land area incomparable to the Swedish context which I depart from in the thesis, I find this narrative applicable to the Swedish context. The structures of the spatial narrative that Halberstam pin point in this quotation, is just like I described earlier in the thesis a motivation for writing this thesis.

In the article “Rethinking queer migration through the body” Andrew Gorman-Murray (2007) argue that “the intranational migration of sexual dissidents have focused on rural-to urban movement, and have largely conceptualized ‘queer migration’ through a symbolic rural–urban binary” (Gorman-Murray 2007:105). Gorman-Murray (2007:106) states that there is a “normalization of rural-to-urban relocation” which “has the potential to shut down debates on queer relocations, occluding the diversity and complexity of such displacements” (Gorman-Murray 2007:106). According to Gorman-Murray “queer subjectivities often take different forms in larger and smaller cities and regional towns,” (Gorman-Murray 2007:118) this statement is in accordance with the starting point of this thesis, that queer depending on context is in accordance with the starting point of this thesis, that **queer** depending on context, although Gorman-Murray (2007) likewise to Baker (2012) and Johnson (2013) delimits **queer** to revolve around identities and considers **queer** as “wrapped up with embodied experiences of same-sex desires” (Gorman-Murray 2007:114). I will argue it is dependent on the context if queer can be regarded as subjectivity, if so I consider this as a process and as a fluid subjectivity, depending on space and time. Gorman-Murray’s discussion is based in an Australian context within the discipline of social and cultural studies.

Within a Swedish context, the cultural geographer Thomas Wimark’s discusses in the recently published dissertation *Beyond Bright City Lights: The Migration Patterns of Gay Men and Lesbians* (2014) that “[i]n the gay imaginary, larger cities become symbols of tolerance, and towns and the countryside come to be seen as in-tolerant heterosexual territories.” (Wimark 2014:52) Wimark states that “intolerance is not only limited to the rural regions” and argue that “the concentration tendency of gay men and lesbians does not have much to do with measured tolerance. Instead, the concentration seems to only be explained by the size of the population,” (Wimark 2014:52) but this is not the only reason according to Wimark, who
claim that “gay men and lesbians are affected by the time and place into which they are born” (Wimark 2014:54). Wimark (2014) do address the concept of *queer* but just in the conceptualization of “queer migration” (Wimark 2012:32), instead *gay men and lesbians* and *homosexuals* appears frequently as fixed group identities in Wimark (2014). Still Wimark’s more complex ideas of migration patterns between city and countryside contexts becomes relevant for highlighting the countryside perspective and to *emphasize the countryside as a space where queer life is lived and can be lived.*

In “Get Thee to a Big City. Sexual imaginary and the Great gay Migration” (1995) the anthropologist Kath Weston raises the “symbolic contrast” between the rural and the urban (Weston 1995:257) and states that the city has come to represent “a beacon of tolerance and gay community; the country a locus of persecution and gay absence” (Weston 1995:262). Weston’s discussion about the symbolic of urban/rural relations is connected to what I want to question and discuss within the thesis, but Weston also revolves around the formation *gay and lesbians*, which I in this thesis do not want to limit the discussion to.

This is a topic also discussed in the ethnologist Michelle Göransson’s dissertation in which she argues that sexual orientations should be understood as “materialized and spatialized” (Göransson 2012:265). Göransson’s interviews with “persons who deviate from the societal norm of man and the societal norm heterosexual” (Göransson 2012:277) illustrate that the notion of the country as intolerant is present with a picture of a “dangerous place” (Göransson 2012:53) for people outside the heteronormativity, but also the city is described in ambivalent ways (Göransson 2012:279). With the aim to analyze how queer is depended on context, I find Göransson’s research relevant in relation to experiences of queerness within city and countryside contexts. However, Göransson writes from an urban perspective, and since the informants in the study are living within city contexts, I miss a spatial perspective from the countryside. In this essay I want to put the focus within the countryside and view the city as emerging from a countryside perspective.

The social anthropologist Lissa Nordin (2007) emphasizes in her dissertation, that sexuality norms also have consequences for people who define themselves as heterosexual, describing single men within a rural context. The political scientist Malin Rönnblom (2002) argues in her dissertation that “rural areas are often considered more patriarchal / traditional than the city and thus becomes ‘rural woman’ ‘more subordinated’ than the ‘city woman’” (Rönnblom 2002:34). Both of these theses are contextualized in the northern rural areas in Sweden.
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This theory section will start out with theorizations around the city/countryside divide, since the aim of the thesis is to contextualize queer within the notions of city and countryside as an example, it becomes relevant to give an overview of theoretical perspectives on this divide. Further the intersectional perspective will be outlined; I describe the concept and discuss the issue with identities, this will be followed by the section “logics of intra-activity.” Following four parts consist of theorizations on queer: “The etymology of queer,” “From Queer Nation to Queer Theory,” “Queer in this thesis” and “Queer spacetime.” The two first parts contain etymology and genealogy which are important theoretical backgrounds in order to discuss a redefinition of queer as depending on context. There is also a description of my use of the term queer in the thesis as compared to present theories concerning definitions. The next section is named after Barad’s concept spacetime which will be outlined along with a brief insight into the field of “queer temporalities.” Moreover, I will outline Sara Ahmed’s queer phenomenology.

The city/countryside divide

Although the purpose of this thesis is to argue for a contextualization of queer in order to achieve political power, I am doing this using the dichotomy of city and countryside. This dichotomy is further emphasized in the research question: How do people situated in the countryside, but with experience of queer lives in the city, articulate the difference between the two contexts city/countryside? There is a division made between city and countryside, although I will argue for queer as changing depending on space, and hence not fixed by spaces. This association between queer and a fixed space is by the way the reason why I am using the concept of space, instead of place in this thesis.

According to Michael Bell (1992) “the academic standing of concepts such as community and the difference between countrylife and city life, these ideas remain strongly held by popular beliefs.” (Bell 1992:65) Bell’s idea of country and city as imaginary spaces pinpoint my use of city and countryside as examples in order to discuss queer as depending on space and time, and to function as a political tool dependent of where one is contextualized. Bell (1992)
suggests the use of “the rural-urban continuum.” (Bell 1992:66) Tanja Joelsson (2013) states that “how one experiences a place oneself and how others experience it might be two different things; whether or not people have direct or indirect experience of the place also affects their understanding of it” (Joelsson 2013:90). By applying this statement to the experiences of queerness within the contexts of city and countryside, which this thesis is based on, opens up for the city and the countryside to be understood as unfixed spaces.

**Intersectional perspective**

The concept of intersectionality is coined by the critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995) in order to make evident “how power differentials around gender, race and ethnicity are entangled with each other” (Lykke 2010a:71). Nina Lykke defines intersectionality as following:

> [I]ntersectionality can, first of all, be considered as a theoretical and methodological tool to analyze how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities, based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed sociocultural categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother tongue and so on, interact, and in so doing produce different kinds of societal inequalities and unjust social relations (Lykke 2010a:50).

The social categories exemplified in the quotation above I assume as unfixed and dependent on context. In the interaction with people I assume that there are categorizations constructed all the time, with one word, careless or unconsciously, individuals can be positioned within power differentials to another and become representative for a whole group of people by the use of identity categories. My view on the notion of identities is similar to Barad’s view (2007). Barad states that “identity formation is a contingent and contested ongoing material process; ‘identities’ are mutually constituted and (re)configured through one another in dynamic intra-relationship with the iterative (re)configuring of relations of power” (Barad 2007:240-1). Positions and categorizations are moving in our surrounding, within our classroom, on the bus, round the coffee table, it happens through a glance, words or body language; it may also happens when you are alone through things you see and your perception of it. With small meticulous movements I assume that we become categorized all the time.

In order to reveal categorizations from an intersectional perspective, law professor Maria Matsuda (1991) proposes to “ask the other question” (Matsuda 1991:1189), asking for “‘blind spots’ and ‘missing’ categories” (Lykke 2010a:82) is an central approach in intersectional
analysis. In order to analyze differences between experiences of queer lives with the two contexts city/countryside with a view of the concept of *queer* as dependent on space and time, I will use Matsuda’s approach “ask the other question” (Matsuda 1991:1189) as a way of thinking throughout the analysis.

**The logic of intra-activity**

Barad’s theory of intra-activity (Barad 2003:815) is a key concept for the thesis, considered both as theory and methodology. Intra-activity should be understood as a logic for the whole thesis and as a starting point from which I have generated the material. With the theory of intra-action Barad considers that materiality cannot be distinguished from discourse and pictures the world as a process of intra-activity (Barad 2007). According to Lykke (2011:2) intra-activity “refers to an interplay between non-bounded phenomena, which interpenetrate and mutually transform each other while interplaying” (Lykke 2011:2). I interpret intra-activity as an activity between human-and nonhuman animals, nature, artefacts, ideas, words etc. which becomes and occurs in intra-actions. It is in this ongoing intra-active flow that I consider queerness to arise; everything in the subjects’ environment, including space and time, becomes active agents in the process of queerness. Connected to intra-activity Barad proposes an “agential realist ontology […] based on the existence of phenomena rather than of independently existing things” (Barad 2011:45). For Barad agency only has meaning in intra-activity and with the agential realism Barad points out that “empirical claims do not refer to individually existing determinate entities, but to phenomena-in-their-becoming” (Barad 2011:46). A starting point is that when queerness is experienced, there are intra-activity between space and time through which sets up condition for queerness.

**The etymology of *queer***

According to the current Oxford Dictionary the word *queer* can be used as an adjective for: “1 Strange; odd 1.1 [predic.] British • informal • dated Slightly ill: 2 informal , • derogatory (Of a man) homosexual.” Or as a noun with the meaning “• informal , • derogatory A homosexual man,” or as a verb in sense of “spoil or ruin (an agreement, event, or situation): *Reg didn’t want someone meddling and queering the deal at the last minute*” (Oxford Dictionary 2014). As the excerpt from the Oxford Dictionary shows, the pejorative connotation is still attached to the formal significance of *queer* in English; the connection to *homosexuality* is clear, and
there is also the category of man addressed. According to Annamarie Jagose (1996) queer was used as an invective for homosexual. According to Ahmed queer comes from “the Greek for cross, oblique, adverse” (Ahmed 2006:161).

Since this thesis is written within a Swedish context it is important to underline that the concept of queer does not have this etymology in Swedish, a translation of queer into pervo has been presented but not taken hold of (Rosenberg 2006:73; Ambjörnsson 2006:214; Wickman 2012). This absence of etymology and genealogy in Swedish, makes it easier to redefine/not to define queer within a Swedish context, although queer has got a strong anchor of denotation to gay and lesbian from English. According to the Swedish Academy Dictionary (2006) queer means “homosexual”, but in the latest version of the same dictionary there is information only about the morphology, a specified significance of queer is thus not given in the current Swedish Academy Dictionary. It is to me unclear what is causing this shift, since I have not found anything written about it. However this opens up for opportunities to redefine the concept and to advocate for a fluid meaning of queer as depending on space and time.

In the neighboring country Norway the word skeiv was popularized in the early 2000s, originally as a translation or domestic equivalent of queer (Wickman 2012:4). Skeiv means skew or transverse and the word may convey an open acceptance of a position as deviant and as displaying attitudes of resistance (Wickman 2012:4), the Norwegian skeiv does not share the English pejorative etymology of queer and do not have connotation to homosexuality (Wickman 2012:5). The Norwegian queer theorist Bolsø (2008) argues that the dichotomy of hetero/homo has given rise to concepts such as “bi”,”skeiv”, “metro” and “über” and consider these concepts as connected to a premise of a heterosexual normativity (Bolsø 2008:128). Views of skeiv differ between Bolsø (2008) and Wickman (2012), but because Bolsø assumes a Norwegian context, I consider her reasoning to have credibility in this discussion.
From Queer Nation to Queer Theory

Yeah, QUEER can be a rough word but it is also a sly and ironic weapon we can steal from the homophobe’s hands and use against him.

(Queer Nation Manifest 1990 cited in Rosenberg 2002:175)

“We’re here! We’re Queer! Get used to it!” was one of the cries in the rallies at the streets of New York 1990, invented by the activist group Queer Nation, consisting of the members of ACT-UP, a group of AIDS-activists acted to “eliminate homophobia and increase LGBT visibility” (Queer Nation website). As indicated in the above quotation from the Queer Nation Manifest queer was revived and “queer movements turned out from a negative stigma to a positively valued identity” (Lykke 2010a:34), the concept of queer became resignified (Butler, 1993:20, 230). The formation lesbian and gay is often used as a synonym or hyponym to queer and this connection seems clear on the basis of the English queer etymology. But its delimit queer to only concern non-heterosexual people. According to Alan McKee there “is a lack of difference in ‘lesbian and gay’. There is no account of gender or racial differences” (McKee 1997:26).

Queer got established within academia as Queer theory and the first who coined the term “queer theory” was Teresa de Lauretis (1991), who defines it as “a refusal of heterosexuality as the benchmark for all sexual formations” (de Lauretis 1991). The ideas behind queer theory lean on Michel Foucault’s notion of sexuality as a discursive production and his ideas of categorization and power; how knowledge about sex has established and fixed the distinction between normal and deviant categories (Foucault 2002/1978:83).

___________________________________________________________________________

I started writing this essay because I wanted to loosen up the concept of queer from being almost a synonym for lesbian and gay movement, I wanted to redesign the concept to include all forms of norm-breaking. I wanted to start reworking queer from moment to at least an element in the discourse of LGBT movement (Laclau & Mouffe 2008/1985: 157), but the material takes me back to the discourse of the LGBT movement, even though it seems obvious to me that there is more intersections than sex and gender intra-acting in the countryside and city divide. (Research diary)
Eve Sedgwick (1990) puts a focus on the homo-/heterosexual dichotomy, through this background “queer theory was positioned as a critique of the normal and, by extension, of normative sexuality” (Cossman 2012).

Heterosexuals can join the queer movement. Bisexuals can join the queer movement. Queer is not being lesbian. Queer is not being gay. It is an argument against lesbian specificity: that if I am a lesbian I have to desire in a certain way. Or if I am a gay I have to desire in a certain way. Queer is an argument against certain normativity, what a proper lesbian or gay identity is. (Butler 2001)

In the quote Butler emphasizes queer as a resistance against identity categories such as lesbian, gay or bisexual, a conceptualization of queer used in this thesis; a resistance against identity categories and a possibility not to be identified by these.

**Queer in this thesis**

With the statement “there is no entity, no identity to queer, rather queerness coming forth at us from all directions,” Jasbir Puar (2005:121) pinpoints my own view on queer and queerness. Queer in this thesis is not understood as a one way or two ways direction of desire, but as fluid and depending on space and time. *Queer* is used in this thesis as a critical theory and a tool to break apart and challenge identity categories and to “reread gaps, silences and in-between spaces” (Giffney & Hird 2008:6). Noreen Griffney & Myra Hird talks about queer in term of:

> [...] resist, reclaim, invent, oppose, defy, make trouble for, open up, enrich, facilitate, disturb, produce, undermine, expose, make visible, critique, reveal, move beyond, transgress, subvert, unsettle, challenge, celebrate, interrogate, counter, provoke and rebel. (Giffney & Hird 2008:6)

According to Giffney & Hird (2008:6) “queer is a ‘doing’ rather than a ‘being’” similar to this assumption, I understand *queer* as something we do rather than as something we ‘are’ and as a way of resisting normalization (Nigianni & Storr 2009:1). For me, this resistance is not limited to identity categories regarding sexuality or gender, rather I consider *queer* as a resistance to any normalization. Halberstam states that *queer* “refers to non-normative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time” (Halberstam 2005:6). Except for the addressed “sexual identity” this definition is similar to my own understanding of *queer*; as a tool to theorize nonnormative logics and place this logic in relation to a space and time perspective within city and countryside contexts.
I will avoid Halberstam’s reference to *queer* as an identity, instead I want to loosen the perception around *queer* as an identity and connected to Barad’s statement that “queer is not a fixed determinate term; it does not have a stable referential context […] *Queer* is itself a lively mutating organism” (Barad 2012:29). Barad’s view on *queer* reveals a definition of *queer* as unfixed and changeable. Barad’s view on *queer* can be compared to Edelman (2004) who argue that “queerness can never define an identity; it can only ever disturb one” (Edelman 2004:17). Similar to Edelman and Barad’s definitions, I think *queer* cannot be inserted into specific identities, accordingly I consider *queer* as fluid and as “opposed to normativity and so to the order of identity” (Edelman 2011:2). Regarding the notion of *queer* as opposed to normativity one could ask what *normativity* means. I consider normativity as being “in line” (Ahmed 2006:66), and that what is “in line” depending on space and time.

In this thesis I am using the verb form of queer, *queering*, which according to Lykke “shifts the perspective to processes of ‘queering’” (Lykke 2010a:189). The verb form *queering* as well as the adjective *queerness* will be used to illustrate *queer* as a process. The perspective of queer as a process assumes the aspects of space and time to be taken into account.

**Queer spacetime**

As aforementioned I consider queer as a process depending on space and time. In spite of the conjugation *and* between space and time, I do not assume the dynamics of queer, space and time as “marked by an exterior parameter called time, nor does it take place in a container called space” (Barad 2007:179). I consider queer and “spacetime” (Barad 2007:140) in an entanglement, where queerness arises as a result of the intra-action of space, time and matter (Barad 2007:181). The notion of *spacetime* underlines that space, time and matter are mutually connected in intra-activity (Barad 2011:32; 2007:179).

Despite of the intra-active perspective of queer space and time that I assume, there is a theorization of “queer temporalities” (Dinshaw 2012; Tan Hoang 2007; Freeman 2005; Halberstam 2005) within queer theory which is relevant for the analysis of the material in this thesis. Halberstam theorizes about queer time with the description:

> Queer time for me is the dark nightclub, the perverse turn away from the narrative coherence of adolescence – early adulthood – marriage – reproduction – child rearing – retirement – death […] It is a theory of queerness as a way of being in the world. (Halberstam in Hoang Tan 2007:182)
In this quote Halberstam illustrates *queer time* as a non-normative time, similar to this standpoint Freeman (2005) emphasizes “an official timeline” and points out that “time [...] produces essences: time makes bodies and subjects” (Freeman 2005:58, cited in Koobak 2013:232). These theories within the field of “queer temporalities”, I consider as also depending on space. The nightclub which Halberstam addresses is also a space and the narrative of adolescence I assume is also depending on space; queering the time probably looks different depending on where the queering is happening. One can feel more or less queer across time, but that is at least for me also depending on space.

**Queer phenomenology**

According to Ahmed (2006:9) “spaces are not exterior to bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body.” A central term to Ahmed’s queer phenomenology and to this thesis as well is the concept of *orientation* which describes how bodies “extend into space, as an extension that differentiates between ‘left’ and ‘right,’ ‘front’ and ‘behind,’ ‘up’ and ‘down,’ as well as ‘near’ and ‘far’” (Ahmed 2006:5). These orientations are not coincidences, rather the orientation of the body are based on normative lines; we do not ‘find our ways’ independently, rather “the lines”, according to Ahmed “[...] depend on the repetition of norms and conventions, of routes and paths taken, but they are also created as an effect of this repetition” (Ahmed 2006:16). Ahmed exemplifies this performative take on orientations in a very intriguing way: “the event of shared laughter”, which “involves ‘sharing a direction’ or following a line” (Ahmed 2006:82). This is a situation I recognize well, often in gatherings with people where the jokes sustain gender conservatism or racism. If I laugh it means “yes” (Ahmed 2006:82) but if I don’t laugh there is a feeling of discomfort, mentioned by Ahmed (2006:82) as “being out of line.”

Ahmed’s terminology of orientation becomes relevant in order to analyze conditions for queerness within the two contexts city/countryside. Ahmed’s standpoint of bodies as “shaped by contact with objects and with others, with ‘what’ is near enough to be reached” (Ahmed 2006:54) seems to me contradictory to Barad’s logic of intra-action. While Barad is taking the whole world into account in the intra-action, Ahmed places the starting point in the human body. According to Ahmed “our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space” (Ahmed 2006:53), while in Barad’s theorization all organisms are entangled in spacetime.
I have had some struggles with these two different views of the world, but Ahmed’s conceptualization of orientation, coupled with theorization about comfort, direction, and the terms “in line” and “off line,” has appeared to be relevant for analyzing experiences of queerness within the city and countryside contexts. On the other hand, Barad’s view has given me tools to theorize about the spacetime perspective regarding the experiences of queerness. Therefore I have to go on with this struggle.

Ahmed also mentions that “bodies and their objects tend toward each other; they are orientated toward each other, and are shaped by this orientation” (Ahmed 2006:51). Ahmed uses the preposition toward to describe the directions between the body and surrounding objects; “it is the act of reaching ‘toward them’ that makes them available as objects for me” (Ahmed 2006:55). This “towardness” (Ahmed 2006:27) I understand as not the only preposition to use in the describing of how queerness is happen; here I turn to Barad and the logics of intra-activity, where there does not seems to be any prepositions – because discourses cannot be separated from materiality.
METHODOLOGIES

In this part I will describe the methodological principles for the thesis. I will start out by explaining my view of ethics, ontology and epistemology as inseparable illustrated by Barad’s concept of *ethico-onto-epistemology*, and further how this will be illustrated throughout the thesis by creative writing. I will expand this discussion to include the part “construction of cuts” where the relationship between me as a researcher and the participants are discussed.

**Ethico-onto-epistemology**

Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming. The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse. (Barad 2007:185)

From Barad’s point of view, knowledge is something that is constructed between humans and the world, and not just inside the mind of humans. Within her agential realism, Barad have coined the term “ethico-onto-epistemology (an entanglement of what is usually taken to be the separate considerations of ethics, ontology, and epistemology)” (Barad 2012:77). This builds on a monist perspective beyond dualisms (van der Tuin, 2012:160-1), and against fixed identities. The concept of “agential realism” (Barad 2007) points out that humans are not independent parts in the world; instead humans are parts of the intra-activity of the world. “Agential realism would have us ascribe agency not only to humans, but to matter as well” (Jackson & Mazzei 2012:114), within the notion of agential realism, all materiality are agents.

*Agential realism* becomes important to my intra-active participation in the workshop, since the empirical material is generated through intra-activity, I as a researcher was placed beside the discussion that I observed. According to Lykke “agential realism is taking into account that the embodied researcher subject is always and inevitably entangled in the world s/he analyses” (Lykke 2010b:134). In the intra-active research approach my own epistemology becomes impossible to distinguish from what is in the world (ontology). The world gets here limited to the room where the workshop takes place or how I perceive the world when taking
notes from the workshop discussion. The world cannot be more to me then how I perceive it, I cannot think outside of my thoughts.

As a researcher I have the power to mark out queer as something important to focus on. As the I of this thesis, I have the authority to define these splits between words, which will affect the result of the analysis, e.g. what is countryside? These ethical aspects cannot be separated between how I perceive the world and what I know about the world. As Barad states “we’ are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity” Barad (2003:828). By writing I unconsciously add my perspectives of the world; perspectives which I adopt through intra-actions with the surroundings.

In this reasoning a postconstructionist stance (Lykke 2010a:134) becomes visible in my methodology where Haraway’s notion of situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) and Barad’s ethico-onto-epistemolgy (Barad 2007) are key concepts. According to Lykke both Haraway and Barad “see the knower as embedded in the world she studies: not able to stand aside and take a look from ‘outside’” (Lykke 2013:146). My perceiving of the world is not fully my own, what I know about it and my valuing of things in the world is products of the world’s intra-activity, my values and ethics likewise.

As a researcher I am answerable for the knowledge I produce in this thesis, which ideas I reproduce and release into the world’s intra-activity. How I engage in reality; which reality I live in effect what I choose to focus on in my research, which questions I ask to the material, how I analyze it and so on. Haraway’s concept of situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) is closely connected to Barad’s agential realism, where the situatedness of the knowing subject has impact on the knowledge production which brings ethical concerns with it. According to Haraway “feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge […] allow us to become answerable for what we learn how to see.” (Haraway 1988:583) I have learned to see certain things, and to perceive these things in a certain way. My knowledge about queer is situated in my rural context; before I moved here I had never thought of queer as depending on space and time.
Research diary and “a rural queer’s creative writing”

In order to make my situatedness visible, I have applied a research diary and what I call “a rural queer’s creative writing.” As I mentioned in the introduction of the thesis, these reflections are written between the lines of the thesis. The graphical choice of placing these reflections between the clear lines of the text is inspired by Patti Lather’s “fragmented writing styles” (Lather 2007:37).

I have written the research diary describing the process of the conducted workshop to make choices regarding the workshop visible for the reader. A transparency throughout the writing process makes it possible for the readers to make their own interpretations of the material and choice of methods. The sociologist Laurel Richardson’s influence on the research diary is undeniable, by addressing experimental writing, Richardson present devices to free the writing and mentions “methodological notes” which consists of “messages to myself regarding how to collect ‘data’”; “theoretical notes” including “critiques of what I am doing/thinking/seeing”; “Personal notes” “feelings statements about the research […] my doubts, my anxieties” (Richardson 1994:526). My research diary does not cover all of these fields; rather it is a mixture and a reduction of these categories.

The second form of creative writing that I have applied to this thesis consists of what I call “a rural queer’s creative writing” and aim to make my own perception of the world visible. Inspired by autoethnography and Adams and Holman-Jones’s (2008) suggestion “to twist autoethnography from its prior usages, whether diminishing or valorizing, and put it to use for altogether new and other political purposes” (Adams & Holman-Jones 2008:386), “a rural queer’s creative writing” has a methodological purpose to make me as an “embodied researcher subject” (Lykke 2010a:134) explicit in the thesis. This way of using creative writing is also inspired by “experimental writing as a method of knowing” (Richardson 2000:520), which alludes to the epistemological purpose of including this type of creative writing and make explicit what I already know.

“A rural queer’s creative writing” was the starting point for the thesis; it was with these notes that I came up with the idea for the thesis, and this is why I will include them although my thesis has changed direction since I wrote them. These notes are written before the idea to gather experiences of queerness in the countryside from other people and before the idea of the workshop.
There is a postconstructionist standpoint behind both the research diary and “a rural queer’s creative writing,” with the aims to make the framework of situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) and ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad 2007) explicit in the thesis. I want to make my self-reflexivity process visible, since I am now writing this thesis outside of the space where the workshop discussion took place. In analyzing the empirical material I am using the participants’ thoughts from my own perspective, using theories that I value as relevant to them and drawing general conclusions about their experiences. Although creative writing cannot equalize this boundary between subject and object, these notes make my choices visible.

**Construction of cuts: between me and the participants**

I have chosen to use the word generating instead of collecting empirical material, because of my own participation in the workshop discussion. Although passively and reverted to what had been discussed, I became a co-constructor of the empirical material by being present in the room where the workshop took place. There was an intra-action between me as a researcher, the material and the participants. According to Barad “[t]he line between subject and object is not fixed, but once a cut is made” (Barad 2007:155) and in Lykke’s formulation “the researcher subject and the object of research are not a priori bounded off from each other. Instead they are always to be considered as parts of the same world and reality and involved in continuous intra-action” (Lykke 2010a:151). I as a researcher was not only within the same room as the participants and taking notes, but also knew the participants from before. As Lykke argues in accordance with Barad: “cuts and boundaries are, at least provisionally, important for science and knowledge production” (Lykke 2010a:151). Although I was in the room and for the participants embodied as someone they knew, I was a researcher who had formulated questions and directed the discussion, thereby cuts was constructed. According to Lykke “it becomes an important methodological principle to create and construct provisional and momentary cuts and boundaries between the researcher subject and the object of research” (Lykke 2010a:151). Interpreting the material on the basis of my perceiving of the world assumes a subject position, and the participants becomes objects by not have agency in the interpretation of the material. On the other hand the participants interpreted the questions in the discussion as based on their perceiving of the world. This momentary cut reveals that “the boundary between subject and object should not be defined as something that is fixed” (Lykke 2010:151), “cuts are not enacted from the outside, nor are
they ever enacted once and for all” (Barad 2007:178) Although I have chosen to focus on queer and countryside in this thesis, based on my contextualization in the world, and formulated research questions based on my interest, the participants’ interpretation of it makes this thesis not only permeated by my interests and experiences; the boundaries between me and the participants is not fixed, we intra-act and within the intra-action the boundaries between us becomes constructed cuts.
METHOD AND EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

This section will give a description of how the empirical material has been generated, why I have chosen certain methods and raised ethical considerations for these methods. The empirical material for this thesis has been generated through a workshop with participants contextualized in the countryside. By a group discussion and written responses to the discussion questions an empirical material with experiences of queerness in relation to city and countryside was generated. I will start out by describing the selection of the participants, further I will outline the workshop and explain why I decided to conduct the workshop. Furthermore I will outline the empirical material, and the methods.

Selection of participants

For this study, I have chosen participants living in the same village as I do, despite the ethical complications that this entails; it has from the beginning been an obvious choice for me. It is this village that brought me the idea to this thesis, another village with another geographical distance to the city would not result in the same perspective. If seeking participants from other villages it would also take more time for networking than I have had after coming up with the idea to conduct a workshop. But this countryside should not be understood as fixed, there are multiples of rural areas too.

The fact that I know the participants, some of them well makes the selection of participants linked to my situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) and makes the study even more subjective. Since this is not a comparative study, it has never occurred to me to bring together a workshop for participants living in a city. The purpose with the thesis is to write it from a countryside perspective, so I decided to completely focus on the countryside and on the city only as a context appearing in the material.

I had printed the invitation on A4 sheets (Appendix 3) and distributed to the participants’ mailboxes, two persons got their invitation by email. 12 persons were invited, there were 6 persons attending the workshop and they are between 26-35 years old. None of the
participants in this study are rural-born, they have chosen to move to the countryside voluntarily, the participants have at some time lived in a lager city. The selection of invitees was limited to those who I felt somewhat comfortable with. In the sample I was not bothered about how the participants defined themselves, since I understand *queer* depending on spacetime. It would prove that all of the people who participated in the workshop knew about *queer* as a concept and had thoughts about it.

I want to invite everyone in the village because I cannot possibly know who is familiar with the concept of *queer*, who feels left out of a norm (probably all people do that sometimes even if they may not have the same definition of queer as I have). Unfortunately, queerness is officially trapped in a discourse of Otherness that can arouse opinions which I at this stage of the thesis process am unable or unwilling to respond to. (Research diary)

Because I knew the participants I thought that I would find it hard to focus on my role as a researcher. This was never a problem because the participants were aware that I would write, which is never done when we meet and there was also a combination of people who are rarely coming together for discussions. I had presented my thesis so they knew what I was aiming at; the participants helped me in that manner to take on the role of researcher. The notebook can also be considered to inherit agency in generating the material. Following Hultman & Lenz Taguchi within “Barad’s notion of agential realism, both the notebook, the participants and the researcher could be seen as performative mutually intra-active agents” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010:530). Similar to this statement my notebook signaled to the participants that I was the researcher. For certain, I am the body that gives the notebook agency, what is understood as agency "is a quality that emerges in-between different bodies involved in mutual engagements and relations” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010:530). To conclude I would not had that agency without the notebook, or the participants.
Why Workshop?

Based on the aim with this thesis to contribute with a countryside perspective and to emphasize the countryside as a space where queer life is lived and can be lived, I gathered people located in the countryside into a workshop on queerness.

It was a rather long and winding road that led me to conduct a workshop, with detours through phenomenological writing and autoethnography. The idea was initially that the participants would write freely about their experiences of queer and countryside and send to me via email, this request was sent out to everyone in the village through a social forum on the internet. But since this resulted in only one text, I considered it insufficient to use as an empirical material demonstrating a rural perspective and I decided to reevaluate the method. The intention behind the thought of letting the participants write without my presence was to avoid power relations between researcher-researched. Also, since the participants are inhabitants in the same small village that I live in; we live our lives nearby each other, the idea was to establish a distance and formality by collecting the material by email.

I decided to conduct a workshop in order to guarantee the production of written materials, I assumed that it would be easier for participants to write on the spot, where I could also answer questions and respond to thoughts. The choice of using written experiences instead of e.g. interviews or participant observations, was based on the assumption that in writing, the person can use own expressions like poetry or just single words to express queerness. Another significant reason for my choice of conducting a workshop was Barad’s logic of intra-activity, which has been my starting point for the thesis. I considered a workshop as a possibility to practice this theory. Since I already knew the participants before the workshop, I was curious about what would happen in the workshop space and how that could be described through the logic of intra-action.

As I mention in the section “Construction of cuts”, I did not intend to use this methodological principle in the beginning of this project. The workshop was an experimental project to me, since I at that point of the writing process was in a quite critical period and did not really know how to continue.
I spent my confused thesis period to read Carolyn Ellis’ *The Ethnographic I* (2004) and got inspired by her way of discussing theories through fictional dialogue. I wanted to write like her, but I decided that I wanted to bring in real experiences of queerness from rural areas to emphasize a different perspective. If I’m going to be political, I thought, I have to write from the reality. (Research diary)

I needed an empirical material with experiences of queerness from a countryside perspective and was therefore thinking about doing interviews. The benefit of interviews would be that I could ask follow-up questions, but this would also shape the story of the interviewee. I considered that I with transcribed material would not be able to practice the theory of intra-action in the same way as a workshop could enable me to and since a workshop would provide an opportunity to both conduct a group discussion and to gather written experiences I considered a workshop as less constructed.

**Workshop on queerness: an outline**

The workshop took place at my home, no other space was available. The workshop consisted of the following steps; a brief introduction of the idea for the thesis, presentation of the questions and writing the responses, discussion and writing exercise. In my introduction I spoke about the master program, and briefly about the field of research, theories and methods of interests for the study. I presented my main purpose with the thesis at that time; to highlight a countryside perspective within queer research.

I have taken into account the ethical principles contained in the Humanities and social science research under the Research Council’s guidelines and informed the participants both in the invitation letter and in the workshop that they at any time could cancel the participation and that neither names nor places would be mentioned in the thesis.

After my introduction, the participants got three questions:

- What is queer/queerness for you?
- Queer and countryside/city. Are there any differences? Experiences?
- Have you experienced or can you imagine queer/queerness as changeable depending on where you are, using the examples of countryside and city?

When writing the questions I tried to be very open, to allow for a wide range of associations. Until the very end, I was very unsure about the second question, since this question confirms that I assume that there is a difference between queer in a city context and countryside context. With this question I risk to recreate and consolidate the notion of a difference between city and country. At the same time it was a difference I wanted the participants to reflect on. As I have already discussed in previous sections, I use countryside and city as examples to discuss queerness as depending on space and time, and the countryside becomes in that sense an illustration of a perspective rarely adopted within gender and queer studies.

I had written the questions on a large piece of paper and taped it to a table, to make it easy for the participants to follow. The participants were given pen and paper, and twenty minutes to reflect upon the questions and write them down. This reflection time was given to facilitate the discussion and give everyone the opportunity to prepare themselves. In the beginning of the workshop I had informed the participants about wanting to keep the written responses as a part of the empirical material. When the participants had written down their reflections, it came up for discussion that the second and third questions were very similar and that they had interpreted them as interlinked, and had written them down as one question.

I then started the discussion with the question what is queer? The participants took the discussion further into the other questions by themselves and the discussion went on for about one and a half hour with one break for 10 minutes.

After the discussion I introduced a writing exercise, in which participants could choose whether they wanted to participate or not and to choose if they wanted to hand the text to me to use as material. Three of the six participants chose to participate in the writing exercise. The writing exercise was designed after a workshop named “Methods for teaching intersectional gender studies” with Nina Lykke which I attended during the course “Teaching Intersectional Gender, Sexuality, Ethnicity and Equality” on Linköping University. This writing exercise is shorter than the original version and excludes moments where the participants are supposed to read the text for each other and give feedback. I designed writing exercise in the following steps:
1. Close your eyes and think of a situation or event in relation to what we have discussed (5 minutes)

2. Write down keywords and/or sentences from the situation/event (3 minutes)

3. Underline words/phrases that you really like (1 minute)

4. Write a text with the underlined words (20 minutes)

According to the participants the exercise was “fun but difficult.” The idea of the exercise was to gain access to personal experiences concerning countryside and queer or any reflections on the workshop in general. I got one text handed in, but I have chosen not to use it as empirical material, I decided to use the memory work from the discussion and the written responses for empirical material.

_________________________________________________________________________

After the workshop, my writing was not moving on. Why do I write this essay? What do I want to achieve? What confirmation do I apply? I think it was the empowerment that I felt in the room during the workshop. That there really was a *we* but I would write about this, and *they* were participants. It was like I fell down to the ground, down from the theories that I was reading, which in my context feels like 100 years ahead. Not even gender mainstreaming has quite reached the end point where I live. Queerness that seemed so fluid for me when I was inside of the theories received a direction where queer became the fixed identity that I was arguing against; it suddenly felt important to have a fixed identity. It does not fit with the theories I sympathize with, it’s like a parallel universe. It was a crash that caused me to stop writing, because I want to make a difference. Difference, visible in the context that I live in. (Research diary)
Empirical material: Memory work on the workshop discussion

The workshop discussion that I use as an empirical material is not taped; I was writing while the discussion was ongoing. Using abbreviations, it became possible to note what was said and the transferring to the computer was made directly after the workshop. A written down and not recorded discussion, loses linguistic markers such as intonation which can assume values or questions. The choice to not tape the discussion is rooted in two basic coherent reasons, since the participants was known for me from before I wanted to avoid valuation in the comments and I thought that if I could hear the participants voices in the transcription it could be a risk for valuation. My focus was not on the participants from an individual perspective, rather on how queerness was experienced from a countryside context. The second reason was based on the idea that I already saw myself as an intra-active participant and wanted to reduce the hierarchical researcher/researched relation. I considered the presence of a tape recorder would both reinforce the boundary between me and the participants, and that the participants would be inhibited from sharing their experiences.

The empirical material from the workshop discussion moves in the borderland between memory work and observation, but I will call this memory work, since it is written through my perception. Braidotti (2011:232) describes memory work like this:

> Writing from memory or “by heart” involves a number of precise methodological steps. Firstly, it means that one is exempted from checking against the original, at least during the process of writing the actual commentary. This expresses the conviction that the “truth” of a text is somehow never really “written.” (Braidotti 2011:232)

The difference between the memory work that I use here and the one that Braidotti describes is constituted by the fact that I did not write from memory during the actual discussion, but it was later when I copied the material to the computer that I used my memory by interpreting abbreviations and constructed points marks. But that the words which formed the discussion flowed through my thoughts challenges what was previously taken to be the truth. “Thinking” according to Braidotti is “like breathing, is not held into the mold of linearity, or the confines of the printed page, but it happens outside, out of bounds, in webs of encounters with ideas, others, texts” (Braidotti 2011:233). Whether or not I noted everything that was said in the discussion, the text has passed through my thinking or in Haraway’s terms, through my situated knowledge (Haraway 1988).
The second empirical material consists of the written responses to the discussion questions which was an outcome of the original idea for this thesis; to gather written experiences of queer and countryside, with inspiration from the method of phenomenological writing “written experiences from others” (Van Manen 1984).

**Empirical material: written responses to the discussion questions**

As I described in the outlining of the workshop, I wanted to give the participants the opportunity to think about the questions before the discussion. The reason for this was to get a material including personal experiences. I assumed that the participants would be influenced by each other during the discussion, and perhaps also inhibited. I wanted to make sure that the empirical material would contain the participants’ own experiences of queerness. Therefore I told them not to write their names on their sheets, since the aim was not to “report on how something is seen from their particular view, perspective, or vantage point” (Van Manen 1984:57), but to map out the experiences of queerness and to highlight the countryside space as a perspective. Another starting point for this method was Richardson’s statement that “narrated experiences of daily time are linked to larger social structures, the personal to the public” (Richardson, 1990:23). I was looking for experiences of queerness in relation to city and countryside to map out differences and structures of how queerness was experienced.

Since this empirical material is guided by the questions from the workshop discussion, it cannot be regarded as written interviews or phenomenological writing. In the analysis I will refer to this material as “written response.” There was some overlap between the empirical material consisting of written responses and the workshop discussions. Because of the anonymity I cannot know if it was from one and the same participants. But for me, this is not a problem; I want to explore the queerness, not the persons.
ANALYSIS

This section is divided into two analyses: a primary analysis and a secondary. In the secondary analysis I explore the participants’ definitions of queer/queerness which is assumed as a background analysis to the primary which deals with the participants’ experiences of queerness within city and countryside contexts. I will start out this section by describing how I have processed the empirical material. Then I will present the analysis containing four main themes where I will analyze the empirical material on the basis of my previous research and theoretical perspectives. Each theme is followed by a short summary with a focus on differences between experiences of queerness within the two contexts city and countryside.

Processing of empirical material

I will start out the analysis by exploring the meanings of queer according to the participants. The empirical material that forms the basis of the analysis consists primarily of the written responses to the question "What is queer / queerness for you?". This question was not as prominent in the discussion. The aim is to answer the question what does queer mean for people positioned in the countryside?

The next part of the analysis “experiences of queerness in relation to city and countryside” is divided into four overarching section, consisting of my thematic interpretation of the empirical material: “Countryside as safe,” “choice,” “visibility” and “recognition.” This thematic division is developed from the question: Which conditions for queerness within a city and a countryside context appears in the empirical material? Based on the research question How do people situated in the countryside, but with experience of queer lives in the city, articulate the difference between the two contexts city/countryside? I have not divided the themes along queer experiences to the city and the countryside. Although I use the concepts of city and countryside in each theme, I wanted the themes not to focus mainly on the city and the countryside as fixed contexts, but rather illustrate that these are examples of how queerness is changeable depending on space and time. The themes are occasionally overlapping, but they should not be understood as fixed. The themes are based on my situated
knowledge (Haraway 1988) and interpretation; since the material samples are adapted to the thematic division.

Each theme concludes with a summary in which I discuss the excerpts analyzed from the empirical material, and specifically examine the differences between the experiences of queerness within the city and countryside. I will use snippets from both written responses and the memory work from the workshop discussion throughout the analysis. I will refer to the excerpts from the memory work of the workshop discussion as “workshop discussion” in the analysis and to the “written response” in order to not confuse these two empirical materials.

**Meanings of queer according to the participants**

“Otherness,” protest, to convert disdain to pride. Most protest: by external expressions such as looks, clothing, language, acts, creation, etc. (Written response)

This participant associates *queer* to ”otherness,” the definition “to convert disdain to pride” brings my thoughts to Queer nation’s reclaiming of the derogatory sense of *queer* into a positive word. On the basis of the question *what is queer/queerness for you?* I interpret that this participant, by the phrase “protest, to convert distain to pride” expresses an understanding of *queer* as a tool for empowerment in situations where the “otherness” is met by contempt. In the quote the participant connects protest to “external expressions” but also to doing. This participants’ experience of the word queer in the sense of performing; both by appearing and by acts that empower, connects to Giffney & Hird’s (2008:6) idea of “queer [as] a ‘doing’ rather than a ‘being.’” (Giffney & Hird 2008:6). In the following answer *queer* is associated with acting too:

As soon as something is defined, it can be dissolved. Open. Nothing in one way. Consciously norm-critical actions. I find it hard to explain without context. Queer. (Written response)

This view denotes to a fluidity of queer, or the words capacity to dissolve definitions. The word “open” assumes no fixity. Queer becomes in this quotation also to be associated with “norm-critical actions,” but the following ambivalence of the participant in the sentence “I find it hard to explain without context” assumes that queer is not understood as independent of a spacetime perspective.
I interpret this explanation of *queer* as in dialogue with both Barad and Edelman, since both of them assume queer as nonfixed. The quote connects to Barad through the assumptions that queer “does not have a stable referential context,” (Barad 2012:29) the participant claims a context in order to explain *queer*. The initial statement “as soon as something is defined, it can be dissolved” is close connected to Edelman’s statement that “queerness can never define an identity; it can only disturb one” (Edelman 2004:17). This alludes to a power in the word *queer* to break down or challenge definitions. I interpret “one way” as connected to norms and therefore the phrase “nothing in one way” indicates a view on *queer* as “opposed to normativity” (Edelman 2011:12). The final word “Queer” in this participant’s definition can be interpreted as further illustrate the nonfixity of queer, that *queer* means *queer* and should not be put in a definition. The next answer to the question *what is queer/queerness for you?* also contains a view of *queer* as changeable:

Queer strategies/tendencies can be normative and it is set in queer to be changeable. If queer is “safe”/confidently/ common it is not queer anymore. Something can be queer in a place/a room and at the same time not in another. For me it is a queer way to look at norms in order to deconstruct them, not a resting identity, it is resting identities queer resists. (Written response)

This answer describes *queer* as changeable depending on spacetime. In the sentence “Queer strategies/tendencies can be normative” I take the liberty to link “be normative” to a spacetime perspective, where queer is assumed to be so changeable that it also can be normative. The spacetime perspective is illustrated through the location “place/a room.” *Queer* are also referred to as excluding the words “‘safe’/confidently/ common” and there is also a theoretical angle of *queer* assumed. In the whole, this answer reveals an understanding of *queer* as changeable depending on space and resistance to “resting identities.”

I think that queer is a positive word, a word one uses for oneself (if one defines as queer). To stand a bit outside (and showing affiliation to another cultural group) a group perceived as the norm. To be strong in being “different” because of another affiliation where one is not different at all. As power, pride, joy. Hm, or do I think of pride now?! I hear that one is homosexual, bisexual or transgender in using the word queer about oneself. But certainly it does not have to be that way. (Written response)

In this answer the formation LGBT becomes visible in the associations to *queer*, but the phrase “I hear that one is…” indicates that this connection is not made by the participant but by people around. In contrast to this, the written response makes a description of queer as an identity in terms of group affiliation, and as a term to define the self with. There is an indirect connection between queer/queerness and identity. The aspect of Otherness becomes visible in
a positive sense when “being different” is linked to strength. Queer/queerness is associated with “power, pride, joy.”

In these written responses to the question *what is queer/queerness for you?* the participants describe queer/queerness in terms of changeable, dependent on context, (positive) otherness, norm-critical, protest, resistance, power. The participants’ associations with *queer* appears as predominantly positive, however the answers also express ambivalence about identity. This ambivalence becomes even more apparent in the workshop discussion where one participant brought up the own associations to the word *queer*: “queer as identity, movement, academy but here is the identity anyway. It can mean different things in different contexts.” In this statement the association of queer goes to identity but there is also a consideration that it is depending on context. Another participant adds to the theme by asking: “But what does identity really mean? What is identity? Is it a conscious action and approach? But it is easy to be fixed into something.” This discussion moved on by the commentary: “It is so easy for it to become imprinted, it is so sensitive when everything is about to lock people up within something.” Another participant ends this theme by saying: “It feels like identities are used as strategies, if one says that one is queer.”

This discussion shows that most of the participants seem to understand identity as unfixed, but that there is a risk to be fixed within identities by others. Identities are assumed to convey political benefits and are discussed in terms of “strategy.”
Experiences of queerness in relation to city and countryside

Countryside as safe

The cities nightlife is the most dangerous thing I've been through, where there is always an underlying threat of violence (Written response).

Written of a person living in the countryside answering a question about queerness and differences between countryside and city, this quote connotes the city as a dangerous space and assumes that the countryside is safer. This quote illustrates the participant’s experience of the city as an unsafe area, it also highlights the time as a central aspect for security. Time and space seems interwoven and becomes a condition for safety, and further a condition for how queerness is experienced in relation to the two contexts city and countryside. It is not just the location that makes the city, different times of the day shed light on areas and norms become more visible. Other bodies take up the cityspace differently at night than during the day, the space gets smaller. The “underlying threat of violence” connotes for me, that the thoughts inside of people surface at night, perhaps because of the smaller number of people that occupies space and that every person becomes more significant. Göransson suggests that places becomes recoded during day and night, different times can be understood as secure or insecure for bodies gendered in different ways (Göransson 2012:90).

Space and time become in the quotation part of the constitution of a body as deviant. According to Ahmed (2006), space can be understood as “a second skin”, but also the time of day becomes part of the transformation of the body from safe to unsafe. Time and space become important conditions for whether queerness in the city is experienced as dangerous. The limited space in the city’s night-trailer appears in this person’s experiences as a threat and anonymity between people within the space makes unnoticed harassments possible. In the following excerpt from the discussion becomes the rural areas more limited space a condition of safety through the lack of anonymity:

“I experience less harassment in the countryside. The city has more faces. There are many more hate crimes in the city. Those trams at night. It’s dangerous”

“Maybe it is the anonymity which does that?”

“At night on the booze, it's easy to be harassed. There it is really difficult to be deviant and it is positive to be anonymous” (Workshop discussion)
The first contribution to this part of the discussion marks out the country as a safer place and assumes that the city has more shades; “the city has more faces” can be read as a metonym for both the transformation of the space through time and the multiplicity of people, which here is thought of as “dangerous.” The trams are highlighted as a risky space at night, in the tram the city is shrinking to a limited space and the anonymity of the city becomes a negative factor for deviant bodies and there is also an underlying assumption, based on the participants’ experiences that hate crimes occur at night.

In contrast to the city’s negative aspects of anonymity, the countryside is discussed as a space where the absence of anonymity decreases harassment:

But it’s also a lot like, the one I meet, maybe I have to ask for help another day or maybe this person perhaps knows someone I know. You may automatically be careful and have it as a strategy. And do not harass. (Workshop discussion)

The limited geographical space that the countryside signifies in relation to the city is assumed to contribute to link people together and is here assumed to make people more cautious in their approach.

But young people do not think about the strategy not to harass someone because you may need help with something. There is no dependency. It differs between the adults and adolescents. (Workshop discussion)

This participant’s experience of “young people” as excluded from the strategy to not “harass someone because you may need help with something”, makes a difference between “adults and adolescents” visible. There are no explicit reports of experiences that this assumption is based upon, but there is not just one side of a coin, the intersection of age becomes visible as a condition for queerness as safe in the countryside context, since young people are considered as excluded from the strategy of not harassing “because you may need help with something.”

“But here everyone has something to talk about. About the houses or so.”

“But it is also depending on which the newcomers are I think. New inhabitants are not always included unless one is from the right country. There is much racism in the countryside. Those from other countries might not be included in the precautions. Depending on what you identify with.”

“One might think they do not share any interest”

(Workshop discussion)

In this excerpt the “blind spots” (Lykke 2010a:82) of the countryside’s community continue to be highlighted. In this snippet from the workshop discussion, “new inhabitants” becomes
an intersection within the countryside context, here illustrated as excluded in the talk about the countryside as somewhere where the villagers are helping each other. The hidden intersection *ethnicity* becomes visible in the phrase “from other countries” assumed to be people racism is directed against. I interpret the social cohesion of the village as selective depending on identification with selected people. The idea of the countryside as safe is depending on intersections of *age* and *ethnicity*.

Adding Barad’s term *spacetimemattering* (Barad 2007:179) to the discussion of the countryside as safe, it becomes obvious that matter is of time and space. Here I am referring to *matter* as a homonymous concept that both alludes to the problems that arise at different times in different spaces and also related to the material environment that is included in a situation, which acts dynamically, an intra-action that is assumed to differ during day and night. But there is also a matter of intersections where *age* and *ethnicity* are to be included in the safety strategy. No harassments by “young people” are voiced by the participants, but my interpretation is that “young people” might not experience the same safety, likewise with “new inhabitants” from “other countries.”

**Summary**

In this section it appears in the workshop discussion and in the participants’ written responses that their experiences of queerness differ between the two contexts city and countryside with an emphasis on the cities dangerous nightlife. The participants consider that there is an “underlying threat of violence” in the cities nightlife, discussed as an effect of the anonymity in the city. The city appears in this discussion as differentiated by time and space, the danger of the city is discussed in terms of “cities nightlife” which assumes a limited time span, and the space becomes in the participants description limited to the space of the night trams. The intra-action of space and time makes it “difficult to be deviant” in the city according to the material, which in one described experience of queerness within a city context, implies intersections of “norm-breaking.” The inseparability of space, time and matter (Barad 2007) makes the participants experience queerness within a city context as dangerous.

The countryside is by the participants described as a safe space with “less harassment,” with a consideration that there is a caution in the countryside because of the absence of anonymity leading to tendencies to “not harass.” It appeared in the analysis that the participants considered “young people” as excluded from the caution of not “harass someone because you
may need help with something.” This makes the intersection of age visible as an axis where the safeness is differentiated. The discussion also brought up that “new inhabitants are not always included unless one is from the right country,” and the countryside is characterized in the material by the phrase “much racism,” which assumes the intersection of ethnicity. The intersections of age and ethnicity intra-acts with the space countryside and differentiate the notion of the countryside as safe. This line of thought raises the question: Safe for whom?

Choice
In this section, I will continue the discussion of anonymity, but I will here take the analysis further by a more complex understanding of anonymity with an emphasis on the possibilities to choose space within a city context. These spaces are illustrated in the material as subcultures:

“But in the city one can seek out subcultures that are visible”

“And gain strength from elsewhere”

(Workshop discussion)

In this part of the discussion about differences of queerness in the countryside and in the city, this participant finds subcultures visible in the city, which connotes that they are not visible in the countryside. Based on this experience stated, the existence of subcultures in the city appears as a condition for queerness. Subcultures are referred to as somewhere to “gain strength from,” which I interpret as similar spaces to what Baker (2012:3) describes as “gay spaces such as bars, cafes, and neighborhoods” (Baker 2012:3; Valentine 2002). According to Baker (2012) such spaces provides “safety, visibility, and a sense of commonality for queer individuals, and contexts within which political consciousness and movements for public recognition could emerge” (Baker 2012:3). This space is not visible in the countryside according to the participants. Also the following quote reveals a participants understanding of subcultures as less prevalent in the countryside:

I think that there is no wide variety of subcultures that have to do with queer in rural areas. In the countryside, you don’t have the same opportunity to “niche” your company, to just hang out with other punks, other stamp collectors, or other table tennis players…

(Written response)

Unlike this section’s introductory excerpt from the workshop discussion, where subcultures in the countryside indirectly were described as invisible, the quote from the written responses consider the countryside’s queer subcultural range as “no wide variety.” As an answer to the
question “Queer and countryside/city; are there any differences? Experiences?” this quote marks the availability of queer subcultures as a difference between queerness in the two contexts city and countryside. The countryside is assumed to lack alternative queer spaces subordinated from the dominant culture, which makes it harder to find communities to feel recognized within.

The limited space and the small population is a disadvantage because of a lack of such environments formed by other queers, which can serve as empowering queerness. On this basis the countryside tends to form a space that limits queer to construct a collective identity, which can be a negative outcome for those who do not know the concept. Since, I rather see queerness as a process; I assume that this limit in the countryside benefits the approach to make queer a floating concept.

The participants in this study are all linked to a large city and can therefore highlight this differences between queerness in the city and the countryside. Drawing on Halberstam’s point that “queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities,” the limited space in the countryside and the absence of queer subculture tends to reduce rural queer lives to a normative timeline. In his work on queer subcultures Halberstam states that “urban queers tend to spend their leisure time and money on subcultural involvements,” (Halberstam 2005:174) while I would say that, as a rural queer, I spend my money on house renovation. Halberstam’s reference to “urban queers” constructs the city as the platform for queer subculture, similar to what the participants in the discussion describes. In my own experience of the city there are many queer spaces, queer subcultures which tend to “oppose not only the hegemony of dominant culture but also the mainstreaming of gay and lesbian culture” (Halberstam 2005:161). The lack of subcultures to “gain strength from” as the participant in the initial excerpt from the workshop discussion puts it, is something that I have thought of as a disadvantage of living a rural queer life, here in the countryside one have to create queer spaces based on other conditions. Creating queer spaces can be a difficult task since there may be some uncertainty about how others will react, an uncertainty that I have not experienced in the same way in the city for the simple reason that I usually not are at the risk to know the antagonists.

Based on the countryside context that I and the participants of this study live in, the new villagers moved here from the city can be perceived as a collectivity in the act of breaking out from the city as a social and cultural norm. This collective can in turn be contrasted to the group of people who lived in the village from the beginning. From this point of view a quite
wider range of alternative groups working on several projects in the village pops into my head, groups which can be understood as within different cultural levels. Groups are formed and transformed by each other continuously, but as expressed in the quotes there is not “the same opportunity to ‘niche’ your company” in the countryside. I interpret the expressed absence of subcultures in the countryside that emerges in the material as an expression of the limitation to socializing with the people who live here, and that one has to create what is lacking.

Without the city’s multiplicity of subcultures the countryside offers a limited queer space that contributes to restricting interactions with larger groups’ recognition, the range of people to hang out with is quite limited. This issue is illustrated in the following excerpt from the workshop discussion, a quote which is connected to the excerpt that opened this section:

It is unlike the city where one can choose who to hang out with; in the countryside there aren’t the same possibilities to choose. You face norms much more often and it requires less to break them. Everything is visible here and in the city one is anonymous. (Workshop discussion)

In this participant’s experiences of dissimilarity between queerness within the city and the countryside is marked by limited choices regarding association. Dissimilarity between the city and the countryside which becomes visible in this persons experience, is that norms are assumed to be more visible in the countryside and it is therefore easier to break them. In the participant’s formulation “everything is visible here and in the city one is anonymous” the countryside’s visibility of norms becomes contrasted with the city’s anonymity, which in this context I interpret as a positive anonymity; a multiplicity of people to disappear into.

It is not clear from the quote which norms this is all about, but with the assumption that it is about gender norms this experience turn the opposite way from Halberstam’s statement that “gender codes may be somewhat more flexible in urban settings, this also means that people become more astute in urban contexts at reading gender.” (Halberstam 2005:44) Although Halberstam here refers to transgender persons’ experiences to pass outside bigger cities (Göransson 2012:57), I would not from my experience call the gender codes “more flexible.” I assume the gender norms more complex and agree with Göransson (2012) who argue that “what is considered desirable appearances vary with context.” (Göransson 2012:57) With different contexts, I refer not specifically as Göransson (2012:57) does, to various cities, but to different situations and assemblages of people within all geographical locations. Following
quote describes an experience of the transparency of norms in the countryside, similar to the excerpt from the workshop discussion above:

A big difference between urban/rural area that I think of is that in a city one can choose a group for socializing or context to a greater extent, may not need to meet the “norm” as much as on the countryside. (Written response)

Like the previous quote the difference between queer in rural areas versus city is illustrated in terms of choice of social contexts in the city and through facing norms in the countryside. “Rather than simply be ‘out and proud,’ rural queers” with Baker’s words “may express their queerness within and through the norms of their communities.” (Baker 2012:13) Drawing on Ahmed’s terminology I would say that there is an implicit desire in these quotes to be “in line”, according to Ahmed “[w]e are ‘in line’ when we face the direction that is already faced by others” (Ahmed 2006:15). The city appears in this part of the material as a space with a multiplicity of people who break norms, where the amount of people allows one to pick out people to hang out with based on interests and opinions.

Important to notice in this discussion is that none of the participants in this study are rural-born, they have chosen to move to the countryside voluntarily, the participants have at some time lived in a lager city, bodies that grew up or lived in city can be assumed to be shaped by the city’s cultural and social range. With Elizabeth Grosz’s idea of “the city as a product or projection of the body,” (Grosz 1992:245) this idea does not illustrate the complexity of the space city in this discussion, so I turn to Ahmed’s notion of direction:

[T]he body gets directed in some ways more than others […] We might speak then of collective direction: of ways in which nations or other imagined communities might be “going in a certain direction,” or facing the same way, such that only some things “get our attention.” Becoming a member of such a community, then, might also mean following this direction, which could be described as the political requirement that we turn some ways and not others” (Ahmed 2006:15)

As the quotation illustrate, bodies, according to Ahmed, are not directed by coincidences and how I interpret the material, the descriptions of experiences of queerness regarding choice in city and countryside, seems directed to the city, maybe because of the consideration that norms are experienced as less visible.
Summary

In this part of the analysis I have highlighted how the theme “choice” appears in the material about experiences of queerness in the city and in the countryside. In the workshop discussion and in the written responses, the city provides visible subcultures, according to the participants the city offer a possibility to choose areas, groups or spaces, be anonymous and do “not need to face the ‘norm’ as much.” The city’s anonymity becomes in this part of the discussion a positive experience and a condition for queerness. Keeping in mind the previous section’s discussion about the experiences of a threat of violence as a result of the city’s anonymity, a higher degree of anonymity in the city was in this part of the discussion talked about as an advantage. This comparison implies that this discussion refers to daytime experiences and raises Barad’s notion of timespacemattering into the experience of queerness in the city. The participants experiences illustrates the multiplicity of people as positive during day time, the space gets bigger and there are more phenomena to intra-act with.

The participants’ experiences of queerness in relation to the theme of choice in the countryside are characterized by the lacking of subcultures. This is expressed in statements about how one must “gain strength elsewhere.” According to the material, the participants consider that “you can’t niche your company” in the countryside, and that there “aren’t the same possibilities to choose.” There are also experiences of how “you face norms much more and it requires less to break them,” as one of the participants puts it: “everything is visible” in the countryside. Lacking the city’s multiplicity of subcultures and anonymity, the countryside offers a limited queer space that contributes to less intra-activity with other queers or larger group recognition. To understand this phenomenon I adopt Ahmed’s consideration: “the body gets directed in some ways more than others” (Ahmed 2006:15), and in accordance with Ahmed’s statement the positive connotation to the city’s cultural and social range in the material becomes understandable.
Visibility

“It is possible to be seen here. One can reach people that one does not reach in the city. That’s the great thing about visibility; it is possible to reach people.”

“People of so many different ages that one does not talk to in the city”

“If I put up a poster about separatism there will be debate and discussion. Things start to happen. If I put up a note about separatism there is probably no one who sees it in the city. But it is about deciding when one wants to be visible or to involuntarily stand out.” (Workshop discussion)

The discussion emphasizes the experienced benefits of visibility in the countryside and brings in the differentiation of people which one comes in contact with in the countryside, “one can reach people that one does not reach in the city.” The visibility in the countryside is supposed to have political benefits; with the example of “a poster about separatism” the participant assumes that a “debate and discussion” would take place, while this would become invisible in the city. With the statement that “things start to happen” the participant points out an effect of visibility in the countryside.

__________________________________________________________________________

What amazed me most of living in the country was meeting people that I did not get to know in the city; Playing football with 15 year old guys who come home to our house and play video games. Here I was part of a group, not because of a sexual identity, but because we all lived in the same village. What did not exist, we had to create. (A rural queer’s creative writing)

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In the next part of the material a participant have similar considerations:

May be perceived as much more visible in the city where everything is assembled, more to count as a political power than individual queer identities in the countryside. On the other hand, can be a much greater ability to “reach out” / be visible on the countryside if it is so that people come together more. Most of my experiences are experiences from places in the country where there already is some sort of norm-breaking thinking. Queerness can of course be more visible about e.g. that one knows the neighbors. Easier, requires less, however, may be more difficult for one self to be deviant. (Written response)

In this written response to the discussion questions the participant consider that it is easier to reach out with political messages in the countryside, thus the queerness becomes visible in a way that assumes to be hidden in the city, on the basis that “people comes together more” in the countryside. Despite of the experienced possibilities of reaching out with political
messages in the countryside, *queer* is considered to have more political power within a city context, while the queerness on the countryside assumes to emerge as “individual identities.”

This written response also gives a hint of the countryside as a place of norm-breaking; “Most of my experiences are experiences from places in the countryside where there already is some sort of norm-breaking thinking,” the participant states. This brings to mind the countryside as a norm-breaking alternative to the big city. The participant experience queerness as more visible in the countryside and takes the contact with neighbors as an example of meeting people you would probably not get to know in a city. This quote reveals ambivalence in visibility within a countryside context where queerness becomes a political tool of reaching out; in the same time it “may be more difficult for one self to be deviant.”

Visibility in the countryside has been discussed on two levels, where the visibility of queerness can be used as a political tool and loosen up the norms and prejudices, and a second level where it is emerging as a challenge to “be a pioneer” in the countryside as Göransson (2012:54) puts it. This aspect makes a life in the city’s multiplicity much easier. What counts as a political struggle is depending on whether the starting point is from a rural or urban perspective. In a rural perspective it might be a political act just to live there as queer, from an urban perspective it might not be enough to live there. The next quote illustrates an experienced difference between LGBT-struggles from a city perspective and the countryside context that the participant is contextualized in:

“There may be a collision in the struggle sometimes. Sometimes it may hit the wall when there are just discussions with a city perspective. To say that the LGBT - struggle is boring and maybe it can be for anyone in the city where there is a lot going on but in some places it is radical.” (Workshop Discussion)

This post in the workshop discussion shows a perspective on the “LGBT – struggle” as metronormative (Halberstam 2005); by comparing between a city and a countryside perspective on political struggle, the participant articulates that the political struggles within the city cannot be compared to the struggles relevant within the countryside. The quote highlight that struggles not relevant to people in the city can be “radical in some places.” “Some places” do not have to consider a countryside perspective; it can also take other countries or areas into account.
The visibility of the political struggle for people living in the countryside, whether they relate their lives to the concept of queer or not, seems so far off in the analysis depending on perspective; here exemplified in a countryside or a city context:

“It is a lot about movement. What does the fight look like in the countryside? Maybe there is struggle in the countryside that is invisible? Which do not reach the academy?”

“As is the case X, for example. It is so talked about in the media; it did happen a lot there. It would not have been so big in a city, like in Stockholm e.g. where it would not hardly be noticed.”

(Workshop discussion)

This excerpt from the workshop discussion opens up the question of how a queer struggle can look like within a countryside context, and the struggle that is done on the countryside is considered as not to be made visible. These thoughts lead me to think of what counts as a political struggle and which norms around political struggles that this would made visible.

The excerpt points to how the definition of political struggle may differ from which context you are positioned in. Here there is an assumption that the academy is the institution in which this struggle should be made visible. The formulation that it is an institution to “reach” can reveal a difference between the queer life that is lived in rural areas and the receiving of space in research.

In the subsequent comment from the discussion a struggle conducted outside a big city is exemplified in the following way. The “case X” refers here to violence against two men living together in a small town close to the countryside context which this thesis is written from. It all started out with one of the men being beaten by several other men. After this assault the couple got the word “faggot” and a swastika carved out on their car. The incident was published in a local newspaper and a rally against homophobia was carried out in the small town, after which one of the men was beaten up. This case exemplifies the disadvantages of visibility in a smaller town, the media attention made the couple exposed to the outside world and in a small town where everyone knows where everyone live, it can also be a danger to be visible. A similar discussion can be found in the material:

“In X where the gays were harassed. They became so visible and then the assault happened again. After the attention given.”

“It was no good with the visibility but it was debate and people you did not know was against take up the fight” (Workshop discussion)
A closer analysis of this case is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the hidden intersections of this case tangent to sex, gender and maybe class. As the analysis of “countryside as safe” has showed, none of the participants articulated any experiences of physical hate crimes, which also bring a spacetime perspective into this tragic incident. As the excerpt from the group discussion shows there is an assumption that a similar case in a city would not become so visible, which convey the notion of “town” as another space divided from the city space.

“But what is typical for the countryside may be typical of other places in the city. But one might not see it. As the dance culture here for example.” (Workshop discussion)

This statement provides a nuanced view of the rural and urban areas as fixed spaces where queerness is visible or not visible, rather events and situations are considered as not fixed to a limited space illustrated by the concepts of city and countryside. But the formulation “typical for the countryside” connotes for me a presumption of a countryside discourse, including the risk of queer visibility. The city is highlighted as including different spaces. Spaces that one in the city can choose not to see; this is exemplified in the dance culture that is quite dominant in the context that I assume; a culture that with no gaps can be applied to Butler’s theory of the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990). I interpret the main point in this exception as to be about different formations and about how a variety of people generate different situations.

Summary

Visibility in relation to the city has appeared in the previous sections in terms of anonymity; the advantages of an assemblage of people to disappear into and the disadvantage of the city’s multiplicity in the city’s night trams. Within the intra-action of spacetime, the anonymity of the city seems to be experienced as having both pros and cons. This part of the analysis has further illustrated the complexity of visibility. In the experiences of queerness within a countryside context, visibility is brought up in the material as a political tool, since the participants experience it to be easier to reach people. In the same time queer is considered to have more political power in the city, in contrast to “individual queer identities on the countryside,” as one of the participants expressed it. The empirical material describes how the experiences of queer visibility in the countryside consists of two parts; first, the political benefits of being visible, and second, the challenge of being visible. These different experiences of queerness related to visibility in the countryside are discussed in the material through an example of a hate crime which happened in a small town nearby, where the visibility in media led to further violence. In the discussion there is also a metronormative
perspective on “LGBT-struggle” brought up, with the point that political struggles looks different depending on context.

Recognition

In the city, perhaps queer works out as a first-identity, while one might have several other identities as “the first” one in the countryside. (Written response)

In the answer to the question about experiences of queerness in the city and the countryside this participant mentions that queer as an identity could work in the city, but within a countryside context the participant assumes many other identities superior to the queer identity. This statement assumes that identity in depending on which space the participant is located in. Queer in relation to the city is made into an identity, and a “first identity” I interpret as an identity superior to other identities people may experience and queer is thus made into a fixed identity, while in the rural setting the participant does not mark out queerness. This discussion can be connected to what Baker (2012) calls the “urban-focused conceptions of queerness,” (Baker 2012:3) since the participant experience a connection between queer as an identity and the city. The absence of queer communities on the countryside, discussed in previous sections of this analysis, might be a background to the participants’ experience of “several other identities as ‘the first’ one in the countryside.” Queer communities within the city context can be assumed to maintain queer as fixed identity. The ability to interpret the word queer is in the next excerpt experienced as a condition for queerness:

“One has strategies when and where one want to express oneself and it might look different in the city and in the countryside.”

“But does the concept of queer exist even when there’s no receiver? I can go in the city and feel tough in my hair and my clothes. But here it expresses protest or here one may merely see it as an ugly woman.”

“It is far away here to interpret the term queer”

(Workshop discussion)

This snippet from the workshop discussion begins with an assumption that there is an apparent difference of “when or where” to express queerness depending on whether you is in the city or in the countryside. The participant who makes this opinion speaks of this phenomenon in terms of “strategies.” These ideas, I interpret as a strategy to choose your
battles and when and how the participant enters the battles are perceived for the participant to look different in the countryside and in the city. By viewing this discussion through the logics of intra-action (Barad 2007) the strategy to engage in a battle depending on the context, on the persons who are presented and the environment that is involved in co-creating situations, rather than on the two fixed points city and countryside. According to Barad “[S]pace is not a collection of preexisting points set out in a fixed geometry, a container, as it were, for matter to inhabit. Matter isn’t situated in the world; matter is worlding in its materiality” (Barad 2007:180-1). In the workshop I gave the participants the preexisting contexts city and countryside, which affect my way of handing the material, but with Barad’s theorizing in my mind, I interpret this participant’s strategy as depending on surrounding materiality.

The second comment in this part of the discussion reveals the participant’s experience of queerness in the city as a sense of toughness compared to the countryside, where the experience is that someone who does not reach the norms of how a “woman” is expected to appear in the participant’s rural context is instead perceived as an “ugly woman.” This experience of queerness within a city context can be connected to what Ahmed (2006) describes as comfortable:

> [T]o be comfortable is to be so at ease with one’s environment that it is hard to distinguish where one’s body ends and the world begins. One fits, and in the act of fitting, the surface of bodies disappear from view. White bodies are so comfortable as they inhabit space that extend their shape (Ahmed 2006:134).

The participant’s experience of queerness in the city and the countryside illustrated in the sentence: “I can go in the city and feel tough in my hair and my clothes. But here it expresses protest or here one can only see it as an ugly woman,” I interpret this as connected to Ahmed’s notion of comfort within a city context. The feeling of toughness negotiated by the city context indicates comfort in comparison with the experience of “ugliness” in the countryside. The next comment in the excerpt from the discussion “it is far away here to interpret the term queer” reveals the reason to the other participant’s experience of queerness in the countryside as “ugliness” and makes a connection between not being able to interpret the concept of queer and to feel uncomfortable in the queerness. The next quotation from the written responses to the question of experiences of queerness in the city and the countryside develops this discussion and emphasizes the interpretation of the word queer as a condition for how to experience queerness:
I feel more different in the countryside; I meet few who seem to deviate from the hetero-/familynorm. In the city, I feel that external attributes are interpreted by some as queerness / protest, in the countryside, I often feel just ugly, other people’s eyeing, no comments. Difference: the others looks, my assumptions about what others think, feel more that I am “analyzed” in rural areas. (Written response)

As the participant writes, the queerness delivers a feeling of ugliness in the countryside, while the same appearance in the city by the participant is experienced as something signifying “protest.” According to the participant’s experience the outside is interpreted differently by the environment depending on space. In my interpretation of this discussion there is a connection to Ahmed’s (2006) conceptualization of disorientation in the participants’ description of the queerness within the countryside context, there is “a bodily feeling of losing one’s place” (Ahmed 2006:161). The participant introduces the reflection by expressing “I feel more different in the countryside,” in this experience the eyeing and the silence illustrated by “no comments” generates a feeling of ugliness within the participant (a feeling of ugliness does not need to be negative, but this is not apparent in the material). This experience of queerness within the countryside context, I interpret as being “out of line” (Ahmed 2006:161).

Different to the experience of queerness as disorientation within the countryside, the participant describes queerness in the city as, “external attributes are interpreted by some as queerness / protest” which connotes a more positive view in contrast to the feeling of ugliness. The next quotation from the material points out something that can be a reason for the previous experience of the incapability to interpret the concept of queer in a countryside context:

People in the city are more aware that there are “other kinds of people”, in the countryside, it has more of a shock factor. Thus NOT said that the phobias exist in the countryside. (Written response)

The phrase “other kinds of people” I interpret as people who are follow the logics of nonnormativity, who deviate from the norms in the countryside context. The phrase “shock factor” reveals the participant’s response of queerness within a countryside context. As I interpret it, the previous discussion about strategies of choosing battles, are based on this presumption of “shock.” A strategy to avoid battles, or shock, will also be to use already accepted words for existing outside norms, and still be understood by people in the surrounding environment, experiences of this is exemplified in the next quotation.

“I’ve told that I’m a “dyke” to explain my expression. Then people said “Aha, a dyke, I understand.” But it’s more fun if no new stereotypes are made. It’s boring with graspalable. But it’s hard because I do not want to construct limits.” (Workshop discussion)
As the participants experience illustrates in the excerpt above, the identity "dyke" provides the benefit to be recognized and accepted, even if the participant expresses a unwillingness to use this established identity category. The participant mentions the category “dyke” as “graspable” and refers to “stereotypes.” This can be connected to Butler’s theory of performativity, where the word “dyke” is not only a term, but also means that the individual is attributed to the meanings the term contains (Butler 1997:44). This strategy, to use a word already accepted, can be connected to Ahmed’s theory of orientation, the term “dyke” makes the body to be “directed toward a shared object, as a direction that is repeated over time” (Ahmed 2006:120). When using the word “dyke,” people understands because they can relate to others, there is a whole discourse to relate to. There is a direction, and if the surrounding knows the direction it is comfortable using a word that is more or less accepted. Recognition and understanding from the surroundings can sometimes precede the political struggle; a choice depending on time and space. But it is also depending on time and space if this is a political strategy or not, depending on whom you talk to. From the countryside perspective that the discussion assumes makes me interpret this experience as contextualized in the countryside and similar to my own experiences of to reside in a fixed identity in order to extend it.

It was when I moved to the countryside the concept of queer began to mean something to myself, this queer concept had only been a theoretical tool in my essays and exams, but now it made me suddenly make sense to me. I was still the homosexual for some people, but in my self-understanding, I was queer. Queer for me is to not belong to a specific group, but to be and live in opposition to norms. During my first year in the village all stereotypes came as a shock to me, women with children, men who should be free. Women who was expected to make coffee and cook food, men who built things and chopped wood. It became important for me to define myself as a “woman,” something I refused before I moved here, to broaden those norms. (A rural queer’s creative writing)

Summary

In this part of the analysis I have discussed how identity appears in the material in relation to experiences of queerness in the city and in the countryside. The discussion in this theme has revolved around the participants’ experience of how the interpretation of the word queer differs depending on a city or a countryside context. According to the material, the city makes it possible to have queer as a first identity, queerness prevent a feeling of toughness in the city
and people are assumed to be “more aware that there are other kinds of people” in the city. While the discussion from a countryside perspective is considered to be “far away to interpret queer,” the question “does the concept of queer exists even when there’s no receiver?” points out queerness as depending on context. The excerpts make experiences of lacking interpretation of queer within the countryside context visible, and illustrates queer as recognizable within a city context.
CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Meanings of *queer* for people positioned in the countryside

The analysis of the participants’ responses to the question *what is queer/queerness for you?* Has been analysed in order to discuss the question *What does queer mean for people positioned in the countryside?*

Predominantly, the participants describes *queer* as a doing, in terms of protest, clothing, creation, language and resistance. For these people positioned in the countryside *queer* comes to signify acting outside of norms; to challenge definitions and resist fixed identities. The participants’ meanings of *queer* also emphasizes queer as dependent on space.

The meanings of *queer* are also linked to identity and group affiliations in one participants’ written response, but in the workshop discussion the meaning of *identity* is questioned. The participants express that the problem with queer as an identity does not lie in identification as such, but in the risk of being defined by others and imprinted into fixed identities. Identity is brought up as a strategy to convey political benefits, which connotes identity as changeable and unfixed.

**Differences between queerness within the two contexts city/countryside**

In order to answer the research question: *how do people situated in the countryside, but with experience of queer lives in the city, articulate the difference between the two contexts city/countryside?* I have analyzed the empirical material on the basis of the question *which conditions for queerness within a city and a countryside context appear in the empirical material?*

The analysis of experiences of queer/queerness within countryside and city context has shown that the conditions for queer lives differ depending on city or countryside context, but the apparent differences are not only dependent on the context, a spacetime perspective is inevitable in order to map out these differences. The queer/queerness is, according to the analysis, conditional both within a city and a countryside context.
The spacetime perspective as a condition for a queer life is most evident in the city’s nightlife. Space and time constitutes a condition of unsafety illustrated by the experience of the night trams within a city context. The anonymity and the multiplicity of people in the city were brought up as contributing to unsafety. On the contrary the countryside’s absence of anonymity is experienced as safe, the linking between people is considered to decrease harassments. The absence of anonymity thus becomes a condition for queer/queerness in the countryside, but it was also revealed in the analysis that the intersections age and ethnicity differentiated the countryside as safe. The intersections of age and ethnicity determinate whether countryside is a safe space for queer living, and articulate a difference within the countryside context. Experiences of queer lives as unsafe or safe are articulated by difference depending on space, time, context and intersections rather than the two contexts city/countryside.

Within the theme “choice” subcultures are articulated as a difference between city/countryside, subcultures were referred to as queer spaces to gain strength and to be recognized as queer. The possibility to niche a company within the city context is in the analysis articulated as a difference between the two contexts city/countryside. The city’s anonymity and the multiplicity of people becomes within the theme “choice” to benefit queer living. There is not any particular time of the day addressed in these positive aspects of anonymity and multiplicity; to me this connotes day time experiences and makes the spacetime perspective become visible. The articulated differences between the city’s anonymity and multiplicity as unsafe for queerness during the night and as an advantage during day time differentiate the city context in two opposite directions, depending on spacetime. By the range of subcultures, anonymity and multiplicity, the city is articulated as promoting queerness, while the countryside context impedes the queerness, since there are no option to remain in queered spaces.

Within the theme “visibility” the multiplicity within the city context is assumed to make various political struggles invisible; it is considered to be harder to reach out to a wide range of people, while visibility within a countryside context is articulated as benefit political struggle. On the other hand, the all-time visibility of queer living within the countryside context is articulated as challenging.

Within the theme “recognition” the difference between the two contexts city/countryside is articulated through the ability to interpret the concept of queer, experiences of being
understood through external appearance within a city context, and experiences of not being understood within a countryside context. The question if *queer* as a concept even exists within a countryside context was brought up. Further differences between the two contexts city/countryside are articulated in terms of fixed identity by the participants; while queer as a fixed identity is brought up as conditional in a city context, the countryside context is assumed to inherit numerous other identities. This assumes that queer as a fixed identity to a larger extent appears within city contexts, where one can gather with other queers in queered spaces and be interpreted as queer.

The city context is more often articulated through a spacetime perspective related to time, space and matter in the participants’ experiences of queerness. On the contrary, time in terms of day or night is not referred to at all in the participants’ experiences of queerness within the countryside context, and thus not appears as a clear condition for queerness. By the participants, time is constructed as a more crucial condition for queerness within a city context. The anonymity and multiplicity in the city context and the countryside’s absence of the same, makes these to central terms throughout the analysis, and increase the difference between the two contexts city/countryside. From a spacetime perspective, anonymity and multiplicity differentiates the two contexts city/countryside as fixed spaces; the entanglement of time, space, context and intersections makes it impossible to discern distinct differences between the experiences of queerness within city/countryside contexts.

To conclude, the obvious differences which make the city and countryside to linguistic dichotomies consists of size; number of people, objects and area, conditions which make the city’s anonymity and multiplicity evident. However these aspects condition queer living in the empirical material, I would argue that this difference is only discursive - constituted by linguistic and cultural differences of the meanings of *large* and *small*. The phenomenon queerness seems, based on the participants’ experiences, moving back and forth across these discursive constraints; queer and queerness is not fixed in spaces, rather within the ontology of these spaces; conditions for queerness seem too dependent on how things *are* within the contexts. To explain this further, I turn to Barad (2007: 141) who argues that "the primary ontological units are not ‘things’ but phenomena” and “the primary semantic units are not ‘words’ but material-discursive practices through which [...] boundaries are constituted” (Barad 2007:141). The phenomenon of queerness remains through the thesis’s development within the entanglement of materiality and discourse, and within the logics of intra-activity.
For the people situated in the countryside, but with experience of queer lives in the city, in the thesis, differences between queerness within the two contexts city/countryside are not delimited to fixed spaces; the analysis of how queer as dependent on how space, time, contexts and intersections are entangled problematize the city/countryside divide.

**To reinforce the potentials of the notion of queer as a political tool**

Although this is a small-scale analysis, compared with the queerness’ wide meaning, it shows that queerness must be applied to the context to act as an unfixed word. The political potential that I see in the word *queer* is per se seen from a Swedish perspective, where the word is without actual etymology, but which in the English language still has a genealogical power (given by Queer Nation) that can continue to change…

The question how does an understanding of context contribute to reinforce the potentials of the notion of queer as a political tool? Was asked because I wanted to emphasize a changeability of the concept of *queer*, I experience that the word *queer* tends to be fixed as an identity, and that a person defining as *queer* is perceived as belonging to a group, a group of non-heterosexuals. My analysis of experiences of queerness with the examples of the contexts city and countryside has shown that queer cannot be fixed, since it has appeared to be dependent of a *spacetimematter* (Barad 2007) perspective.

The analysis in this study has demonstrated experiences of reaching out with political messages to a diverse variety of people within a countryside context. Political struggles that were considered as “boring” within an urban context were experienced as radical within a rural context. Queer becomes with a spacetime perspective, not just an opposition to fixed identities, but also an opposition to normative political struggles. To make all political struggles visible, a contextualization is undeniable. I would argue that without a spacetime perspective, queer becomes reduced to a fixed unit. As much of the previous research in the thesis displays, queer tends to become a fixed concept within a *gay and lesbian discourse*, which means that the term *queer* tends to maintain instead of challenging normativity.

The analysis has shown that identity categories are used as strategies within the countryside context which I argue to be a political act to challenge fixed identities due to the visibility. The strategies imply changeability.
Queer as fixed identity seems almost exclusively connected to a city context in the empirical material, the possibilities to gather with other queers and restrict one to queer spaces may contribute to queer as a fixed identity.

When I go to cities today, I feel queer, but there is no queerness someone else puts on me. It is an inner sense of not belonging, not understanding the habits and feeling lost. But this queerness is not interpelling. No one stares at me and my partner when we shop, as they stare when we shop in the nearest little town. It is a queerness that does not arise because the surrounding people assume that I belong to a particular group, rather a sense of not belonging. When I walk in cities I think it is queerer at the countryside. It becomes a shelter, a self-chosen one. My countryside is changing, it can be changed. I can create spaces that I cannot create in the city. It becomes an arena for change; there are waste lands, untouched land, and empty buildings. (A rural queer’s creative writing)
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APPENDIX 1: Quotes from memory work on the workshop discussion in original language

p. 40 ”Queer som identitet, rörelse, akademi. Men här blir det identitet ändå nu. Det kan betyda olika beroende på sammanhang”

”Men vad betyder egentligen att det är en identitet. Vad är identitet. Är det något medvetet handlande och synsätt, men det är lätt att bli stämplat att man är något.”

”Det blir så lätt att det blir stämplat det är så känsligt när allting handlar om att låsa fast folk.”

”Det känns som en strategi med identiteter, att man säger att man är queer.”


”Att det kanske är det anonyma som gör det.”

”På natten på fyllan är det lätt att bli trakasserad. Där är det skitsvärt att vara avvikande och det är positivt att vara anonym.”

p.42 ”Det är ju mycket så också, att den jag träffar kan jag behöva be om hjälp en annan dag eller den kanske känner någon. Man är kanske automatiskt försiktig så och har det som strategi. Och inte trakasserar.“


p.42 “- Men här har ju alla nått att prata om. Om husen eller så.”


- ”man kanske tror att man inte delar något intresse”

P.44 ” Men i stan kan man söka sig till subkulturer som syns”
"Och få kraft från andra håll"

P.46 “Det är skillnad från stan där kan man välja umgänge eller välja bort, på landet finns inte de valen. Man möter normer mycket mer och det kräver mindre att sticka ut. Allt syns här och i stan är man anonym.”


- "Så många olika åldrar som en inte pratar med i stan”


P.50 ” Det kan krocka i kampen ibland. Det kan krocka ibland när det bara är diskussioner med stadsperspektiv. Att man säger att hbtq-kampen är tråkig och det kanske den kan va för nån i stan där det finns massa men på vissa platser är den radikal”


- "Som fallet i X till exempel. Det är så omtalat i media det hände ju massor där. Det skulle inte ha blivit så stort i en stad. som stockholm t.ex. där skulle det knappt inte märkas.”

p. 51”X där bögarna blev trakasserade. De blev så synliga och sen hände misshandeln igen. Efter uppmärksamheten

- Det var inte bra med den synligheten men det blev debatt och folk man inte visste var emot tog upp kampen

p.52 ” Men det som är typiskt för glesbygden kan vara typiskt för andra ställen i stan. Men man ser inte det kanske. Som dansbandskulturen här till exempel.”

p.53 ” Man har strategier när och var man vill uttrycka sig och det ser nog olika ut i stan och på glesbygden.”

69
"Men finns begreppet queer ens när det inte finns nån mottagare. Jag kan gå i stan och känna mig tuff i min frisyr och mina kläder. Men här uttrycker det protest eller här ser man bara det som en ful kvinna."

"Det är långt bort här att tolka begreppet queer"

APPENDIX 2: Quotes from written responses to the discussion questions in original language

p. 38 “‘Annorlundahet’, protest, att omvända förakt till stolthet. Mest protest: genom yttre uttryck som t.ex. utseende, klädsel, språk, handlingar, skapande mm”


p. 39 ”Queera strategier/tendenser kan bli normativa och det ligger i queer att vara föränderligt. Om det queera blir ”säkert”/tryggt/vanligt är det inte queert längre. Något kan vara queert på en plats/ett rum och samtidigt inte på en annan. För mig är queer ett sätt att titta på normer för att kunna dekonstruerha dem, inte en vilande identitet, då det är vilande identiteter det ska bryta mot.”


p.40 ”Städernas nattliv är det farligaste jag har varit med om, där det alltid finns ett underliggande hot om våld.”

P.44 ” Tänker att det inte finns ett så stort utbud av subkultur som har att göra med queer på landsbygden. På landsbygden har man inte samma möjligheter att ’nischa’ sitt umgänge, att bara umgås med andra punkare, andra frimärkssamlare, andra pingisspelare…”

P.47 ” stor skillnad mellan stad/glesbygd som jag tänker är att i en stad kan en välja umgångesammanhang i större utsträckning, behöver kanske inte möta ’normen’ lika mycket som på landet”

P. 50 ” kan upplevas som mycket mer synligt i staden för finns samlat, mer att räkna som politisk kraft än enskilda queera identiteter på landet. Å andra sidan kan finnas mycket större möjligheter att ’nå ut’/synas på glesbygden om det är så att folk möts mer. Å tredje sidan har
jag mest erfarenheter från ställen på landet som redan har något slags normbrytande tänk. 
Queerheten kan ju bli mer tydlig i om t.ex. att en känner sina grannar. Lättare/ krävs mindre, 
kan däremot vara svårare för en själv att sticka ut.”

p. 53 ”I stan kan kanske queer funka som en första-identitet, medan en kanske har flera andra 
identiteter som 'kommer först’ i ens liv på landsbygden”

p. 55 ”känner mig mer annorlunda på glesbygden, möter få som verkar avvika från hetero- 
familjenormen. I stan upplever jag att yttre attribut tolkas av en del som queerhet/protest, på 
glesbygden känner jag mig ofta bara ful, andra blickar, inga kommentarer. Skillnad: de 
andras blickar, mina antaganden om vad andra tänker, känner mer att jag 'granskas’ på 
glesbygden.”

p.55 ” Folk i stan är mer medvetna om att det finns "andra sorters människor" i glesbygden 
har det mer chockfaktor. Därmed INTE sagt att fobierna finns på glesbygden.”
APPENDIX 3: Invitation to the workshop in original language

Inbjudan!

Jag vill hälsa Er välkomna till en workshop om queerhet hemma hos mig torsdagen den 8 maj kl.18:00.

Med anledning av min materialinsamling till min master uppsats inom programmet Intersectionality and Change på Linköpings universitet, bjuder jag in till presentation av min uppsats, hembakat och kreativt skrivande på Kullagatan 5.

I uppsatsen undersöker och diskuterar jag begreppet queer i relation till rumslighet, med exemplet glesbygd. Mitt intresse ligger i att luckra upp begreppet queer, som inom mycket forskning, media och politik tenderar att bli synonymt med 'homosexuell identitet'. Jag vill med uppsatsen diskutera queer som ett handlande och varande mot all slags normativitet, snarare än en fast och utestängande sexuell identitet. Jag vill också kasta ljus på glesbygden som en plats där queera liv levs, då queerforskning i Sverige och internationellt verkar ha staden som norm. Mitt material består av autoetnografiska beskrivningar av förflyttning mellan olika rumsliga kontexter, där queer verkar ha olika betydelser.

Workshopen hålls med anledning av att jag vill prova en ny form av datainsamling där deltagaren själv skriver en kort text i självvald form ex. poesi, dialog eller enstaka ord för att beskriva hur queerhet ter sig i deltagarens liv i relation till rumslighet. Syftet är inte att se och analysera deltagares perspektiv, utan att kartlägga fenomenet queer och diskutera queerhetens vidd.

Kom! Kom!

/Sara Gagnesjö

Jag vill också informera om att även om att deltagandet är frivilligt och en kan när som helst avbryta sin medverkan. Texterna kommer inte att användas för något annat syfte än för uppsatsen, inga namn kommer att nämns, varken på platser eller på personer.
Title: A Countryside Perspective of Queer, queering the city/countryside divide

Author:
Sara Gagnesjö

Abstract

This thesis contributes with a countryside perspective to queer research by highlighting the countryside as a context where queer lives are lived. In the thesis I problematize the city/countryside divide with a view of the concept of queer as dependent on space and time. The empirical materials are generated through a workshop on queerness, gathering people living within a countryside context; the materials consist of a discussion and written responses to questions on queerness and the city/countryside binary. Theoretically and methodologically, the thesis is inspired by the notion of agential realism (Barad 2007) and situated knowledge, (Haraway 1988); the use of creative writing, inspired by Richardson (1994 and 2000), has also been central to the development of the thesis. The analysis is carried out within themes focusing on conditions for queerness within city/countryside experienced by people situated in the countryside. The analysis shows how space, time, contexts and intersections are entangled and queering the city/countryside divide.

queer, countryside perspective, city/countryside, spacetime, intra-activity, creative writing

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