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# Queer diffabilities in Uganda: Experiences of intersectional complexity and the urban climate crisis

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## Introduction

'Double stigma, trouble and phobia comes with being a person with disabilities and then being queer', Kira tells us. They lead a small civil society organization supporting queer people living with diffabilities in Uganda. We adopt the term 'diffability' here to recognize – and normalize – the diversity of abilities among people.<sup>1</sup> One of the initiatives Kira tells us most passionately about is a project designed to mitigate the high levels of food insecurity many in this community experience. Incomplete schooling, inaccessible and discriminatory employers, lack of social support networks, poor quality and congested housing in dense underserved urban neighbourhoods and high levels of sociopolitical stigma all collide to sustain both queer and diffabled communities in high levels of social, economic and environmental precarity. Working to mitigate the impacts of these overlapping inequalities is a vibrant civil society. In the initiative above, Kira's organization keeps a modest urban garden, and uses their fast-growing nutrient-rich produce to bolster purchases of goods from the local market in a series of food parcels that they deliver to the homes of people who are both queer and diffabled.

Their organization poses as a purely PWD (people with diffabilities) organization, so as not to raise the suspicion of family members. Though some families are suspicious, they allow the meetings to take place because it results

<sup>1</sup> This term was derived by Mansour Fakhri and Setiadi Purwanta, two blind people in Indonesia, as a critique of the term *disabilitas* (disability), which re-produces the marginalization of people with disabilities. For a full discussion, see Pirmasari and McQuaid (2023).

in food (and sometimes toiletries) being delivered, which are then shared by the family. Kira, a gender non-conforming, non-binary person, often does the home themselves. While they engage in conscious acts of altered appearance and dress, suspicion remains. This serves, Kira explains, not only to provide a small degree of food security for people often unable to work and who often have complex under-served health needs but also to pierce the isolation and loneliness of housebound people, especially for those trapped in houses with discriminatory family members. During their home visits, the organization tries to manage some time alone with the individual, but this can pose challenges due to limited space, multiple people around, nosy or curious family members or neighbours, and so on. Due to limited resources this initiative is reserved for 'members' of the organization who have the greatest needs but also the greatest restrictions in terms of mobility. Primarily this initiative is only in greater Kampala, where the organization is based, to enlarge part of the transport costs that are entailed.

In this chapter we introduce our approach to intersectional climate justice that argues for a greater focus on disability and queerness in (intersectional) climate justice studies and climate change research more broadly. To do so, we will recount the lived experiences of a queer person in Uganda we have named Kay. Their stories emerged out of our broader applied research on the gender-age-urban interface of climate change in both Uganda and Indonesia, in which we conducted fieldwork across seven cities. To protect the anonymity and security of our research collaborators, we have chosen to blend the experiences of several queer wheelchair users we met during a creative workshop co-hosted with Kira's organization in summer 2022. Experiences recounted here were lived by different people from across the LGBTQ+ community – as such, we have only identified Kay as queer; however, we acknowledge the rich diversity within the community and how different sexualities and gender identities can and do shape individual experiences and daily life in Kampala. All quotes we include here are drawn from verbatim transcripts from our fieldwork and reflect real lived experiences. Kay's stories as they appear here were chosen to evidence intersectional complexity and the ways in which power works to drive the social inequalities, marginalization and exclusion that position some minds and bodies more vulnerable to climate change impacts. We hope that amplifying these voices opens up alternative ways of thinking and theorizing about climate justice that interrogates normativity, provides space for a greater embodied diversity of lives impacted by climate change, (re)visions just futures that centre inclusion, social and environmental justice, and compels transformative approaches to climate justice in our research, actions and engagement with climate governance.

## Queer diffabilities and climate justice

Our chapter highlights some of the ways in which systemic inequalities and oppressions layer and accumulate for certain people, with queerphobia and ableism both serving to exclude and stigmatize particular bodies and minds. Recent climate change and justice research has embraced intersectionality to address gaps and failures in climate adaptation and mitigation theory and practice (Bulkeley, Edwards and Fuller 2014; Chu and Michael 2019) and to recognize and confront systems of oppression, inequalities and promote inclusion, equity and recognitional justice (Strange et al. 2024; Dodman et al. 2022; Revi et al. 2020). The emerging field of intersectional climate justice research thus highlights how specific communities are disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of climate change and supervening policies, attending to often overlapping factors (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, diffability, class, citizenship, sexuality, among others), and historical injustices that further exacerbate the inequitable distribution of climate impacts (Mikulewicz et al. 2023; Amorim-Maia et al. 2022 and 2023). By centring the lived experiences of both diffabled and queer people in urban Uganda, this chapter aims to demonstrate how being multiply marginalized leads to more acute experiences of climate change, with less opportunities and resources to be able to mitigate impacts and environmental harms. This must begin with better understanding how power works to inequitably position people within overlapping systems of domination. Amplifying multiply marginalized communities thus allows us to recognize diffability and sexual and gender diversity as sites of critical embodied and experiential knowledge and sociopolitical resistance (Belser 2020); thus ensuring we start our climate justice work here in the messy and complex lived experiences of those ‘on the ground’

Understanding the lived experiences of queer and diffabled people, and amplifying their voices, encourages us to push for inclusive, reflexive and contextualized climate knowledge production. Knowledge which is sensitive to how power operates in and through gender and sexuality, ableism and other oppressions, and that can identify structures that perpetuate vulnerability and precarity for certain bodies and not others. Centring queerness and diffability allows us to foreground embodied diversity and address at the heart of climate justice how poverty, structural exclusion, social disadvantage and other categories of difference disproportionately render some people more vulnerable to climate change (see Bell 2011; Engelman et al. 2022; Erevelles and Minear 2010; Priestley and Hemingway 2006). It responds to calls for ‘much

more diverse set of knowledges, values, skills, and experiences that would allow humanity to overcome what are quintessentially Western understandings of climate change' (Michael et al. 2023: 4), which is necessary if we are serious about finding solutions to the climate crisis.

Decentring climate justice through amplifying embodied and diverse Indigenous frameworks means taking 'into account local contexts, cultures, and economic and political factors' and beginning the 'intellectual decolonisation of the discourse about disability' (Mbazzi et al. 2020: 404; see also Grech 2011; Phasha 2017). For example, the African notion of ubuntu ('I am because we are') can provide an alternative approach to diffability that compels us to 'ask why the social responsibilities of ethical actions are enabled or disabled individually, socially, by the state or structurally' (Berghs 2019: 6; cf. Bannink Mbazzi et al. 2020: 404). We can then act, as Berghs (2017: 6) suggests, according to how diffability 'needs to be about ensuring greater ubuntu in society in a wider sense of diversity than impairment'. Feminist diffability studies encourage us to approach diffability through 'complex analyses of embodiment, representation, identity and activism' (Mohamed and Shefer 2015:6) and ask questions such as 'Whole role does gender play in the experience of disability? ... How do institutions, global economic inequalities, and ideas of citizenship and the nation produce gendered, raced and classed disability?' (Hall 2011:8).

Efforts towards queering climate change are small but growing. Queer ecology, as Mortimer-Sandilands (2010) notes, understands sexuality as a matter of environmental justice, calling on us to challenge the existence of homophobia and heterosexism in prevailing environmental discourse and queering heteromasculinist understandings of nature. Queer ecofeminism (Gaard 2015) emphasizes how all our climates are both gendered and sexualized, and simultaneously material, cultural and ecological. It highlights the importance of including sexuality as part of a broader intersection of oppressions such as class, gender, race and speciesism, highlighting climate change as a 'white industrial-capitalist heteromale supremacy on steroids ... boosted by widespread injustices of gender and race, sexuality and species' (Gaard 2015: 27). An emerging body of work draws our attention to the heightened environmental vulnerabilities of LGBTQI+ people (Dwyer and Woolf 2018; Balgos, Gaillard, and Sanz 2012; Gaillard et al. 2017; Rumbach and Knight 2014), including specific environmental injustices such as disproportionate exposure to air pollution and other hazards (Collins et al. 2017). The primary focus of this work so far is on (post-)disaster and humanitarian settings and demonstrates the shortcomings of humanitarian systems that are often ill prepared to address, or

actively ignore, LGBTQI+ issues at multiple scales (Dominey-Howes et al. 2014; IGLHRC and SEROVie 2011). Gaillard et al. (2017) highlight, for example, how LGBTQI+ people are regularly excluded across response, relief and recovery stages following disasters.

An approach to climate justice that explicitly investigates multiple marginalization sets our focus on material, political and sociocultural workings of power and the complex everyday ways in which intersecting axes of systemic inequality – derived from being queer, living with diffabilities and generally as part of the urban poor – result in unique layered precarities. As Green et al. (2018) argue regarding the lived experience of First Nations diffabled people in Australia, an intersectional approach is critical if we are to address cumulative systems of social inequalities perpetuating the experience of multiple and intersecting barriers and discriminations, each of which works to amplify and compound the impact of each other (Cooms et al., 2022).

As Judith Butler (2009) poses the question ‘whose lives are grievable?’, Sandberg and Marshall (2017) compel us to ask ‘whose lives matter?’. Climate justice must consider and question the drivers of inequality, unmasking the unequal impacts of urbanism, environmental harms, post/colonial histories, global capital, heteronormativity, ableism and social factors, including gender, sexuality, race, diffability, class and age, and the social norms and practices that govern whose bodies matter in responses to the climate crisis. To begin this work, the next section introduces Kay’s story. Here, in the depth that the space here allows, we can begin to glimpse the myriad forces at work in shaping climate precarity and consider how queer and diffabled people are forced into the margins of society and are denied basic human rights and dignity, healthcare, shelter and employment, and justice.

## Decolonizing diffability and gender beyond the binary: Our applied arts-led research

Kay’s stories emerged as part of our larger GENERATE project,<sup>2</sup> which explores the gender-age-urban interface of climate change in Uganda and Indonesia. Our applied creative methodologies explore new feminist, intersectional and decolonial routes to laying bare the messy and complex politics of everyday urban lives in the face of the climate crisis. We collaborate with local civil society and

<sup>2</sup> This work was supported by the UK Research on Innovation [MR/S015299/1].

artists to open up safe creative spaces for exploring, imagining and articulating future climates and environments that can name and transcend the inequalities and oppressions plaguing the present (see McQuaid and Pirmasari 2023).

Over sixteen months, between 2021 and 2023, we collaborated with LGBTQ+ communities across Uganda to better understand their lived experiences (and responses) to climate, environmental and social challenges. Our methods included extensive participant observation, thirty in-depth life-story interviews, two multi-day applied-arts workshops, three focus group discussions with residents of LGBTQ+ shelters and a series of fifteen creative workshops with over 200 participants, co-facilitated with a total of fifteen local civil society organizations.<sup>3</sup> Our workshops combined drawing and reflective discussions to better understand how systemic oppressions and environmental challenges affect different LGBTQ+ people, while also cultivating a safe space for reflection and solidarity. Separate workshops were held for lesbian, bisexual and queer women; gay, bisexual and queer men; transgender women; transgender men; older LGBTQ+ people; sex workers; refugees and asylum-seekers; LGBTQ+ people living with disability; and LGBTQ+ people with experiences of incarceration. These categories reflect the LGBTQ+ activist landscape in greater Kampala, where organizations are geared towards specific segments of the community. To better situate this landscape amidst a broader context, we now turn to explore three key threats to queer and disabled Ugandans living in Kampala: queerphobia, ableism and the (slow) onset of the climate crisis.

## Queerphobia, ableism and climate change in Uganda: The importance of context

In this section we begin with queerphobia and ableism, as these presented the clearest dangers and threats to the everyday lives, health, well-being and rights of our research collaborators, before turning to the broader climate crisis. While the vast majority of our research collaborators could be categorized as being part of the ‘urban poor’ and thus facing disproportionate climate impacts (Douglas et al. 2008; Twinomuhangi et al. 2021), here we are interested in how the impacts of stigma, marginalization and persecution further exacerbate and compound precarities.

<sup>3</sup> To protect the anonymity and safety of our collaborators we do not name any organization and all names here are pseudonyms.

To advance our understanding of how this works, we must situate everyday lived experiences among broader sociopolitical and environmental contexts and contend with complex and situated colonial histories. Colonization brought 'crisis to the social orders in which embodiment had been organised ... creating new hierarchies of bodies' (Connell 2011: 1374). Many traditional caring practices for people with diffabilities were destroyed by the introduction of colonial humanitarian models (Ingstad 1999; cf. Bannink Mbazzi et al. 2020: 412). Colonial regimes disrupted sociocultural meanings of gender, sexuality and diffability through the imposition of new gendered and patriarchal social orders, legalized homophobia in the form of the colonialists' codified and religious laws (Achmat 1993) and created the elaborate 'othering' of African sexualities (Tamale 2013:36). Colonization produced both a racialized subaltern and a diffabled subaltern, as Meekosha (2011:673) argues: 'The idea of racial and gender supremacy of the Northern Hemisphere is very much tied to the production of disability in the global South.' As local gender orders became 'subsumed in a global economy, a modernised patriarchy has become internationally hegemonic' (Connell 2011: 1376). Today, enduring links between gender, sexuality and regimes of power continue to marginalize amidst the disenfranchising effects of neoliberal global capital. For example, Meekosha (2011: 668) highlights the link between 'the struggle over the control of minerals, oil and other economic resources' and the ongoing production of diffability. Certain bodies were, and continue to be, contained and maintained in precarious conditions (Puar 2017). It is imperative, therefore, that we centre and amplify diverse communities from the Majority World (Crawford, Michael et al. 2023) to highlight environmental and infrastructural challenges in the context of colonial legacies (Meekosha 2011).

(Homo)sexuality and more explicitly staunch heteronormativity, homophobia and transphobia have emerged as political tools to entrench dictatorships across the globe. In Uganda, anxieties surrounding queer existence have spurred efforts to restrict organizations 'promoting LGBTIQ activity' (Ministry of Internal Affairs 2023) and prompted calls for tougher criminal sanctions (Owiny 2023). On 26 May 2023, a new Anti-Homosexuality Bill was signed into law by President Yoweri Museveni after being passed by parliament with only one opposing vote. As recently as August 2024, government figures in Uganda linked LGBTQ+ communities to what it called 'Coordinated Efforts to Overthrow the Government of Uganda' (Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs 2024). It comes as little surprise, then, that LGBTQ+ people in Uganda face high levels of stigma, persecution and widespread political, legal and social attacks. At the time

of writing, legal challenges to the Act are ongoing. Regardless of the outcome, the consequences are wide ranging. One report argues that there is a 'clear connection between the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act and the cases involving violence and violations against human rights of persons on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity' (HRAPF 2023: 21). These challenges are heightened given that the Act actively targets not only LGBTQ+ people and those perceived to be but also those who 'aid and abet homosexuality', carrying serious implications for service providers, aid organizations, media outlets, landlords and other institutions.

In contrast to such hostile legal persecution, Uganda boasts very progressive policies on diffability, even if these are dominated by imported understandings of diffability and subject to donor whims and cycles (see Whyte 2020). However, the Baganda saying *omulema y'amanya bw/afuna ekkubo lye* (the disabled person will have to figure out their path), highlights enduring challenges with implementation. For many, there is an ongoing absence of government support and experiences of social exclusion in schools, workplaces, healthcare and public spaces across Uganda, despite the implementation of many inclusion programmes and policies (Bannink Mbazzi et al. 2020: 404). Reported by long-time diffability activist Lukabwe Fred Kisirikko in our *See Change* book (Crawford, Kućma et al. 2023), people with diffabilities in Uganda must contend with discrimination from employers, informal and poor urban planning, inaccessible walkways, poor sanitation, environmental vulnerabilities and donor fatigue. As highlighted by postcolonial diffability studies (e.g. Meekosha 2011), diffability and poverty go hand in hand. The Ugandan government reported in 2020 that 'around half of Ugandans in households with persons with disabilities are living in extreme poverty (less than \$1.9 PPP or UGX 2,400 per person per day), and over three-quarters are living in poverty'. Ableism, here and elsewhere, operates as a sociopolitical mechanism of marginalization, systematically reinforcing the social differentiation of diffability and vulnerability (Bell 2019). We must better understand the historical, structural and systemic manufacturing of gender, sexualities and diffabilities amidst an unfolding urban climate crisis.

Looking at the climate, in its latest Nationally Determined Contribution, Uganda reported a high vulnerability, sensitivity and exposure to climate change, accompanied by low adaptive capacity (Republic of Uganda 2022). Uganda's tropical climate, which traditionally observed stable rainfall patterns, is increasingly facing extended droughts, longer rains and extreme weather conditions, all of which disrupt livelihood practices (Nuwagira and Yasin

2022). Projected temperature rises of between 2 and 5°C over the twenty-first century could lead to decreases in rainfall, triggering more frequent droughts, extreme heat and erratic rainfall (Twinomuhangi et al. 2021). Kampala is already impacted by shifting water levels and waterborne diseases from nearby Lake Victoria (Twinomuhangi et al. 2023), and flooding is ‘by far the most significant impact of climate change for the city’ (Twinomuhangi et al. 2021: 39).

Climate changes are projected to be felt acutely by people often characterized as the ‘urban poor’, who lack access to services (Lwasa 2010). Kampala’s geography tends to exacerbate these risks. The city is spread across seven large leafy hills with dusty congested valleys in between, crowding poorer residents into informal neighbourhoods comprising densely occupied substandard dwellings with little drainage, infrastructure, nor green space. Many of these neighbourhoods, which are often the only ones accessible (and affordable) to diffabled and LGBTQ+ households, often run counter to official urban and environmental planning with inadequate roads, access, transport options and street lighting undermining residents’ dignity and safety (Vermeiren et al. 2012). These informal settlements increasingly encroach on wetlands and have poor drainage and waste disposal (Semiyaga et al. 2022), and are the areas most impacted by climate change (Arinabo 2022). It is within one of these settlements that our research collaborator Kay lives, as we shall turn to next.

### ‘There are those I have met who cannot speak or even say anything because the world has made them silent’: Lived experiences of intersectional complexity

Kay is a middle-aged queer person with diffabilities. They live in Katwe, a densely populated neighbourhood where one- and two-room dwellings crowd together between unpaved roads and open sewage and drainage channels. As they get older the physical demands of navigating this dense and informal neighbourhood become more acute:

what’s most challenging is jumping omwaala [trenches]. Even the toilets are built so high with steps whereby we cannot access them. Right now I cannot jump omwaala. When I was younger, I could get off my wheelchair, put the wheelchair over the trench and then get over the trench, but now I can’t. If we go for trainings and there is a trench I just stay on the other side, because my body cannot let me do that anymore ... When I was young there are some ways I could handle things ... because I was energetic by then.

Open drainage trenches, unpaved roads, unmanaged waste and informally constructed toilets restrict movement around the neighbourhood as well as access to water, markets, healthcare and safe spaces. This is, as we see below, exacerbated during the rains. The trainings which Kay mentions are generally organized by non-governmental organizations and not only provide training on a given subject or issue but also allow for social interaction with others as well as financial assistance since some trainings offer a per diem, transport refund and/or free meal. All of this means there is a lot to be lost when Kay cannot access the training.

The physical landscape of the city increasingly restricts Kay's mobilities, dignity and opportunities, while sociopolitical stigma and marginalization further curtail their livelihood options. As they explain: 'It doesn't matter whether you're capable or you're educated, once they find out you have a disability then nobody wants to hire you ... every time you ask for a job, they can never give it to you.' Even in the case of being offered a job, 'previously people used to take us for granted because they thought we didn't have value.' The situation is exacerbated for LGBTQ+ people: 'sexual orientation? This one cuts across. If you come out and say maybe "I'm a queer person" or "I'm a lesbian", automatically you will lose your job.'

For many of the LGBTQ+ people we spoke to, civil society organizations offer not only a safe space to seek community, advice and services but also livelihoods as project staff and officers. However, stigma against disabilities cuts across. Kira, who leads a civil society organization, reflects:

I know very many persons with disabilities who are queer but they will not come out. They would rather talk to me on the phone than even come into a setting like this [the organization's office]. However much I tell them it's a safe space, they'll tell me, 'We're not coming to your office. Meet me at this restaurant or here or here.' They will not come because already they have stigma and now they are like, 'Now kati bagambe ate kati ndi mulema. Actually, abamu babayita nabassiru' ['Now they will say that I am disabled'. Actually, some are called stupid'.]

Stigma against disability is deeply entrenched in Uganda. As Kay tells us: 'For us, all of us who are here, we are minorities in our communities we come from, and it hurts if I have a disability and I come. I come out and you victimized me again. Because for you, you don't have disability, but you are in this community.' Such experiences highlight the complexities of intersectional identities. Any fleeting privileges of being positioned as part of one marginalized community are refracted through the lens of mis/understanding another, serving to demonstrate

the situated and unequal positionings of people as well as the fluctuating positions of privilege and exclusion as people move through different spaces.

The economic injustices facing both diffabled and queer communities have ramifications that cut across all aspects of life, from where you can afford to rent a house, if a landlord will rent to you, the assistive devices you can purchase, your healthcare, food security, transport options and so on. 'That's why persons with disabilities are poor, because whatever you buy, the climate affects it,' Kay explains: 'Living with disability, it's kind of expensive, most especially when it's like rainy season ... like when we are transporting ourselves. So, at times, we feel like it's better staying at home than moving.' Transport options rapidly reduce when it rains, especially with regard to 'taxis', which are an informal system of small minibuses that operate daily routes across the city and offer the most affordable means of public transport: 'with just ordinary climate it's hard for a taxi person to let you board the taxi. Now imagine when it has rained or it starts raining. That means nobody is going to take you and then I will have to push my wheelchair back again 200 metres to my house under the rain.' Restricted mobility options 'means I won't do my activities. Any programme I have on that day, I won't do it. And this is because my age, the strength of my muscles have reduced ... When it rains, I use a lot of energy because I need to put a lot of effort on the ground ... This whole situation breaks my heart.' 'Programme', like trainings, can be inclusive of many things and come with different benefits, which are lost on days when inclement weather impacts Kay's mobility.

Kay's house, however, offers inadequate protection from the increasingly hostile weather:

The housing we are staying in? Some of us are in slums. Whereby these slums that we are living in, when it rains it's horrible for us. When it rains you need to wake up. For example, when it rains at night, just know it's horrible, because other people without disability, they have to climb up, put their things up, because they don't want them to [get damaged]. When I am asleep, I have to move, go to the wheelchair, pick up all my cups, my bedsheet and everything, the TV, and put them up. By the time I can do so, I have lost everything.

Such environmental burdens are exacerbated by social exclusion and stigma. As Kay reflects: 'You live in an environment which is not favourable to you. And which is making you feel like you are less valued. By the time you come out to the public, you know, you even feel shy to talk ... They despise us so much. You hear them and you keep quiet, but in your heart, you are hurt.' Another participant in the creative workshop interjects to describe the situation as 'noise

pollution'. Kay agrees: 'Someone will be like, "you're a curse to our society". Then another will be like, "are you a male or are you female?" Then another will say, "You should be stoned or burned to death".'

Looking to the future, Kay calls for diversity and acceptance. In our creative workshop, Kay's small group of queer and diffabled participants held up their collective drawing of a house. They used it to describe their vision of what a just future might look like. Among other factors, they pointed out accessibility, covered drainage channels, a crossing point on the road, before turning to describe a world of social acceptance of diversity amongst neighbours, employers and health workers:

We want unity because we feel like if we come together and be one family everyone could understand one another ... And the cooperating ... Loving each other, caring and then acceptance. We talked about awareness. But in awareness, we talked about like first accepting yourself before you can create it to others. First, understand yourself before you let others to understand you too ... And then we talked about inclusion, like including ourselves in places ... And then we talked about self-love, like I said: acceptance. Accepting yourself first before you can let others accept you. And then humanity. You can't love yourself if you're not having that. And then consideration. We made this in bold letters. Like: don't judge a book by its cover, like don't think for another person until you have interacted with them and everything ... That's why we created the house: like if we come together, I think our tomorrow will be better, because this is the shade that we need, but our voices are hidden very far, the security is not yet enough, and yet we need all of this. That's why we drew the house.

## Conclusion

A focus on the lived experiences of queer and diffabled people in Uganda forces us not just to consider the vulnerabilities of all bodies to climate change but to highlight how complex intersectional identities increase the precarities faced by particular bodies (and minds), and how social and political forces and material circumstances continue to maintain them in situations of precarity. A focus on both queerness and diffability here thus compels us to better understand how multiple and reinforcing systemic sociocultural, economic and political factors create lived experiences of precarities and barriers in daily life, which, while becoming normalized, are exacerbating the impacts and limiting responses to climate change. Without rendering these precarities and barriers visible we cannot strive for the multifaceted justice required for more inclusive and equitable

climate futures. As we have argued here, it is critical that we understand the ways in which some bodies are maintained in positions more vulnerable to climate change than others, and our calls for climate justice tackle these oppressions head on. Here, in amplifying Kay's story, we seek to recognize gender, sexuality and diffability as socially contingent and relative (Eriksen et al. 2021) and as sites of structural, political, sociocultural and environmental injustices and violence (Belser 2020; Lawson and Beckett 2021; Oliver 1996).

Our chapter thus addresses broader concerns that climate justice has overlooked the experiences, vulnerabilities and capacities of both queer people, and people with diffabilities, generally, but especially in Majority World contexts, where they are subjected to intense socio-legal persecution. Our work thus aims to decentre, contextualize and deepen the ways in which we understand how diffability, gender and sexuality intersect with other forces in shaping the impacts of, and vulnerabilities to, climate change. By centring Majority World lived experiences of diffability and queerness, we aim to enrich – from the ground up – conceptual understandings of how marginalization works in practice, the necessity for an intersectional lens in climate knowledge, and place the need for explicit action to address social inequalities and exclusion at the heart of climate justice.

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