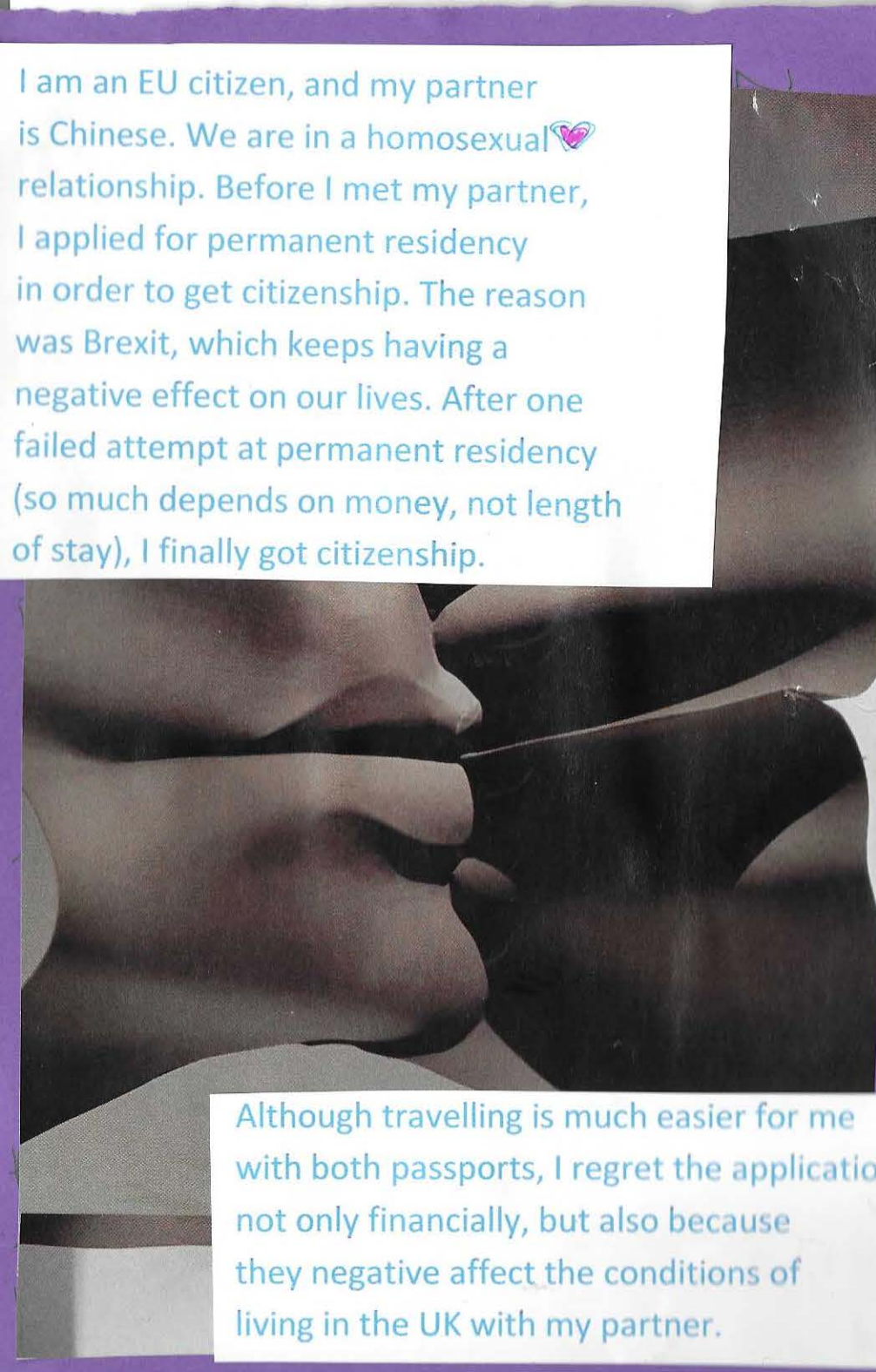


CONTROL

Keep thinking, sharing and resisting.



I am an EU citizen, and my partner is Chinese. We are in a homosexual💖 relationship. Before I met my partner, I applied for permanent residency in order to get citizenship. The reason was Brexit, which keeps having a negative effect on our lives. After one failed attempt at permanent residency (so much depends on money, not length of stay), I finally got citizenship.

Although travelling is much easier for me with both passports, I regret the applications, not only financially, but also because they negative affect the conditions of living in the UK with my partner.

NICE
TO

The hostile environment affects us all the time, not just the UK one, but that of the EU as well. Because the UK is not part of the Schengen agreement, my partner constantly has to apply for visas which are not always granted.

- If we got married, we would have to pay five figure sums of money just for the spousal visas. Things are not looking good. I have made this zine to explain a bit more about the hostile environment from an LGBTIQ+ perspective.

MEET
YOU

LOVING

=

A never-ending journey

The immigration system is very heteronormative and makes problematic connections between love and marriage. Technically, marriage has never been about love, but about the transfer property and rights.

It is a legal contract that has only recently become associated with romance. For some reason, 'love' has been added as a legal obstacle in relationships that involve an 'international' partner.

Although it should be possible to marry a friend or someone who needs a safe space, as long as you have a contract, it is not. You have to perform a particular expression of 'love'.

If you do not have an "adequate" romantic partner, you have to leave the country.

This not only goes against what marriage means legally in most countries in the world, but also against many queer relationships which may not involve romance, sex, or heteronormative displays of affection. They may also involve more than one partner. What happens to other partners if you can only choose one?



Rigged system

A moral economy of suspicion: Love and marriage migration management practices in the United Kingdom

Anne-Marie D'Aoust

Department of Political Science, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

Indeed, in the UK, a 'sham marriage' does not implicate *any* body coming from *any* territory. It entails

a marriage (whether or not void): (a) entered into between a person ("A") who is neither a British citizen nor a national of an EEA State other than the United Kingdom and another person (whether or not such a citizen or such a national); and (b) entered into by A for the purpose of avoiding the effect of one or more provisions of United Kingdom immigration law or the immigration rules. (Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, 1999, section 24)

The call for contributions to the *Love Letters to the Home Office* project asked potential writers not to focus on the unfairness of the law or on experiences of lack of integrity during their application's evaluation process – in other words, on the legal and technical aspects that might highlight their differential of rights. Rather, prospective writers were prompted to focus on their love story, and express how it was experienced *despite* current challenges, thus reinforcing the romantic idea that 'true love conquers all'. 'These prompts,' the website suggests, 'might help you: how does it feel when you see them at the airport? ... how their face lights up when they see you on Skype ...; how it feels to simply drink a coffee together or cook together, at last!' (Love Letters to the Home Office, 2013).

But appealing to love as the basic right that characterizes our very humanity reinstates technologies of love rather than challenge their role in a moral economy of suspicion. In other words, ...

Table 3. Total reports of suspicious cases by Registrars to the UKBA (Section 24-24a Reports).

2007	384
2008	344
2009	561
2010	934
2011	1,741
2012	1,891
2013	2,135

UKBA: UK Border Agency.

Source: House of Commons Debates (2014) and House of Commons – Home Affairs Committee (2014) (p. 9).

Table 1. Number of marriage abuse enforcement visits.

2008	30
2009	40
2010	240
2011	685
2012	735

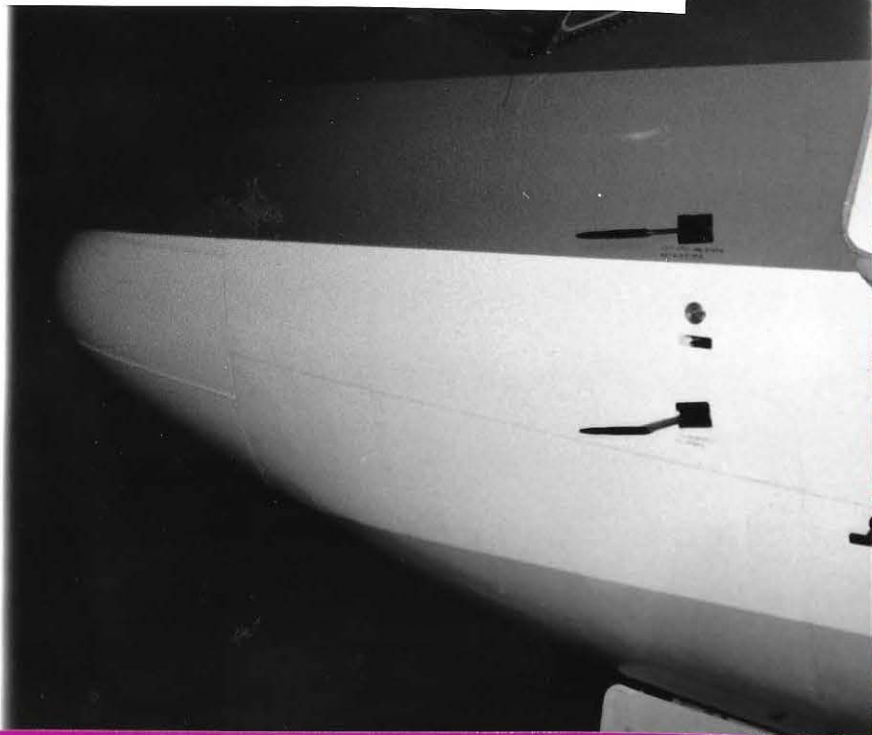
Source: House of Commons Debates (2014).

Table 2. Number of arrests done as a result of a marriage abuse enforcement visit.

2007–2008	7
2008–2009	11
2009–2010	24
2010–2011	178
2011–2012	197
2013	664

Source: Chalabi (2013) and Elgot (2014).

The political scientist Anne-Marie D'Aoust has written an article on how abusive, invasive and ridiculous the current process is. This is just a small excerpt.



Because the UK is not part of the Schengen area, my partner is basically trapped on this island with her UK-only work visa. We cannot easily visit family or friends abroad, or just go on holiday. My partner also works in the EU on occasion and misses out on work and networking when a visa is refused, which happens on occasion. I stay with her out of solidarity and also miss out on things, but it is by choice rather than enforcement. I know the feeling only a little bit from when my permanent residency was refused, but I didn't have to leave the country. I missed out on only one conference because the UK had kept my passport for 6 months longer than promised.



REFUSAL / ANNULMENT / REVOCATION OF VISA

REFUSAL TO ISSUE A PERMANENT RESIDENCE CARD

On 10 June 2016 you applied for a Document Certifying Permanent Residence.

Your application has been refused for the reasons set out in the enclosed notices.

The notices inform you of whether there is a right of appeal and, if so, how this may be exercised, and sets out any time limit for an appeal to be made. The notices also explain whether and when you are required to leave the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely,



Elizabeth Knowles
NWEURO8



Since my partner gets a lot of shi*t from both UK and EU immigration authorities, marriage would seem like a good way out of this misery, given the amount of time spent on paperwork and the amount of money sunk into the system. But getting married is expensive, and you have to re-apply after a couple of years.

We calculated that the total would be around £10,000 just for visa stuff. In China, gay marriage is not legal, so we cannot marry there.

So what about Germany where I am from? I asked at my local rural German registry office. To my surprise, I received a very friendly sounding email.

The below table summarises some of these costs.

	Out-of-country application	In-country application
Spouse visa UK fee (cost) in 2023	£1,538	£1,048
Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)	£1,872	£1,560
Housing Report	£80-120	£80-120
Copy of the title deeds	£3	£3
Priority (premium) visa services	£573	£500-800
Lawyer fees	£385-£3,000+	£385-£3,000+
English language test	£150	£150
Tuberculosis test	£65-110	Not applicable
Translations	£0-300+	£0-300+

WHAT WE NEED IS SYSTEMIC CHANGE

£1,048

£1,048

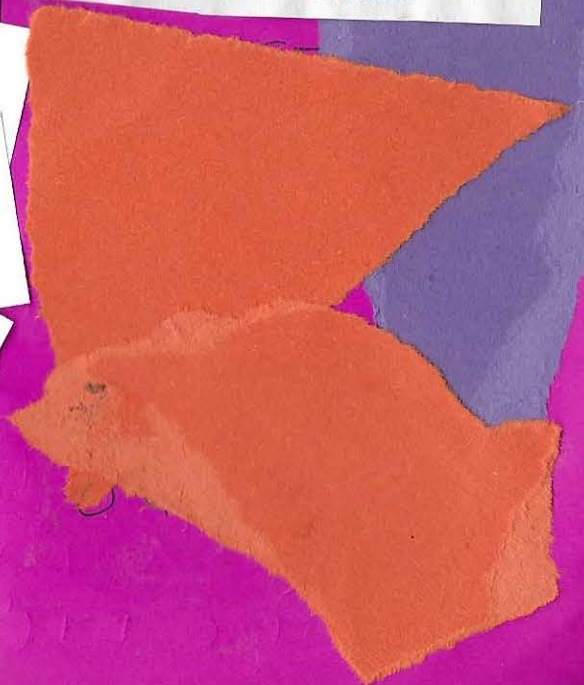
£1,538 each person

£3,250

£1,048 each person

anxiety

anger



Gerne berate ich Sie über die erforderlichen Dokumente für eine Eheschließung in Deutschland. Hierfür benötige ich von Ihnen beiden die Lichtbildseiten Ihrer Reisepässe, gerne scannen Sie mir diese ein. Teilen Sie mir bitte auch mit, ob Sie beide das erste Mal eine Ehe eingehen, also beide ledig sind. Hatte einer von Ihnen mal einen Wohnsitz in Deutschland? Wenn ja, wo war der letzte aktive Wohnsitz? Zu der ungefähren Dauer kann ich Ihnen keine Auskunft geben. Es werden definitiv u.a. Urkunden aus China benötigt. Schon rein alleine deswegen kann ich Ihnen als deutscher Standesbeamter nicht sagen, wie lange das Verfahren in China, aber auch insgesamt, dauern wird.

"I'd be happy to advise you on getting married in Germany. For this, I need your passports (scan of main page with passport photo). Please also let me know whether this is the first time that you are getting married. Has one of you been a resident of Germany? If so, where? I cannot give you an indication when it comes to timings. We need, amongst other things, documents from China. Because of this reason alone, as a German registry office worker, I cannot tell you how long such a process takes in China, or overall."

There was more information in this email, including about costs from their side: 40-100 Euros approximately. What a difference! At least compared with £10,000! Okay, there are also hidden costs such as translations and a spousal visa, but this is nothing like the crazy UK fees.

LIMPING

A LIMPING RELATIONSHIP

“WHEN A PERSON IS REGARDED AS MARRIED BY ONE COUNTRY AND AS SINGLE BY ANOTHER, OR WHEN A CHILD IS REGARDED AS LEGITIMATE BY ONE COUNTRY AND AS ILLEGITIMATE BY ANOTHER.”

-ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

FIGHT BACK.

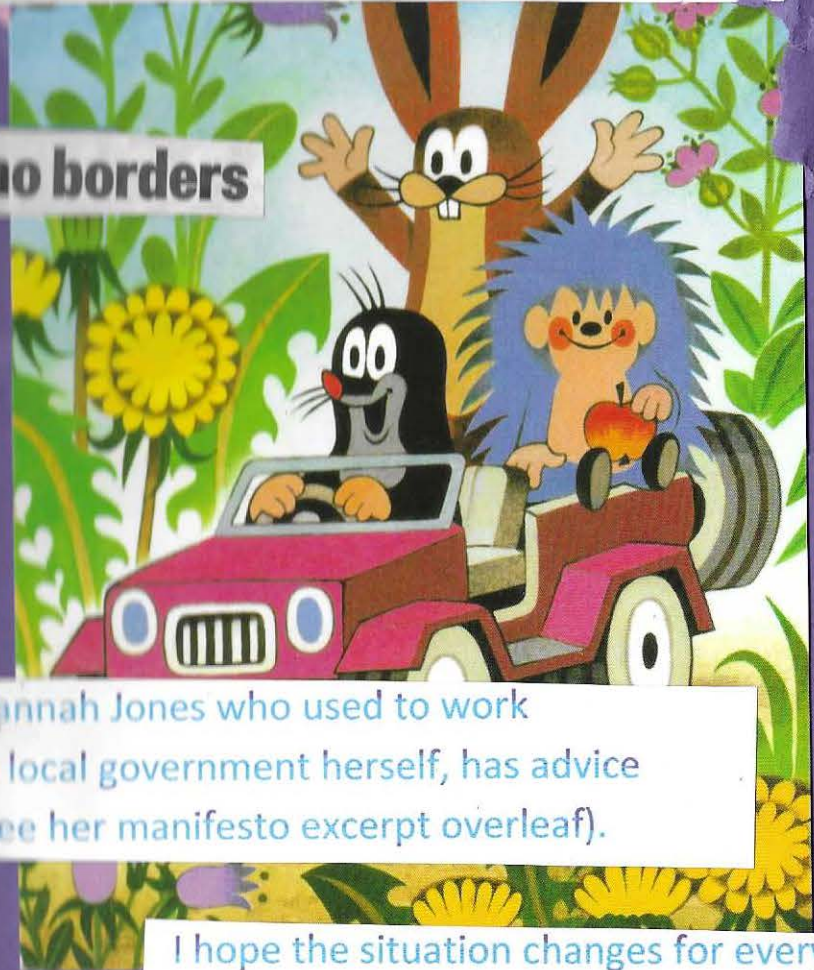
According to an older Moroccan friend, the UK visa costs are actually quite new. My friend did not have to pay a ton of money for his citizenship application twenty or thirty years ago. Neither did a Canadian friend. She said it was mainly a matter of getting in a queue and having the patience to stay in it.

It is only today that we have this money racket.

I know that the pain, stress and financial ruin that this visa regime causes is intentionally inflicted. It is supposed to be a deterrent. And it stays in place, because most people feel like it's a good thing and doesn't affect them. The sociologist Hannah Jones calls this attitude 'violent ignorance'.

We probably have to leave the UK in order to stay together and not feed this violent system with thousands of pounds, but it would be great if there was more support.

no borders



Hannah Jones who used to work in local government herself, has advice (see her manifesto excerpt overleaf).

I hope the situation changes for everyone. Abolish borders, global inequality and twisted enforcements of heteronormativity!

Manifesto

1. Information

i. Get information (in all forms)

If violent ignorance is about ignoring what is discomfiting or upsetting, and removing its evidence and evidence of its causes from view, maybe it can be challenged by gathering more and better information. Being hungry for information might mean being

imaginative about what counts – facts and figures, fairy stories, life histories, soap operas, political speeches, business accounts, children's games, legal judgements, personal letters, dance, music, art and so on, all of this expands understanding, and consuming, experiencing and questioning all forms of information makes it harder to cut off meaning or make parts of the world invisible.

ii. Question information

Simply accepting what we are told risks ignorance; who knows if the person sharing information is right, or how they made their judgements or came by that information? Questioning doesn't mean disbelieving everything, but having reasons for believing something. Being able to change one's mind when new information or ideas emerge is another defence against ignorance; settled patterns of thinking can prevent seeing things we would prefer stayed hidden.

iii. Save information

Value, protect, create, share libraries and archives. Ideas and information come in many forms and can be easily lost, as the examples of the British colonial records in Kenya and the Windrush landing cards, discussed in Chapter 4, demonstrated. The fact that paper records were destroyed did not mean that all knowledge was lost; those who had lived through events knew what had happened, and other forms of record could be reconstructed. But this goes to show how important oral histories and folk archives are, alongside the more official or state-level archives, libraries and museums.



iv. Make information

Produce records of struggles, injustice, strategies, success. If history is a process of both remembering and forgetting, there is power in deciding what is remembered. Preserving records that might

otherwise be lost can be done on personal, collective and institutional levels. Recording the lives of those lost to the violence of borders, or to the institutional indifference of the Grenfell disaster, is an important part of keeping those violent events from being lost in ignorance. Preserving the knowledge of how they came to lose their lives matters. It is important too to record that struggles against violence, and against ignorance, are what have challenged injustice in the past.

2. Imagination

i. Allow yourself to be surprised

The best way to see what is usually ignored is to be open to seeing new things and to allow ourselves to be surprised by what we see. Look at everything, wonder at it, explore meanings. Get beyond the obvious, even if that seems initially more satisfying. If someone is to blame for violence, is that the whole story? What else might matter?

ii. Connect meanings, feelings, ideas

Take that information you have collected, made, gathered and saved and work out what it means in new formations. Play with connections; think about why some things matter and some things don't seem to matter. What was it that made the image of Alan Kurdi make so many more people face up to the violence of borders and try to act? What other ways of connecting people to the meaning of distressing information that is around might help to harness anger into action? Stories, images and interactions can change the boundaries in which people usually think and make it possible to see ways out of a situation which violent ignorance obscures. They might even help us to imagine new ways in which the world could be organized, to help us escape the confines of what violent ignorance convinces us is inevitable.

iii. Find ways to communicate

Violent ignorance can be about oppressive silence, looking away, not talking about certain things and not thinking. Keeping questions, information, ideas and meanings live is a way of stopping ignorance from shutting down new connections. Communication doesn't have to be with words; it can be with images, art, actions. It can be loud or quiet. It is about listening – or looking – as well as telling and making

(they are part of the same thing). It can be face to face and intimate, or public and anonymous. Interaction will keep changing information, ideas and meanings, raising questions, and new possibilities for a better way of connecting.

3. Risk

i. Understand, then bend, rules

The trick of violent ignorance is that it makes people feel safe, because it feels easier to ignore what is happening than to take action. But when injustice continues, no one is really safe; even those with the most power have to put their resources into protecting themselves and their position. Understanding that it is not safe to stay mired in ignorance may be the first step to being brave enough to take a risk to counter it.

ii. Find others, speak out

Use whatever privilege and resources you have. If you are not at the sharp end of the violent border regime, or have the resources to use the legal system to your advantage, maybe you can afford to take more risks than others. Maybe the resources you have are your ideas, your skills, or maybe they are the connections you have with other people. Taking risks together can make a movement more powerful. Learning

about violence and injustice and its workings together is one thing. Recognizing one's own role in injustice is riskier – especially because it makes people feel unsafe and uncomfortable. Use that discomfort, and use your anger, to work together to find ways to keep trying to tackle unfairness and expose injustice, without needing to claim that you know all the answers or are infallible.

iii. Keep trying (fail again, fail better)