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This paper was originally submitted as a dissertation in completion of the requirements for the degree Masters in Global Migration. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of UCL's Migration Research Unit.

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UCL Migration Research Unit Working Papers

No. 2018/10

'Berlin'deyim Aşkım!' On Performativity, Advocacy and Transnational Solidarity amongst Queer, Turkish- Speaking Migrants in Berlin

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‘Berlin’deyim Aşkim!’ On Performativity, Advocacy and Transnational Solidarity amongst Queer, Turkish-Speaking Migrants in Berlin

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*This research dissertation is submitted for the MSc in Global Migration at
University College London*

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Word count: 11,745

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‘Berlin’deyim Aşkım!’ translates to ‘I am in Berlin, my love!’ in English. It originates from the slogan ‘Nerdesin Aşkım, Burdayım Aşkım!’ – meaning ‘Where are you my love? I am here my love!’ – used by queer activists during the now-banned Istanbul Pride March since 2013.

Abstract

As the largest migrant community in Germany, there have been a number of academic literatures that have focused on the intricacies of marginalisation experienced by the Turkish-speaking diaspora in the capital city Berlin. Nonetheless the foci of these analyses have engaged principally in the intellectual practice of maintaining hetero-patriarchal identity as the existential point of focus. Recognising the need to subvert this discursive sexual-gendered hierarchy, this paper engages in an ethnographic research of the queer, Turkish-speaking first and second-generational community in Berlin. It begins with a consideration of performative spaces in maintaining queer, Turkish-speaking migrant (QTSM) identity in Berlin, before endeavouring to assess the role of extant advocacy organisations in the city in politically representing the queer, Turkish-speaking generational community. Finally, it examines the role of the QTSM community in establishing transnational networks of solidarity pertaining to queer modalities of existence between Berlin and the domestic community in the Turkish Republic. As the empirical findings in its subsequent analysis present, the existence of this community has been one that has encouraged the establishment of a number of physical spaces, political rhetoric and transnational networks of identification that have ultimately combined to demonstrate the community’s relevance as a counter-normative and extra-national diasporic modality of existence in Berlin; one that simultaneously maintains a salient connection to the cultural-linguistic mechanisms of Turkish-speaking identity, whilst being of pertinent independence as a result of its distinctly unique and queer traits.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Richard Mole for his careful considerations regarding my topic, and his support throughout the writing of this paper in London and Berlin.

Furthermore, this paper would not have been possible without Muna, Michelle and Reena's genuine care and consideration at UCL's SENIT suite; providing me with an uninterrupted, personal and positive environment in which to write up my thesis. This is a vastly underfunded department at UCL, catering for a number of students with nuanced learning needs.

Of course, an enormous thank you to all the participants in my research in Berlin who met with me on several occasions and whom openly welcomed me into their communities as a guest.

To my mother, Soraya, whose late-night humour and homemade Kibbeh has kept me going into the early hours of the morning. Seni çok seviyorum. انا بحبك يا امي

Finally, the biggest thank you is to my personal tutor and friend, Dr Ben Page, for his relentless emotional and intellectual support from the start of the academic year up to the submission of this paper. The Geography department at UCL is privileged to have such a person on their team, and without his support throughout the year, I surely would have cracked under the pressure.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkish-speaking¹ migrant communities in Berlin – and more broadly in the Federal Republic of Germany – have been of particular demographic pertinence since the onset of the second half of the twentieth century. As a result of the miracle of the economic boom [*Wirtschaftswunder*] and the subsequent commencement of West Germany's labour crisis instigated by the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Turkish-speaking migrant communities of Germany have taken precedence as an indispensable faction of the nation's modern industrial labour population. This has been historically codified with the formalisation in 1961 of the bilateral labour agreement [*Anwerbeabkommen*]; reached between Turkey and West Germany with the aim of facilitating temporary labour migration from the former nation to the latter under the pretence of guest-worker [*Gastarbeiter*] status. Establishing what has been referred to as a 'corridor' between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Turkey, this labour recruitment agreement has initiated a multiplicity of waves of migration (Aydin 2016, p. 4-5) in the past half-century that have inflated the Turkish-speaking first, second and third-generational population to the status of largest ethnic minority in Germany (Benz 2012). According to the latest official German census conducted in 2011, there are approximately 2,714,240 members of the German population with a 'background in Turkish migration'² living in Germany (Zensus 2011). More recently, and specifically within the capital Berlin, the Turkish population has been recorded in a micro-census to be a total of 176,730 as of the 31st December 2016 (Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2016, p. 18); 4.8% of the total 3,670,662 registered as residents of the city in the same micro-census (Ibid, p. 6).

It would be naïve however for one to assume that such a statistical pertinence of Turkish-speaking identity indicates a salience of tolerance, acceptance and/or sociocultural harmony

¹ The research that will be conducted in this thesis endeavours to recognise the complicity of nation-states in erasing the heterogeneity of ethnicity, language and culture extant within their borders. The Turkish Republic is of no exception to this practice in the maintenance of its imagined community (see Anderson 1983). As a result, I utilise the term 'Turkish-speaking' in this paper in recognition of the minorities – such as Greek, Kurdish, Armenian and Arab, the latter to which I personally belong – that I have encountered in my fieldwork and whom are either Turkish citizens from birth or are born to parents who are Turkish citizens from birth; and who speak fluent Turkish or are from families who speak fluent Turkish.

² According to an official publication on their website in 2012, 'German with a background in migration' refers specifically to 'all persons who have immigrated into the territory of today's Federal Republic of Germany after 1949, and all persons born in Germany who have at least one parent who immigrated into the country or was born a foreigner in Germany ... This means that German nationals born in Germany may have a migration background too, be it as children of ethnic German repatriates, as children born to foreign parents (in accordance with the so-called *ius soli* principle) or as German nationals with one foreign parent' (DeStatis 2012).

within the inter-ethnic relations of the Turkish-speaking populous and their German counterparts. As is noticeable in previous literatures, there is substantial academic attentiveness to the complexities of marginalisation experienced by the Turkish-speaking demographic within both the German capital and the nation en-masse³. These literatures have also proved their contention however, as their principle academic focuses have solicited an analysis of the Turkish-speaking migrant communities through a normative lens of sexual and gendered homogeneity; in turn asserting a hierarchy of analytical significance in which the hetero-patriarchy takes a formative precedence at the top. As a result, the academic work of my predecessor Petzen (2004) on the queer, Turkish-speaking community in Berlin has enjoyed only marginal significance within the contextual studies of Turkish-speaking migration and diaspora in Germany, scarcely managing to penetrate the commonly acknowledged discourses of mobility and identity pertaining to the Turkish-speaking communities' experiences in the city. Consequently, this thesis responds directly to such a considerable gap in the literature. It utilises a mixed-method approach of participant observation and semi-structured interviews with the queer⁴ community, endeavouring to uncover and present a narrative on the experiences of a marginalised body of the Turkish-speaking diaspora in the city by:

- Examining the daily lives and intra-ethnic relations of first and second-generation⁵ queer, Turkish-speaking migrants⁶ in Berlin.
- Considering the significance of performative spaces in socio-culturally maintaining QTSM identity in Berlin.
- Considering the significance of advocacy in politically representing the QTSM community in Berlin.

³ See Mueller 2006, Baier and Pfeiffer 2008, Sezgin 2008, Sürig and Wilmes 2015 and Aydin 2016.

⁴ Queer is a term that respectfully takes its place both within the vastness of the LGBTQIA+ spectrum of self-identification, and more radically as a critical intersectional component of theory within academia; an ideological intention to “mark a certain critical distance from the ‘formulaic [and] convenient construction – lesbian and gay – and instead to construct another discursive horizon, another way of thinking the sexual” (Kopelson 2015, p. 145). Queerness is hence a political action; an intellectual notion and modality of being that removes sexuality from the organised binaries of being that have been established with the inception of the state-endorsed ‘LGBT’ identity. Similarly, it is an umbrella term for non-normative sexual and gendered modalities of existence. That withstanding, this paper does not engage in an explicitly gendered analysis; rather, gender is of implicit pertinence to this analysis.

⁵ In this paper, ‘first-generation’ refers to a foreign-born resident or citizen whom has a direct background in engaging in movement to relocate and settle in a new nation. On the other-hand, the ‘second-generation’ refers to the immediately precedent generation – such as the children of the first-generation – whom have been born in the country of their family’s relocation.

⁶ In order to avoid crowding sentences, I will shorten ‘queer, Turkish-speaking migrants’ hereafter in this paper to ‘QTSM(s)’ for the sake of intellectual clarity and fluidity.

- Finally, assessing the role of the QTSM diaspora in establishing transnational networks of solidarity pertaining to queer modalities of existence between Berlin and the domestic queer community in the Turkish Republic.

2. QUE-E-RYING THEORIES OF MIGRATION AND DIASPORA

Given the indicative focus of this paper on the migratory and diasporic notions of queer, Turkish-speaking identity in Berlin, I resolve to consider the extant literatures that are of analytical relevance to the topic of my study. As a result of the intellectual virtue of both mainstream migration and diaspora studies on the hetero-patriarchal notions of identity, I endeavour to emphasise on the theoretical insights of queer academia; an intention to subvert the continued perpetuation of queer marginality and ultimately position non-heteronormative intellectual discourses of transnational mobility and identity as the principle mechanistic considerations of the empirical research presented in this thesis. Furthermore, I examine the significance of Petzen's research as an intellectual precedence to this research; assessing its functionality as a foundation on which to construct a more contemporary and intersectional exploration of migratory and diasporic identity amongst the QTSM community in Berlin.

2.1 Migration Studies

Queer discourses of migration have rarely enjoyed the same precedential significance as their more normative, hetero-patriarchal counterparts. Commonly acknowledged debates emergent within the study of migration have tended to overlook the intricacies of queer theory that inherently challenge the salient binaries of gender and heteronormativity within human movement. Perhaps the most ubiquitous theoretical debates within understandings of migration are that of the neoclassical micro/macroeconomic approaches; regarded as the earliest frameworks developed to explain migration (Massey et al 1993) and considered by certain academics as the "standard workhorse specification to analyse internal and external migration rates at a regional, national and international level" (Mitz and Reinkowski 2010, p. 4). According to the microeconomic approach, people make individual rational decisions on whether to migrate that are dependent primarily on the estimated outcome of particular investments; including the material costs of travelling to another country, or the difficulty in adapting to a new labour market (Massey et al 1993, p. 434). As a result, microeconomists

use a theoretical equation to demonstrate how migrants engage in a decision-making process to determine whether they will move or remain:

$$ER(0) = \int_0^n [p_D(t)P_{ED}(t)Y_D(t)NR_D(t) - P_{EO}(t)Y_O(t)NR_O(t)]e^{-rt} dt - C(0)^7$$

(Zanker 2008, p. 10)

By doing so, microeconomists project the assumption that a “potential migrant goes to where the expected net returns on migration are greatest” (Massey et al 1993, p. 435). A contextually advantageous factor of this theory is its utility in analysing how earlier generations of Turkish-speaking migrants, particularly those arriving with the onset of the *Anwerbeabkommen* in the 1960s, may have engaged in an economically-orientated decision-making process to migrate to Germany. Nonetheless, the theory lacks the individual case histories necessary to test its propositions (Olligschlaeger 1984, p. 250); consequently functioning as an assumptive and overgeneralised hypothesis that “fails at the test of realism” (Marginson 2017, p. 1). Furthermore, it neglects to consider that contemporary flight could be a result of political and social investments (in addition to economic ones), opting instead to apply a rigid labour-flow model that subsequently implicates migration as a direct response to “spatial differences in the returns of labour supply” (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2013, p. 32).

It is however possible for a person to migrate on the basis of a number of intersecting non-economic factors, and queer theories of migration solicit their subsequent consideration. A definitive theoretical input is the emotional embodiment approach; a sexual-emotional turn in migration studies that challenges normative categorisations and attempts to understand sexuality as a polymorphic feature of “multiple, intersecting relations of power including race, ethnicity, gender, class, citizenship status, and geographical location” (Lubeid 2008, p. 170). For Gorman-Murray, this sexual-emotional turn is demonstrated through the argument that queer movement is predicated on the basis of bodily desires and emotions; including “yearnings to test new sexual identities, practices and ways of being; finding, consolidating or leaving intimate relationships; and seeking communities of belonging” (2009, p. 444). These bodily desires and emotions are said to create a ‘culture of migration’ in non-

⁷ The various symbols utilised in this equation function as mathematic representations of factors such as monetary travel costs’, ‘psychological costs’, ‘income at destination and origin’, and ‘non-monetary returns’ (Ibid, p. 10).

heteronormative communities that reinforces an aspiration to “actualise sexual identities, relationships and desires by engaging in movement” (Ibid, p. 443). Under this pretence, queer theory visibly subverts the economic-centric narrative that one’s decision-making process of migration is warranted totally on the basis of fiscal aspects. It provides a multifaceted intellectual discourse to understanding the key implications of intersecting notions of identity within mobility; provoking a consideration of sexual and gendered sentiments that may shape destination choice and migration paths through “the importance of desires, intimate relationships and psychological and emotional needs [influencing] decisions” (Ibid, p. 446).

2.2 *Diaspora Studies*

Since its inception as a discipline in the late 20th century, the semantical function of the term *diaspora* has undergone a number of transitions that have been contingent to the spatial-temporal context in which it has been placed. Classically, the term had been used to refer to the Jewish experience, before progressing in the late 1980s⁸ to become a metaphorical designation for a multiplicity of people; “expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien [*sic*] residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*” (italics in original, Safran 1991, p. 83). From the mid-1990s⁹ this notion was criticised by social constructionists whom, influenced by postmodern discourses, sought to deconstruct the static notions of ‘home’ and ‘homeland’ by arguing that identities have “deterritorialised, deconstructed and constructed in a flexible and situational way” (Cohen 2008, p. 2). Although this social constructionist approach bears critical relevance to the ways in which queer theory conceptualises the notion of diaspora (to be explored below), commonly acknowledged theories are notably more inclined to argue that the notion of home(land) remains a powerful discourse and one which, if anything, has been more strongly asserted in the 21st century (Ibid).

Principally, the limitations of the second-wave rhetoric are demonstrated when attempting to apply its argument in analyses of contemporary transnational mobility and identity. Such debate adopts a statist perspective of minority communities, arguing that the definitional characteristics of a diaspora include: a dispersal from a specific, original ‘centre’ to two or more peripheral or foreign regions, the retention of a collective memory and myth about the

⁸ Regarded as the second-wave of diaspora studies within the context of this paper.

⁹ Regarded as the third-wave of diaspora studies within the context of this paper

homeland, and the belief that they will never be accepted by the host society and therefore alienated and insulated from it (Safran 1991, p. 83). Writing in 1991, Safran¹⁰ utilises the case-study of ‘Maghrebi¹¹ identity in France’ to argue in favour of this debate, stating that the former’s diasporic consciousness is a result of a condition in which “assimilation is impossible so long as [France] is equated with European and Christian origins and customs ... [and] Islamic culture is regarded as incompatible with it” (Ibid, p. 86).

Although perhaps an innocent attempt to draw scrutiny to the reductive perspectives of the French nation-state and populous regarding religious heterogeneity, Safran’s argument embodies a self-defeating logic that fundamentally places it within the familiar confines of Orientalist discourses. It reduces Maghrebi identity and its subsequent communal alienation in France – alongside the consequent formation of a diasporic consciousness – to the pertinence of religious intolerance; disregarding the intricate experiences of marginality that may pertain to gender, sexuality and class to name a few. In an attempt to assert the significance of ‘home’ within his subsequent analysis of diaspora communities, Safran further establishes a polarised rhetoric that works to produce a discourse of quasi-dichotomous identification between the native and ‘diaspora’ communities of France that bears an uncomfortable affinity to Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilisations’; published just five years later (1996). As a result, when asserting notions of ‘home’, second-wave diaspora scholars must be careful not to standardise migrant identity in a manner that inadvertently conceptualises disintegration as a result of imagined ‘essential’ differences between the ‘native’ population, and the diasporic community in question. On a final note, the concept of ‘home’ used by second-wave scholars such as Safran can furthermore be regarded as counterproductive when considering second, third and/or even fourth generational migrants; whom may be born and raised within the ‘host countries’ their families have migrated to. Although a national consciousness for one’s ethno(/)religious heritage may remain a pertinent topic within the context of familial socialisation for generational identity, it is the nation-state that works to reinforces the rhetoric of ‘foreignness’ and the alleged ‘home’ being abroad, not the diaspora (see Dempsey 2013 for the complexities of dual citizenship for Turkish-speaking migrants in Germany).

¹⁰ Although Safran’s later work was a direct attempt to “adopt a more flexible use of conventional diasporic theory” (Cohen 2008, p. 12), his earlier work very much maintains the statist narrative of what I regard as a ‘second-wave’ diasporic scholarship, explored henceforth.

¹¹ A historical term used principally to refer to the northern part of Africa, in comparison with its Middle Eastern counterpart *Mashriq* (Maghreb Studies Association 2004).

Social constructionists reverberate the need to criticise second-wave debates of diaspora scholarship, problematizing arguments on the basis that their static conceptions of identity are unsustainable as identities are never fixed; “different intrinsic characteristics [of one’s identity] become salient based on the contexts in which people and groups identify themselves. Even within a single diaspora, simultaneous ‘diaspora’ identities are possible” (Butler 2001, p. 193). For academics that apply this social constructionist approach to their argument, it is necessary that the (re)conceptualisation of diaspora is one that attempts to accommodate for the reality of multiple identities and ‘phases of diaspora’. For instance: “An African descendant born in Jamaica is part of the African diaspora. Upon moving to England, he or she then joins a Caribbean diaspora in England, while retaining membership of the African diaspora. How, then, does this Jamaican immigrant relate to the continental Africans resident in England, themselves also part of an African diaspora?” (Ibid).

Respectfully, it is possible to theorise that a person be capable of holding a membership to more than one diaspora; an argument that can similarly be applied to gender, sexuality and their subsequent relationships with ethnicity and language. For instance, let us consider a hypothetical first-generation QTSM named Hassan who has been residing in Berlin for three years. According to second-wave debates of diaspora studies, Hassan can be conceptualised as ‘belonging’ to a static, Turkish-speaking diasporic community characterised as existentially homogenous in the city; endowed with the assumptive logic that he collectively engages in the ‘reimagining of home’ that is entrenched as a prerequisite for scholars such as Safran. However, by applying the social constructionist argument of fluidity and multiple diaspora membership, one could likewise theorise Hassan as capable of belonging to a queer community in the city. These normative and queer diasporic formations would assumedly have converging functions of belonging and maintenance – demonstrated through shared affiliations such as language and/or ethnicity – whilst similarly being of pertinent distinction on the basis of queer modalities of subversive existence vis-à-vis the hetero-patriarchy. This research endeavours to demonstrate the extent of these pertinent convergences and/or distinctions, with an examination of how the QTSM community engages in performing and advocating for its existence within the social, political and transnational architecture of Berlin.

Furthermore, queer theories of diaspora have developed on the social constructionist approach of fluidity, arguing that queer mobility and identity adopts a particularly subversive

and transitory role that challenges “not simply the repertoire of localised categories of desire [that are almost always exclusively heteronormative], but also the stability of national identity itself” (Wesling 2008, p. 33). Within such theoretical debates, there is a tendency to draw intersections between queer and diasporic modalities of existence on the basis that they both possess a disruptive function against the stability of fixed identity categories; maintaining a liberating “position within the material and geographical displacements of globalisations” (Ibid, p. 30). That is, the enforced borders of the nation-state, the concept of state-sovereignty and the consistent enactment of an ‘imagined community’ through nationalistic rhetoric, can be considered as analogous to the binaries of the hetero-patriarchy; excessively policed and maintained through laws, societal ‘customs’ and alleged ‘traditions’. Notably then, queer and diasporic subjects challenge these constraints by rejecting the normative expectations of an obedient national-sexual subject; in the process forming an alternative modality of existence. This generates the formation of what Guzman refers to as the ‘sexile’; subjects whom, once exiled from national spaces, detach themselves from the duties and demands of nationalism and are paradoxically liberated into transnational mobility (Guzman 1997). As a result, queers become extra-national entities that disrupt structural socio-political customs and coherences; constituting a “mobile resistance to the boundaries and limits imposed by gender [and sexuality], a resistance [that is] *the same* as the migrant’s movement through national and cultural borders” (*italics in original*, Wesling 2008, p. 31). That is, queerness disrupts the hetero-patriarchy like migration and diasporic identity disrupts national sovereignty (Ibid).

2.3 Petzen’s Legacy?

It is interesting to regard how queer sites and organisations explored in Petzen’s fieldwork remain of notable relevance today for Berlin and its subsequent QTSM community. An extant example of this is the notorious *Gayhane* party held at SO36 in Kreuzberg. Petzen notably draws attention to the role that it plays as a subversive, QTSM community space in the city; “gender roles and norms are reversed; stereotypes of migrants are toyed with. And although there is the danger that performances of this kind can backfire ... drag and other performative projects can be useful ones in demarcating public space for Turkish[-speaking] queers” (Petzen 2004, p. 27). Similarly, Petzen draws on the significance of advocacy organisations that have played a pertinent role in creating and developing adequate QTSM representation in Berlin (and more widely in Germany/Europe). Perhaps the most relevant of these is

GLADT¹², historically involved in “providing coming-out [*sic*] counselling and legal counselling about migration and partnerships, as well as keeping up links with the queer community in Turkey” (Ibid, p. 24); and remaining a fundamental player in advocating for the representation of queer migrants and refugees from all backgrounds and experiences in Berlin (and Germany) today (GLADT 2017). Petzen’s analysis encounters limitations however when considering the generational focus of her research. She deliberates exclusively on second and third-generation QTSMs in Berlin. Whilst the aforementioned historical and demographic prevalence of the Turkish-speaking population in Berlin provides a rationale for such focus, it undermines the salience of transnational mobility that exists as a result of the corridor of movement extant between the two nations; a corridor that has maintained the presence of first-generation Turkish-speaking identity in Berlin consistently since the 1960s (see Aydin).

Petzen’s omission of first-generation QTSM identity thus symptomizes her analysis as state-centric when considering how Turkish-speakers navigate and maintain home and home-like spaces in Berlin. It also works to disregard the impact that socio-political and economic developments in the ‘home country’ can have on the diaspora, equally applicable contrariwise. For clarity, broadening our analysis temporarily to include literatures that focus on other minorities in Berlin provides us with the ability to regard how the queer diaspora can be used as a “heuristic device to think about identity, belonging and solidarity amongst sexual minorities in the context of dispersal and transnational networks” (Mole 2018, p. 6). Mole’s research on the Russian-speaking queer diaspora in Berlin found that a rising level of sexual and political dissidence in Russia – a result of the introduction of the ‘gay propaganda law’ in 2013 – brought the topic of LGBT rights in Russia to both a national and international level of scrutiny (Ibid). This internationalisation enabled domestic activists to maintain distinct transnational connections and networks with the queer, Russian-speaking diaspora; allowing the latter to be active in “raising awareness of the situation in their homeland ...” (Ibid). Given the current treatment of the queer community in a politically Islamising Turkey¹³ – one that has resulted in the banning of the annual Istanbul Pride March [*Istanbul Onur Yürüyüşü*] in 2015, in addition to the substantial increase in violent homophobic and transphobic attacks across the country¹⁴ – many queers have felt an unprecedented crackdown on sexual and

¹² Gays & Lesbians out of Turkey; *Gays & Lesbians aus der Türkei*.

¹³ See Kırbaçoğlu and Türkmen 2018, Deutsch Welle 2018, BBC News 2018.

¹⁴ See Human Rights Watch 2015, Cetin 2016.

gendered freedoms that have become transnational concerns for QTSM community. It is of subsequent logical relevance to include analyses of first-generation QTSMs in Berlin, as their experience with transnational mobility makes them integral in maintaining networks of solidarity between Berlin and the queer community in the Turkish Republic.

2.4 Research Questions

As a result of the examinations conducted above, the following questions are presented as an intellectual precedence for conducting my fieldwork in Berlin. These are questions that intend to provide a contemporary and intersectional academic narrative on the negotiation of transnational identity and mobility for QTSMs in Berlin, utilising the thematic significances of performativity, advocacy and solidarity in order to do so:

- What are the lived experiences of marginalisation regarding diasporic and sexual identity for QTSMs in Berlin?
- What are the aims of the performative spaces that are created and maintained by QTSMs for the engagement in queer and ethno-cultural identity in Berlin? How do they operate?
- How do QTSMs negotiate their ‘Turkishness’¹⁵ and queerness through advocacy organisations in relation to the wider, domestic German population and the hetero-patriarchal Turkish-speaking population in Berlin?
- How do QTSMs in Berlin create and maintain networks of transnational solidarity with the domestic queer community in Turkey?

¹⁵ Drawing reference to the aforementioned critical approach to ‘Turkish’ in the introduction, I use the term ‘Turkishness’ loosely here to refer to those belonging to Turkish-speaking communities.

3. METHOD[OLOGY]

3.1 Participant Recruitment Tools

Inspired by Blackwell et al... (2014), I created a ‘researcher’¹⁶ profile on Grindr¹⁷ and waited for users interested and relevant to my study to contact me. The profile remained active from June 1st to July 15th, after which I deleted the account and all conversations that occurred via its online messaging service. Over these forty-five days, I was contacted by eight gay, cisgender men and one queer, transgender woman¹⁸. Ultimately, two men and the transgender woman responded to my email and agreed to meet for a semi-structured interview about their experiences as QTSM in Berlin. The disclosure of all three participants as ‘out’ and part of a larger community of QTSMs in Berlin meant that the location did not require discretion; facilitating publicity as a guarantor of safety. As a result of these three interviews, my preliminary use of Grindr as a participant recruitment method was a success. Perhaps one of its most instrumental methodological justifications was its function as a “cost-effective tool to recruit participants for research without having to go into the field” (Ibid, p. 28). The practical and ethical risks associated with entering unfamiliar QTSM spaces without invitation – to instigate fieldwork on sensitive topics of race, ethnicity and sexuality – were safeguarded against with the decision passed to QTSMs in Berlin to contact me based on their own discretion via Grindr. Had I used more traditional methods to cultivate research participation such as physical networking in communal spaces, I could have undermined and/or disturbed the safety and discretion of the QTSM community; in the process jeopardising any future opportunity to organically involve myself as a participant observer within its subsequent spaces and rhetoric. Furthermore, my use of Grindr enabled me to practice the snowball-sampling method (SSM) as a result of these first three interviews. All three participants contacted me individually after our interviews and provided the information of colleagues, friends and partners whom had demonstrated interest in my work and agreed to

¹⁶ I put “RESEARCHER” in the title of my profile, followed by an image providing details in English as a profile photo. Given the limited word count, I wrote the following in Turkish in the ‘about me section’ (in translation): “*This profile is aimed at contacting LGBTQ, Turkish-speaking first and second-generation migrants in Berlin. I would like to find out about your social and political experiences in the city. This research is done for a Master’s dissertation at UCL in London. Anonymous* (Observation notes 01/06/18).

¹⁷ A “geosocial smartphone networking application intended for use by men [*sic*] who are interested in having sex with men” (Gibbs and Rice 2015, p. 282).

¹⁸ All eight men self-defined as ‘gay cis men’ when contacting me via the messenger service. The transgender woman however, defined herself as queer.

be interviewed. In total, through this SSM I was able to organise seven additional semi-structured interviews with Queer, Turkish-speaking cis/trans male, female and gender non-conforming migrants; essential in providing me with a better picture of the interactions and experiences of the QTSM in Berlin¹⁹.

3.2 Interviews

My decision to use semi-structured interviews was sourced from a consideration of their efficacy in allowing for adaptable and understanding questioning that could cultivate the most contextually significant research. Semi-structured interviews with an open-ended approach usually consist of “several key questions that help define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail” (Gill et al 2008, p. 291). I developed a written interview guide in advance that provided me the topical frameworks with which to approach the interviews that I conducted, based on the research questions and the phenomena underlying my field of enquiry. The semi-structured nature meant that I was able to use this guide to research all my intended topics, but with the added possibility to act on tangential impulse when necessary. The open-ended nature of my questioning allowed for my research participants to divulge in particularistic experiences and critical insights regarding performativity, advocacy and transnational solidarity that I would have been unable to enquire into with structured interviews. Its facilitation of open dialogue hence encouraged the “discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the [researcher] (Gill et al 2008, p. 291).

3.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a naturalistic form of data collection that seeks to minimize the influential presence of the researcher when conducting fieldwork. As a core feature of ethnographic research, it is argued as a characteristically “political act, one that can enable us

¹⁹ Whilst attempting to ensure gendered and sexual diversity amongst the participants of my research, this is not a representative sample of the collective QTSM community in Berlin in any statistical sense. Rather, the claims made are insights into the intricacies of QTSMs’ transnational identity and mobility in the city. My use of a mixed-method approach attempts to give a more heterogeneous understanding of QTSM community’s experiences, but it would be reductive to claim it provides a universal account as no scientific method of sampling was used when recruiting participants.

to challenge hegemonic conceptions of the world, challenge authority, and better act in the world” (Shah 2017, p. 45). Guest et al (2013) consider three key elements of participant observation that make it an instrumental research method: “access to location, building rapport with participants and temporal consistency” (Guest et al 2013, p. 76-77). My use of participant observation provided a greater likelihood of access to trusted community settings, a better success rate of members of the QTSM community choosing to ‘accept’ my role as a researcher with a recurring presence, and a linear, temporal narrative that allowed me to cultivate information through an extended period of involvement; rather than attempting to extract information with a disruptive urgency and immediacy. I was able to enact an unimposing enquiry into the performative and advocative experiences, practices and intricacies of QTSM identity in Berlin; taking on “unplanned and/or multifaceted approaches whilst collecting data without any temporal or physical delay” (Gursel 2018). It encouraged my attendance to a number of talks, parties and demonstrations that permitted me to constantly adapt and change the focus of my research questions to the topics of relevance to the QTSM community at the time of my fieldwork. Another distinctive consideration was deciding which particular form of this research method was the most appropriate for my fieldwork. Bernard writes that there are three forms of participant observation; the “complete participant who practices deceptive covert research when getting membership into a group, the participant observer who observes and records some aspects of life around them, and the complete observer who engages in little to no interaction with research subjects” (Bernard 2006 in Gursel 2018, p. 2). Whilst possessing the capability to conduct covert, complete participation - given my own identity as a first-generation QTSM in Berlin - I believed it ethically sound to practice full disclosure and inform every environment I entered into of my intentions to conduct research. Thus, all forms of qualitative data collected as a result of my participant observation were done so with the prior knowledge and consent of the participant/subject.

3.4 Positionality

Some of my participants’ skills in English²⁰ were limited to a proficiency that did not facilitate conversations pertaining to transnational mobility and identity as QTSMs in Berlin.

²⁰ I am unable to speak fluent German, and thus my interviewees were provided with the option of speaking in English or Turkish; based on personal preference.

However, given my native fluency in Turkish, I was able to close this metaphorical gap of linguistic positionality by presenting the option to conduct our interviews in Turkish if requested. Although most endeavoured to communicate in English, there were instances where my conversations with particular participants were able to continue uninterrupted by naturally transitioning to Turkish for contextual clarity. This encouraged a feeling of relatability between myself and the participants of my research, as they were able to regard me more as a fellow QTSM conducting research into *our* community than a hegemonic academic inadvertently asserting a Eurocentric linguistic hierarchy whilst cultivating research. Nonetheless, there was some positional distance between myself and some first-generation QTSMs on the basis of citizenship and immigration status. Since birth, I have been endowed with the privilege of a dual British-Turkish citizenship that has granted me a freedom of movement – for now – in Germany that is incomparable to the restrictive access of my solely-Turkish citizenship holding participants. Certain participants in my research would have been required to undergo a visa application process obliging a justification for the reason of relocation to Berlin; subsequently asserting an underlying level of socio-political insecurity pertaining to their status and mobility within the country²¹. As a result, I was careful to ensure that I demonstrated the upmost caution regarding conversations pertaining to visa status and citizenship as a positional and ethnical prerequisite; choosing to ‘opt-out’ of asking particular questions and only conversing on said topics with discernible relevance to performativity, advocacy and transnational solidarity.

From a theoretical perspective, my positionality of linguistic proximity and citizenship-related disassociation is emblematised in Abu Lughod’s concept of ‘halfie anthropology’. She writes that ‘halfie’ scholars’ approaches to ‘culture’ are emblematic of the act of blurring the boundary between the *self* and the *other*; ‘halfies’ being a reference to those “whose national and cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” such as myself (Abu-Lughod 1991, p. 446). Previously, ‘culture’ has been utilised as a discursive operation with which to enforce a separation and establish an existential hierarchy within the context of knowledge-cultivation; a distinct example of which is the discursive practice of orientalism within Western research and their subsequent view of the ‘primitive’ Middle East (see Said 1978, Massad 2007). In my research however, these boundaries of ‘cultural’ separation are deconstructed through my positional relatability to the community that I study,

²¹ To be discussed in more detail in the final empirical chapter of this paper.

and simultaneously to the English-speaking academic narrative with which I approach it. In this regard, the QTSM *'other'* that I research is similarly part of the academic *'self'* with which I achieve this; encouraging a somewhat uneasy but unique travel between speaking *'for'* and speaking *'from'* the experiences of QTSM identity in Berlin.

3.5 Ethics

Given the focus of my topic on queer and migrant identity, the ethical element requiring the most attention was anonymity within this method/ological enquiry. Alongside the departmental ethics committee at UCL, I completed numerous forms including a risk assessment and ethics declaration form; guaranteeing practices that safeguarded against any potential disturbances whilst conducting my fieldwork. The most distinctive practice was the use of consent forms throughout the project, agreeing that under no circumstances will the identities of my participants be revealed and ensuring that this be my foremost priority. Interestingly however, whilst conducting the interviews I noticed the ambivalence of some participants in having their identity disclosed for the purpose of this research. Grinyer (2009) writes that there is an “apparently underestimated likelihood of research participants wishing to be acknowledged in published research and thus enabling them to retain ownership over their own stories” (Grinyer 2009, p. 49). As a result of some interviewees adamantly requesting their identity remain hidden however, I conceptualised a mediated alternative to total identity disclosure to appease both categories of participants. Those demonstrating ambivalence regarding their identity would have distinctive features relating to their experiences – including their roles in particular performative and advocative spaces in which they may have a following – discernible to a reader with contextual experience. On the other hand, those requesting invisibility would remain as such, with no distinguishable characteristics relating to their identity noticeable by the reader; acting in line with what Barnes refers to as the rule of thumb in that “the data should be presented in such a way that respondents should be able to recognise themselves, while the reader should not be able to identify them” (Barnes cited in Grinyer 2009, p. 50).

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Now that there has been a consideration of the queer theoretical discourses extant within migration and diaspora studies, in addition to an examination of the methodological practices undertaken in the realisation of the fieldwork for this paper, I endeavour to present the three empirical chapters below. These chapters will engage in distinctive analytical elements pertaining to performativity, advocacy and transnational solidarity; each being provided with an analysis of the empirical findings and their subsequent relativity to the pre-existing literature in their respective sections.

4.1 Performative Space

Berlin is renowned as a global party and sex capital of the world due to its facilitation of sexually explorative behaviour within the confines of the city's various social architectures (Manson 2014). Perhaps the most notorious of these is *Berghain* (Biel van Lehn 2016); with a reputation for hedonistic sexual experimentation that has endowed the venue with infamy as a queer performative space in the city. As a result of this sexualised independence, many ascertain Berlin as possessing a reputable culture of acceptance and tolerance, with little competition globally (Fedorova 2016). Nonetheless, for QTSMs in Berlin this alleged freedom has been tarnished with a parallel history of racial marginalisation and misrepresentation; recurring conditions that continue to undermine their desire to involve themselves more distinctly in such mainstream queer spaces in the city. Waltz argues that "even as the club scene has become more inclusive, not every place is as welcoming as they might seem. The post-migrant Turkish and Arabic community is still the group most decidedly excluded from the nightlife of their city" (Waltz 2018). Notably, my fieldwork echoes this sentiment, in that ten out of eleven of my interviewees state that they have experienced a micro or macro form of racial/sexual aggression within mainstream queer spaces in the last three months. One participant details that, when attending a 'sex-positive' party, "*people touched my body without my consent, fetishizing me based on my racial characteristics and subsequent assumed masculinity*"²². Another states that his distinctive ethnic features and masculine sensibility means that he is asked frequently at the entrance to a nightclub whether he knows it is a "*gay party; being questioned most times you try to enter a*

²² Interview #3 on 04/07/18.

queer space makes you feel that you are not welcome there [...] If the bouncer at the door is doubting your identity and judging you [...] who knows what the people inside must think of you”²³. Particularly for a queer, trans-femme²⁴ identifying participant in my research, the rhetoric that they have experienced in the past three months had been aimed more distinctively at racially scrutinising their identity as a woman:

During Pride weekend in July [...] I joined the queue on Sunday morning to see one of my favourite DJs at Berghain [...] This drunk boy standing behind my friends angrily pushed me and told me that I had jumped the queue [...] When I told him my friends had been saving a space for me [...] he responded by calling me a ‘shit drag queen’ and demanded that I go ‘belly-dance’ at Schwuz instead [...] My friends and I were so shocked that we didn’t know how to respond [...] I stayed quiet [...] enjoyed the party [...] but have been too upset to return since then [...]” (Interview #6 on 11/07/08).

As a result of such toxic rhetoric in mainstream spaces, it is unsurprising that all of the QTSMs interviewed in my research – in addition to those that I had casual conversations with whilst attending particular QTSM or People of Colour-focused events – have stressed the significance of intersectional and performative spaces in Berlin as integral in subverting the “*white-centric, cis-centric and masculine-centric spaces of Berlin’s nightlife and music scene*”²⁵.

A relevant extant space that continues to challenge this narrative and facilitate a space for the performance of QTSM identity in Berlin is the aforementioned *Gayhane* party held at SO36; a historical punk-rock venue in Kreuzberg (see Beattie 2018). Occurring monthly, SO36 as a venue has become a historical sponsor of this “Turkish queer disco party, with a variety of DJs and a 1am show” (Petzen 2004, p. 25). It sustains the role of a contemporary, intersectional space that aims to transcend the resonant exclusionary and Eurocentric behaviour that characterises many of its queer counterparts in Berlin; centring QTSM identity by focusing on the performative dances, music and aesthetics of cultures that are native to the lands of the Turkish Republic²⁶. Interviewing one of the long-term resident DJs of the event – a female, second-generation QTSM – I was provided with historical context to the formative

²³ Interview #2 on 02/07/18.

²⁴ For a more insightful understanding of the vocabulary used to gendered clarity to non-cisgender and non-conforming peoples, see Minter 2000 and Ward 2010.

²⁵ Interview #7 on 13/07/18.

²⁶ Including Arabic, Armenian, Greek, Kurdish and Turkish.

period of *Gayhane* twenty years prior; “*I played the first ever Gayhane in 1997 [...] The first ever homo-oriental party in Berlin [...] It was on Christmas day [...], so it was only Muslims and Middle Easterners [...] This was very smart of them to make this queer oriental party on Christmas day [...] It was so fantastically happy [...], and the vibrancy grew so much from it*”²⁷. Upon entering *Gayhane*²⁸, it is evident to see how this vibrancy has continued to function over two decades; emblematised particularly by the use of aesthetic decorations and dance as a manner with which to consume and perform cultural traits of Turkish-speaking identity through a queer gaze.

Regarding aesthetic, the pertinence of richly-coloured drapes and ornamental golden camels – symbols of the nouveau-orientalist Western gaze of the Middle East and Islamicate reproduced in the media²⁹ - constitutes a salient decorative presence; one that, whether intentionally or not, exaggeratedly mimics and reproduces the descriptions of the Harems and *Köçeks* of the ‘Abbasid and Ottoman Empires that have cultivated much attention for their subsequent homoeroticisms and queer culture(s)³⁰. This subsequent orientalist reproduction of the historical interior of the past thus works to reimagine an extant queer space in the present. That is, *Gayhane* combines the historical eroticism of imperial history and the subsequent orientalist gaze with which its aesthetic is consumed within a Western context, to establish a socio-spatial infrastructure where QTSMs are able to perform, subvert and embody the notions of their cultural/linguistic and queer identity. A space in which historical, aesthetic culture becomes a performative modality of “bright yellow wall hanging elephants, camels and even a flying carpet, with an intentional degree of kitsch” (Kulish 2008).

Additionally notable is the aforementioned use of dance as a performative mechanism with which to engage in one’s identity at the party. The organiser of the event, *Fatma Souad*³¹, is

²⁷ Interview #5 on 10/07/18.

²⁸ July 2018.

²⁹ See Disney’s 1992 ‘*Aladdin*’ film; based on one of the tales in the *Arabian Nights* that was added in the 18th century by *Antoine Galland* and not part of the original collection of stories. See also ‘*Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*’ by Bernstein and Studlar for more clarity on problematic and fictitious depictions of Middle Eastern ‘culture’ within Western films (1997, P. 188). For more contemporary examples, see *Zabarah* (2014).

³⁰ Harems were parts of Muslim households reserved for the wives, female servants and concubines. The *köçeks* were young male dances in the Ottoman palaces whom cross-dressed and performed as entertainers. For more accurate readings on the history of queer performativity and homoeroticism within ‘Abbasid and Ottoman imperial history, see *El Cheikh* (2005), *Murray* (2007), *Boone* (2015) and *Rosinko* (2018).

³¹ Whom describes herself as expressive through “dance, performing and visual arts, and the writing of poems” in his biography (*Gorki* 2014).

herself a QTSM performer and artist; having founded the Turkish-German theatre collective ‘*Trans Dance Theatre Formation*’ five years prior to the first *Gayhane* event. It is thus unsurprising that demonstrative expressions of performative culture such as belly-dancing and *Halay*³² – both of which are native mechanisms of Turkish-speaking identity – find such a distinctive role within *Gayhane*’s social architecture; these performances are regarded by the party-organisers as “an important concern of the evening to bring guests closer (Facebook 2018). Upon attending *Gayhane*, one will be contented with the presence of a male belly-dancer gracing the stage to perform a traditional Turkish number during the event; a consistent occurrence at the monthly parties³³. Whilst observing the expertly practiced movements of the dancer and the subsequent reaction of the (predominantly) QTSM crowd of people surrounding the stage, one is reminded of the iconic events of the 1980s ballroom scene and its significance for the Black and Latinx communities in New York. Similarly to the ballroom scene, the QTSM members of the audience at *Gayhane* affectionately mimic the movements of the dancer, cheering him when he engages with the crowd directly; “*yes sister [.] Allah has given you the gift of a body and you are definitely making use of it [!]*” says the person besides me at upon my attendance in July, to which everyone responds with a hefty applause and laugh of approval³⁴.

Whilst encouraging a collective engagement in culture however, it is important to similarly draw attention to the possibility of criticising the tentatively gendered function of the belly-dance as one that latently reproduces the performative binaries of the patriarchy. The spectacle could be regarded as one that does not provide a manifested criticism of the dogmatic feminisation of belly-dancing, but rather engages in a seemingly “uncritical mimicking of the hegemonic” (Butler 1993, p. 131). That is, rather than actively subverting the socially constructed ‘femininity’ of belly-dancing, the performance encourages a mimeses that principally works to “ignore the ever-present reality that spectacles of public homosexuality [*sic*] frequently entrench rather than subvert dominant heterosexual norms” (Rothenburg and Valente cited in Petzen 2004, p. 27). Although this creates a discursive crisis regarding the contextual practice of belly-dancing at *Gayhane*, Petzen does argue that the Turkish-speaking performers in Berlin “cannot be accused of lacking a political stance”

³² *Halay* dances are a “regional category of dance styles of central and south-eastern Anatolia. The *Halay* dance performs the joy of togetherness and solidarity. Generally its music, performed on *zurna* and *davul*, starts slowly but gets fasted and fasted, speeding up the dance and generating excitement (Bor and Hartong 2006, p. 132).

³³ Observation notes from 28/07/18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

(Ibid, p. 27). Nonetheless, the criticism she engages in is reductive in that it does not substantiate a distinctive inference regarding the manner which this (socio)political stance is enacted; endeavouring rather to draw attention to the management of an entrance-policy as an adequate attempt to prevent the gendered hetero-sexualisation of the belly-dancing and genderqueer performances of *Gayhane* (Ibid). Whilst a regulation of the attendants³⁵ of *Gayhane* can be regarded as a productive manner with which to limit a problematic consumption of such performances, it is necessary to provide a more distinctive contextual analysis of the role of mimeses occurring internally to the four-walls of *Gayhane* - as a performative space - to more justly understand its subversive function.

Mimeses can in fact compose a resistance against the pertinence of hetero-patriarchal normativity that is embedded within traditional cultural performativity with a consideration of its contextual placement. Whilst the highly feminised manner in which the belly-dancer is presented may cast some justified doubts for its magnification of quasi-intrinsic gendered roles, it amplifies a queer-cultural performative function that is demonstratively comparable to the aforementioned ballroom scene precedent in New York. Similar to the notion of ‘realness’ that was/is used in these scenes (Jones 1991) – in which queer and transgender performers mimic normative modalities of gender and commerciality as a form of resistance – the use of belly-dancing becomes subversive through the presentation of its gendered mimeses in a distinctive socio-spatial context; the queer performative space of *Gayhane*. Contrary to the presentation of male belly-dancing within mainstream, heteronormative environments³⁶, its contextual placement in a queer space composed of QTSMs attests male belly-dancing with a counter-normative rhetoric; one that facilitates a performative functionality as a distinctive queer production and consumptive of culture, and a distinctive cultural production and consumption of queerness.

The significance of the cultural-queer function of performance is further enforced at *Gayhane* when taking into consideration how QTSMs collectively engage in the aforementioned *Halay* dance; another occurrence that is prevalent in the evening programme of every event³⁷. As a traditional auxiliary of Turkish-speaking ceremonial culture, *Halay* is a group endeavour that

³⁵ A practice employed by most clubs in Berlin during large, queer events.

³⁶ See Zaidel Sasmaz – a male belly-dancer whom performs at *Gayhane* - on German national television channel (Sasmaz 2017, 00:00:10).

³⁷ In fact, *Gayhane*'s monthly events usually have the full title ‘Gayhane – House of Halay’.

relies on a collective synchronicity for it to be performed in its authentic manner; usually at “weddings, engagement ceremonies, [military service send-offs and] at national and religious festivals...” (Turkish Cultural Foundation 2018). Nyberg argues that *Halay* is traditionally understood as a “playful way of ‘being together’ [rather] than a rehearsed objectified performance in its own right” (2012, p. 15); one with the intrinsic function to link members of an imagined community through the performative mechanism of ‘traditional dance’. It is evident to see its function as a reproduction of the nation-state through its use at national and religious ceremonies, in addition to its valorisation of the military industrial complex. However, it can also be regarded for its maintenance of what Joseph (1994) refers to as a ‘patriarchal connectivity’ within the context of wedding and engagement ceremonies. This is the production of boundaries that are organised for gendered and age domination within contexts that glorify kin structures and morality, such as the family; with its subsequent cultural constructs “privileging the initiatives of males and elders in directing the lives of others” (Joseph 1994, p. 453). Perhaps the most contextually relevant example is the authority that is held – in literal terms – in the hands of the elder male during the *Halay*. The most common sight is to see “a senior man take the lead at the beginning of the chain. As in [the] patriarchy, senior men take responsibility of their family members and make decisions. Following in line are younger men, women, and children at the end” (Nyberg 2012, p. 25). Within the context of tradition therefore, *Halay* as a dance operates as both a reproduced cultural discourse of nationalism, and as a simultaneous maintenance of the patriarchal family.

Nonetheless when examining the contextual placement of *Halay* within the QTSM space of *Gayhane*, it becomes possible for the function of this dance to mechanistically transition into producing contemporary extra-national and sexual (re)imaginings; working to undermine the rigid practice of nationalistic and (hetero-)patriarchal³⁸ traditions that characterise their domestic contexts. *Gayhane* – as a performative QTSM space – asserts a new dualistic meaning on *Halay*. In one respect, it contributes to occupying diasporic space through the performance of a distinctive mechanism of Turkish-speaking identity within a German context; producing a narrative of cultural engagement that is accompanied with a sense of unfamiliarity and experiential subjectivity through its location in a punk-rock venue in

³⁸ See Snider for an analysis of how the nuclear family is a reproduction of heteronormative discourse, and the subsequent need to decentre its characteristics as the ‘supreme’ or ‘ideal’ model (Snider 2016).

Kreuzberg. Whilst one could argue that this consumption of *Halay* could inadvertently work to produce the imagined community within a diasporic context, it is the subversive pertinence of its queer performativity – the other respect – that ultimately symptomizes its significance (defined by Guzman in the pre-existing literature) as an extra-national entity; an assertion of sorts of an unfamiliar cultural and sexual discourse that is integral in the endeavour to establish meaning at *Gayhane* through a creation of “*our own surroundings and how we want to hear and live them*”³⁹.

Consequently, the salience of aesthetic decoration and dance at *Gayhane* asserts the aims of this space as one that maintains the socio-cultural significance of Turkish-speaking identity, whilst endeavouring to interpret it through a queer gaze. Alongside this functionality as extra-national, one can thus witness the aforementioned pertinence of the social constructionist argument regarding the maintenance of a multiple diasporic identity(/ies). *Gayhane* acts as a space that facilitates the mutualisation of one’s queerness with one’s Turkish-speaking identity, establishing a multifaceted existential space in which both modalities of existence are capably performed together; a distinctively queer and Turkish-speaking modality of diasporic being. As a result, returning to the considerations of whether these forms of diasporic engagement – of culture and of queerness – are of pertinent convergence or dissimilitude to each other, *Gayhane* functions to subvert the assumptive notion of their contextual separation; establishing a cultural-queer architecture in which QTSMs can perform and consume all aspects of their identity in relative, collective harmony. In this regard, not only is the social constructionist argument of multiple diasporic membership accurate, but *Gayhane* becomes an embodied socio-spatial representation of how these multiple diasporic memberships are capable of existing in a simultaneous manner within the confines of its four-walls at *SO36*. *Gayhane* establishes a queer, transformative politics in an environment that is “based upon an ethics of change that refuses ontological foundations” (Moffat 2012, p. 127). Both the organisers and the attendants’ performative cultural-queer endeavours exist to challenge not only hetero-sexualisation, but simultaneously cultural marginalisation. Thus, not only does it function as a space in which multiple diasporic identities can be performed and consumed, but its very existence acts as a subversive force against the cultural and sexual homogeneity of its city-wide queer counterparts. In doing so, the presence of the QTSM body “in particular locations forces people to realise ... that the space around them ... the city

³⁹ Interview #5 on 10/07/18.

streets, the malls and the motels, have been produced as heterosexual, heterosexist and heteronormative (Bell and Valentine 1999, p. 18); and simultaneously as culturally inaccessible and intolerant. Therefore, *Gayhane*'s placement in the (now queer-gentrified) Turkish-speaking context of Kreuzberg-Berlin-Germany is thus no coincidence. Rather, it is a multifaceted, performative response to the marginality experienced in mainstream spaces in Berlin. An action that, once a month, enables for the wishful thinking of a multifaceted cultural-sexual tolerance to become an achievable entity; outperforming "the (hetero-centric) norms [and] dominant social narratives of the [surrounding] landscape" (Avilez 2011, p. 116).

4.2 Domestic Advocacy

The global productions of diasporic advocacy consist of numerous characteristics that assert their capabilities in a multiplicity of manners; dependant ultimately on their socio-political contexts. Notably, whilst diasporas regularly maintain active links to their 'home communities' (and usually establish pertinent networks of social, political and economic remittances), not all members of a diaspora "engage in advocacy on behalf of their country of origin" (Newland 2010, p. 4). Consequently, I characterise my remaining empirical analyses into two distinctive chapters to ensure the upmost intellectual clarity and scrutiny in this paper. In this first section, I endeavour to provide an examination of the role of internal diasporic advocacy for QTSMs in regard to their socio-political positionality vis-à-vis the wider Berlin community. In the corresponding chapter, I engage in a consideration of how this QTSM community advocates for the creation of a transnational network of solidarity with the domestic, queer community in the Turkish Republic.

As Newland writes, there are a multiplicity of reasons as to why members of a diaspora engage in advocacy, "to express their identities, to acquire power or resources ... [and/or] for changes in policies and practices in order to bring about conditions more conducive to development" (Ibid, p. 5). These socio-political discourses can similarly endeavour to penetrate mainstream understandings through a number of different mediums, including direct governmental participation and lobbying, lectures, focus groups, media and political demonstration. Of sizeable relevance to this chapter's focus on the QTSM community's internal diasporic advocacy is the use of lobbying as a medium of representation and action.

Although Petzen draws (marginal) attention to the aforementioned *GLADT*⁴⁰ in her research – a queer, migrant organisation that remains of pertinent relevance for the QTSM community in Berlin today – its efficacy is only superficially recognised for its compositional structure as an organisationally ‘Turkish space’ in the city. As a result, there is the necessity for a further analysis of its integral function in tackling “issues of multiple discrimination and intersectionality, and the associated specific experiences of the effected people” (GLADT 2013). Alongside *GLADT*, there is the advocative work of the long-standing Turkish Confederation of Berlin-Brandenburg (TBB) that warrants a consideration in this section; particularly for its emergent project (2018) for Turkish-speaking families titled ‘*My Child without Ifs and Buts! Strengthening LGBTQI and their Families*’.

In an interview with the current project coordinator of *GLADT*, I discussed some of the managerial and executional features of the organisation practiced since its inception in 1999; endeavouring to understand its utility in socio-politically advocating for the QTSM community in Berlin. Historically, *GLADT* was founded by a number of queer refugees and migrants in Berlin of Turkish and Kurdish descent; hence the pertinence of ‘*Türkei*’ in its official title. In the twenty years that it has been operative, *GLADT* has developed into an advocative network providing sustainable support and representation to, and for, *all* migrant queers of colour in the city; “*the creators of the organisation were Turkish and Kurdish gays and lesbians with migration and asylum backgrounds [...] By 2005 the organisation was already focusing on transgender issues [...] and helping people from various different ethnic backgrounds through psychological and social support*”⁴¹. Similarly to many of the younger organisations in Berlin – such as *LesMigras* and the *Centre for Intersectional Justice (CIJ)* – *GLADT* thus operates in its current form as an intersectional network engaging in projects on various levels “against racism, sexism, trans- and homophobia, disability and other forms of discrimination” (GLADT 2013). Presently, the organisation continues to practice under the auspices of two distinctive advocative projects regarding queer migrant identity in the city. The first of these is Discrimination Sensitive Event Planning and Execution’ [*Diskriminierungssensible Veranstaltungsplanung und-durchführung*]; “*focusing on parties, hangout scenes, bars and places where queers hang out in an attempt to understand and stop the experiences of discrimination that occur in these spaces*”⁴². The second project is

⁴⁰ In German: *Gays & Lesbians aus der Türkei*. In English: *Gays and Lesbians from Turkey*.

⁴¹ Interview #8 on 18/07/18.

⁴² *Ibid.*

‘Meeting Point’ [Treffpunkt]; “offering psycho-social counselling, film events, queer events and also trainings on intersectional topics such as sexual orientation and racism ... [we] are asked regularly to meet with workplaces and organisations to offer sensitivity and representation training on these topics”⁴³.

Whilst this contemporary intersectional nature of GLADT’s advocacy is evident, an analysis of its functional inception and subsequent development of projects is one that reaffirms its role as a staunch advocate for the QTSM community in Berlin. This is visible in two correspondences presented to me by the coordinator during our interview (as seen in Figures One and Two), and with a brief overview of some of its more public and successful endeavours since the turn of the 21st century (as seen in Table One).

“As the largest gay minority [,], we want to get in touch with all ethnic groups from Turkey and Germany [.] Our goals are to get to know each other and to strengthen each other [.] Furthermore [.] we want political [.] cultural and social enlightenment in matters of home-orientation for the Turkish-speaking and German-speaking communities [,] because we have long been a multi-cultural society [.] (Interview #8 on 18/07/18).

Figure 1: a letter detailing the intentions of GLADT as a forming organisation in Berlin. Translated orally in interview with the coordinator.

“Working under the name of GLADT [,] I would like to contextually draw attention to two separate points that need to be discussed today [.] The first of these [;] as gay Turks living in Berlin [,] is there a need for an association supporting our rights [?] And secondly [,] will we be able to provide unity in the group and prepare a scene to present our work [?] If we are able to give the answer ‘yes’ to both these questions [,] we should create this organisation with not a moment to lose and begin the process of fundraising [,] as there is a lot to collect” (Observation notes from 18/07/18).

Figure 2: transcript of a short speech given by now-member of German Parliament and first-generation QTSM during a roundtable discussion in the formative period of the organisation. Translated from the original in Turkish.

⁴³ Ibid.

YEAR	NAME OF PROJECT
2001-03	Lubunya and KAOS publications catalogued into archives.
2003	Renaming of the association to GLADT e.V. – Gays and Lesbians from Turkey
2003	The Federal Congress for Turkish-born Homosexuals
2004-	Start of the ‘Meeting Point’ Programme
2006	Trans Identity Poster Campaigns
2006	Gayhane Breakfast
2008	‘Homosexuality and Trans Identity in Immigration Society’ Programme
2008	Round Table Discussion: ‘Kreuzberg for Acceptance and Equal Treatment’
2008-09	‘Homosexuality in the Immigration Society’ Handbook for Emancipatory Youth Work
2008-09	‘Multiple Discrimination in the Everyday Reality of Kreuzberg’ Handbook
2010	‘When Discriminated Against’ Programme
2012-	‘i-Päd’ Programme
2013	‘My Child Is’ Brochure
2014-	‘You Are Not Alone’ Campaign

Table 1: an overview of some of GLADT’s public projects since its inception. Data collected from archives presented during interview with coordinator (Observation notes from 18/07/18).

The inceptive endeavour of *GLADT* as a QTSM complex that has subsequently evolved into an intersectional framework is evident with these texts. Considering the projects displayed in Table 1, it is equally clear to regard the extant significance of advocative support and representation for QTSMs in Berlin; in the form of various workshops, panels and handbooks. For one participant interviewed in my research, the ‘*My Child Is*’ brochure (2014)⁴⁴ was able to offer her culturally sensitive advice on how to openly identify as a lesbian woman to her mother; “*I was unsure of how to approach this topic with my mother [,] I wanted to explain to her how I felt but I was worried that I would be unable to find the accurate words in Turkish to do so [,] The brochure [in Turkish] provided me insight into some of the culturally-specific language that I could use to talk to my*”⁴⁵. Another participant was able to take advantage of *GLADT*’s ‘*You Are Not Alone*’ campaign and gain access to the

⁴⁴ This brochure is published in Turkish and German; ‘*Benim Çocuğum*’ and ‘*Mein Kind Ist*’ respectively.

⁴⁵ Interview #9 on 20/07/18.

organisation's catalogue⁴⁶ of queer literature and art from Turkey. Furthermore, the access to psycho-social services and therapy enabled them to engage in a discourse of positive representation for QTSM identity unparalleled by any other queer advocacy organisation in Berlin;

“GLADT provided me the opportunity to relate to others with the same struggles [...] Being raised in Berlin within a strict Muslim-Turkish household [,] I had no point of reference for my gender-identity and ethnicity as a Turk [...] I was too scared to search online in case my brothers found out and told our parents [...] I discovered GLADT through a postcard stuck to a wall reading ‘you are not alone’ in Turkish [Yalnız Değilsin] [,] and eventually decided to visit the organisation in 2015 [...] I thought that if they had Turkish [,] there must be other people like me there [...] What caught my attention was the cover of a KAOS magazine with a Trans woman on the front in the lobby [Jan/Feb 2007 Issue 1; see Figure 3] [...] I told my counsellor and they gave me access to a library of hundreds of these magazines [...] I went there regularly [after] and learnt more about the different queer magazines in Turkey [...] Now I hope to start one of my own magazines here in Berlin after I finish my studies [...]” (Interview #4 on 06/07/18).

It would not be assumptive to characterise these experiences of linguistic support for intra-familial dialogue and existential representation as integral forms of socio-political advocacy for the QTSM community in Berlin. Regarding the utility of the brochure in conversations pertaining to ‘coming out’ between QTSMs and their subsequent family members, one can consider its significance in subverting normalised terminologies of ‘LGBT’ identity that are rooted in the discursive sexual and cultural imperialism of Western identification. Parallel to Amer’s (2012) argument applied within the context of the Arabic-speaking world, the use of native discourses relating to queer identity in the brochure provide a contextualised and historical terminology that offers contemporary Turkish-speaking queers a rich and empowering semantic catalogue, as well as “home-grown modes of sexual resistance” (Amer cited in Fernandez and Aziz 2014). The brochure’s explanation of the topics pertaining to queer identity within the context of the Turkish language is thus a pertinent advocative endeavour to decolonise the notions of sexuality that have been entrenched and internationalised with the Eurocentric discourses of ‘LGBT’ identity (Massad 2002);

⁴⁶ Upon request.

discourses that are “loaded with struggles, accomplishments, experiences, and identities unique to Western [read: white] societies” (Ibid). As my participant reaffirms, “*the brochure let me approach conversations about love and relationships with my mother in a familiar manner [...] Although she was not happy at first with the outcome of our conversation [,] it [has] helped give us a good start to build on our relationship with the right language these past four years*”⁴⁷.

Furthermore, regarding the significance of existential representation in the form of Turkish-speaking art and literature on queer identity, its advocacy is sourced from the provision of access for members of the QTSM community to the positions from which queer, Turkish-speaking identity have previously endeavoured to speak or write; that is, “positions of *enunciation*” (italics in original, Hall 1989, p. 68). These forms of visual and literary art and identity-expression from Turkey provide access to an authentic and positive representation of the ontological existence of queer, Turkish-speaking identity for the diaspora; facilitating a productive point of historical reference that establishes an existential precedence for the construction of a QTSM identity in Berlin. This identity construction is one that works – both latently and manifestly – to challenge the stereotyped notions of Turkish-speaking identity in Berlin as homophobic and sexually regressive (for the racialized politics of hate crime in Germany, see Haritaworn 2010-11). Ultimately, it encourages the possibility for a greater politics of relatability and acceptance for the QTSM in Berlin; as it becomes possible to “see others like ourselves accepted and represented ... [and the] representation of queer people and experiences in the media [helps this] by providing knowledge of the existence ... of the community” (Anna-X 2017).

Now that the pertinence of *GLADT* as an advocative organisation has been considered, it is possible to examine the functionality of TBB’s emergent project on ‘Turkish-speaking LGBTQI families’⁴⁸. The TBB, or Turkish Union in Berlin-Brandenburg, is an umbrella confederation that consist of thirty-seven member organisations and eighty-seven individual members; extant for over two decades in Berlin (TBB 2009). The confederation’s statute declares that “as Turkish people ... [they] resolutely oppose all forms of racism and any kind

⁴⁷ Interview #9 on 20/07/18.

⁴⁸ Notably similar to the ‘*Mein Kind Ist*’ brochure series, this programme is conducted in Turkish and German; in the former, ‘*Şartsız Koşulsuz Benim Çocuğum! LGBTQI Ailelerin Güçlendirilmesi*’. In the latter, *Mein Kind – Ohne Wenn und Aber! Stärkung von LGBTQI und ihren Familien*’.

of discrimination on an everyday institutional and structural level ... [They] want to [pursue their] minority rights on a legal, social and economic level as well as demand equal opportunities and participation opportunities in all areas of life” (Ibid). Whilst the TBB has taken organisational precedence as a socio-political advocate of the Turkish-speaking diaspora in Berlin – with a number of projects relating to literacy, housing and education services (TBB 2017) – its advocacy for the QTSM community has been of little comparative significance historically. Nonetheless, under the current coordination of a second-generation Turkish-speaker – a participant of my research whom has worked as a journalist and activist on QTSM identity in the city for over twenty years – the organisation now endeavours to establish a network of dialogue pertaining to the existential experiences of QTSMs in Berlin; one that intends to mutualise the sexual-gendered and ethnic modalities of QTSM existence with the larger, Turkish-speaking diaspora through family reconciliation. The project works to achieve this by providing support for parents of QTSMs in Berlin, empowering them “to stand by and support the sexual identities of their children” by getting to know extant queer networks and establishing “new ones with each other” (TBB 2018). Before considering its efficacy however, it is important to note here that this project is one that is funded by the Senate Department for Justice, Consumer Protection and Anti-Discrimination [*Justiz, Verbraucherschutz und Antidiskriminierung*]; notably exemplifying it as a joint endeavour between a large, Turkish-speaking advocacy confederation and an official governmental body. As a result of this partnership, it is unsurprising that some members of the QTSM community have been reluctant to involve themselves with the project out of doubt for the efficacy of official organisations in maintaining intersectional and cultural sensitivity⁴⁹. Nonetheless, its formative utility as a newly emergent project is representative of an advocative attempt to promote and maintain a network of intergenerational dialogue for QTSMs with family members in the city, and its consideration is thus of contextual relevance to the explorations of this paper.

On June 16th, TBB and Bildungswerk Berlin facilitated the launch of this project at Aquarium (Südblock) in Kreuzberg; a venue that has earned a particular affinity from the QTSM community on account of its partial QTSM ownership, and its hosting of various events by

⁴⁹ For the interviewee whom had previously divulged information regarding the utility of *GLADT*'s brochure in providing a linguistic precedence with which to talk to her mother about sexuality, this event seemed “inauthentic and an attempt of the government to look diverse; we are not a quota...” (Interview #9 on 20/07/18).

organisations such as the CIJ and *GLADT* on intersectional and of-colour queer identity (Tetik 2018). The first half of the event consisted of a screening of excerpts from the documentary ‘My Child’ [*Benim Çocuğum*]⁵⁰ directed by Can Candan; a semi-autobiographical account of five different parents’ processes of how they “started their [path] to[wards an] acceptance and recognition of their [queer] children ... and how they are currently fighting for LGBT rights in LISTAG in Turkey”⁵¹ (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2018). The demographic of the audience at the event was one representing the inceptive endeavours of the project as an advocative space for Turkish-speaking families regarding queer identity; composed predominantly of an older generation of Turkish-speaking migrants (and their German counterparts). The delivery of the event in German and Turkish simultaneously – with the use of headsets wherever necessary to maintain the fluency of the conversations – was a constructive manner with which to linguistically organise the event; with the discourses delivered centring on Turkish-speaking modalities of existence as the norm, rather than privileging Eurocentric participation. The panellists from Turkey – some of which were members of solidarity alliances such as LISTAG, and others including a prominent queer academic from Turkey – maintained an integral role in advocating in favour of intra-familial social change regarding perspectives of sexual orientation and gender identity; with this availability of a cultural and linguistic point of reference for the generational Turkish-speaking diaspora facilitating the establishment of an unprecedented advocative space. This space worked to successfully instigate a process of socio-political deconditioning regarding the preconceived notions of queer identity amongst the Turkish-speaking community in attendance; decentering the aforementioned practice of discursive frameworks of sexuality and gender that intrinsically contextualise queer identity solely within the contexts of Eurocentric modalities of existence⁵².

⁵⁰ *Mein Kind* in German.

⁵¹ “LISTAG (Families of LGBTs in Istanbul) is a voluntary support and solidarity group for families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people in Istanbul since January 2008” (LISTAG 2018).

⁵² When querying the coordinative staff present regarding the future endeavours of the organisation after the launch, I was informed that the fundamental intention is to establish a consistent string of events centring on moderated parent groups, with the possibility for individual consultations upon request (Observation notes on 16/06/18). I was additionally referred back to the aims outlined on TBB’s website, stating that “in the course of the continuation of the project beyond 2018, the involvement of parents and members of other communities is planned ... project offerings, in particular the moderated parent groups, will be open to all interested parents of queer children and adolescents. The TBB will implement various measures to publicise the project and its offers, as well as to raise public awareness of LGBTQI hostility and discrimination” (TBB 2018). As a result, whilst this project may be a new advocative endeavour in its formative period, it is clear that the fundamental function is one that intends to facilitate a culturally sensitive collection of social programmes that intend to strengthen familial ties between QTSMs in Berlin and their families. A further analysis will be of pertinent relevance once the project has established itself more permanently as an advocative force for the QTSM community in Berlin.



Figure 3: 'JAN/FEB 2007 Issue 1' of the Lubunya magazine on queer identity published in Turkey. Scanned with permission from GLADT.

As a result of the above analyses, it is evident to witness the social and political endeavours of *GLADT* and *TBB* as advocative organisations providing representative and participatory

support for QTSMs in Berlin. Regarding the pre-existing literature, it becomes necessary to revisit the argument submitted by second-wave scholars such as Safran that *a)* migrants establish a diasporic consciousness to engage in a collective memorialisation of the ‘homeland’, and *b)* that migrants believe that they will never be accepted by the ‘host society’ and therefore become insulated and alienated from it (Safran 1991, p. 83). As the projects of *GLADT* and *TBB* demonstrate, it is not necessarily an intrinsic characteristic of a diasporic that its consciousness be one that produces a rhetoric of reimagining the ‘homeland’ within its functional practice. These organisations exemplify that, in fact, it is possible for members of a diaspora to engage in forms of advocacy that endeavour to achieve representation and participatory equality within the ‘host society’. As is contextually evident, diasporic consciousness is utilised to establish culturally sensitive and accessible dialogues on issues pertaining to the construction of Turkish-speaking migrant identity with regards to sexual orientation and gender identity in Berlin within these organisations. Regarding *GLADT*’s endeavours, this is enacted in a manner that directly allocates and lobbies for the QTSM community’s visibility within the context of the wider, German population that maintains much of the mainstream social, political and cultural architecture of the city. Within the latter function of *TBB*, the utility of a diasporic consciousness is one that advocates for the decolonisation of the Western, discursive ontologies of sexuality and gender extant in the hetero-patriarchal Turkish-speaking community; opting for a more generationally inclusive and intersectional manner with which to existentially mutualise one’s sexual and/or gender identity, with one’s diasporic background. Correspondingly, the essentialising characteristics of second-wave diasporic studies explored in the pre-existing literature can thus be regarded as intellectually redundant with an exploration of the advocacy projects extant for QTSMs in Berlin. *GLADT* and *TBB* work to pertinently undermine the idea that insulation, alienation and collective nationalistic (re)imagination are all fundamental features of a diasporic existence.

4.3 Transnational Networks of Solidarity

In this empirical chapter, I examine how salient political advocacies within the QTSM community in Berlin have endeavoured to establish transnational networks of solidarity with the domestic, queer community in Turkey. I undertake an examination of certain events that

have been convened in the city⁵³, focusing particularly on the role of QTSMs in calling for a scrutiny of the contentious restrictions of sexual and gendered freedoms under the leadership [read: dictatorship] of Erdoğan⁵⁴. In this regard, the first event I analyse is a film screening conducted under the auspices of the ‘Pink Life Queer Festival [*Pembe Hayat Kuir Fest*]’ (hereafter PLQF); an international film festival centring on queer, Turkish-speaking identity that made its German debut between mid-June and mid-July 2018 in Berlin. The second event that I approach in my considerations of transnational advocacy is the ‘*Berlin Walks with Istanbul Pride*’ (hereafter BWIP) march, coordinated by a collective of QTSMs in the city and executed at the same time as the banned Pride March [*Onur Yürüyüşü*] in Istanbul on July 1st, 2018.

The former event organised by the PLQF, titled *Hatewalk*, centred on the intricacies of transgender rights and the experiences of migration within Turkey (Bibak 2018); held on the 14th June 2018 in Wedding, Berlin. Hosted by a prominent, Turkish-speaking transgender human rights advocate – Janset Kalan – the event consisted of a screening of the documentary-film *Gaci Gibi*⁵⁵ and was followed by a Q&A session with Kalan and a QTSM co-facilitator of PLQF’s Berlin debut. The themes explored in this documentary-film naturally set the precedence for the discussion that followed, focusing fundamentally on the experiences of transgender women in South-East Turkey in regard to the local authorities and community⁵⁶. What was immediately noticeable in respect to this event was its endeavour to provide the speaker Kalan with the opportunity to present her own narrative in its most authentic form; a platform that encouraged the *trans*-nationalisation of the experiences and challenges facing queer people such as herself and those whom she advocates on behalf of in the Turkish Republic. In this regard, one can witness the utility of this film-screening and subsequent Q&A for its congruence to the instrumentality of life-histories as an interdisciplinary perspective applied to understandings of migration studies (see Apitzsch and Siouti 2007); facilitating an opportunity for these women to subjectively explain their stories

⁵³ In the months that I was present as a researcher in Berlin; June to mid-August 2018.

⁵⁴ Various international media outlets have covered Erdoğan’s transitioning of the Turkish Republic from an ‘alleged’ democratic nation into a totalitarian state. See ANF (2018) and Tisdall (2018).

⁵⁵ *Gaci* is a term developed as a result of a publication released on the experiences of queer people in the Turkish Republic in the early 2000s (Eski Sozluk 2007). It is also the title of a documentary film by Serkan Çiftçi in 2017 showing “a life-long battle with hate and transphobia, reminding us the safe spaces within our chosen family and trans solidarity” (Bibak 2018).

⁵⁶ Disclosing information on several issues pertaining to housing and employment discrimination, harassment, sex-work and socio-political resistance in the form of direct action and intellectual advocacy; observation notes from 14/06/18.

and experiences to a non-native audience and subsequently cultivate a network of solidarity that transitions beyond a national site of significance.

Perhaps one of the most distinctive occurrences in the film was its footage of the banned Istanbul Pride March in 2016, and the attendance of the documentary-film's protagonists from South-East Turkey to the event in order to advocate alongside fellow queers for their rights. The documentary-film specifically pointed attention to some of the violent occurrences of this march, including the police attacking crowds of people on the city's main street *Istiklal Caddesi* with tear gas and water cannons. The effects of these images on the audience members, a combination of Germans and QTSMs, was profound; emblematised with a German audience member saying "*we saw how bad it was on the news, but watching this film and hearing your experiences makes you realise the real hardship you have all suffered just to be yourselves*"⁵⁷ in the proceeding Q&A. This comment, whilst somewhat naïve, reflected the intention of the event as one that aspired to cultivate international scrutiny regarding the growingly restrictive access to basic human rights and equality for queers resisting in the Turkish Republic. Janset's own account of her experiences of violence in Turkey, in addition to the visual representation of this sexual-gendered oppression in *Gaci Gibi*, thus facilitated the establishment of a socio-political network of solidarity through the dissemination of information and experience within the transnational context of Berlin; that is, the representation of one's existence as a form of resistance. Notably, this socio-spatial network of solidarity was reinforced with the event's publicising of the BWIP march that was to take place three weeks later. At the end of the event, there was an announcement by the organisers that the solidarity march was to be held in Berlin simultaneously to the banned march set to take place in Istanbul⁵⁸. Flyers were distributed detailing information regarding the event, and as seen in Figure 4, there was a poster displayed on the screen to remind the audience of its impending significance. What became evident here was the latent influence of this documentary-film screening in cultivating public interest for the politics of the Pride march in Istanbul. By drawing visual attention to the previous occurrences in the city through *Gaci Gibi* and providing a running commentary and subjective point of reference through Kalan's presence, the PLQF was able to dualistically advocate for the queer and specifically-transgender community's existence in Turkey, whilst similarly advocating political solidarity

⁵⁷ Observation notes from 14/06/18.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

for the impending Istanbul Pride emblematised with the upcoming BWIP march set to take place in the city.

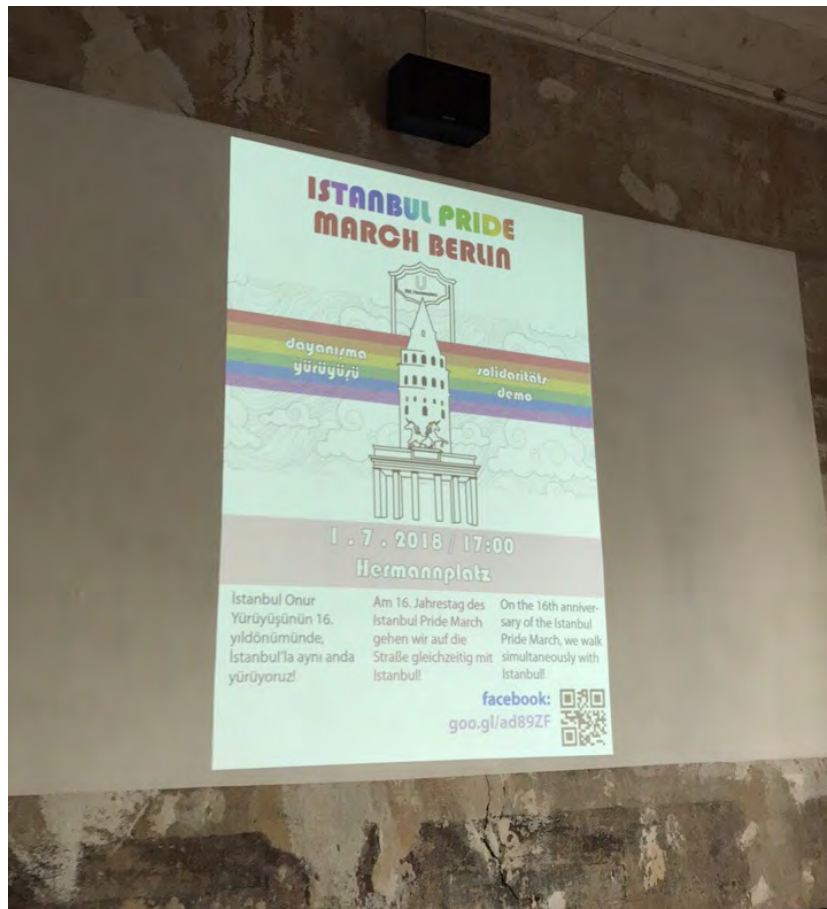


Figure 4: image of BWIP march's poster projected on screen at the Gacı Gibi event. Credit: Erkan Gursel. Taken on 14/06/18.

Regarding this BWIP march, its transnational advocative intentions can be analytically introduced with its online appeal for support via social media networks in anticipation of the demonstration. The event description on Facebook clearly disclosed the functional intention of the march as one that endeavoured to subvert the principles of border politics and engage in an act of transnational solidarity with the queer, Turkish-speaking community in Turkey; “we might be far-away from the streets of Istanbul, but [our] hearts are beating with our friends on this special day ... we are pacing our heartbeats to walk and say ‘no borders for queers’! ... Join us [and] be part of our voice and take a step in creating translocal solidarity between Berlin and Istanbul!” (Facebook 2018).

QTSMs simultaneously utilised the Istanbul Pride march as an opportunity to occupy space and advocate for their own liberty and equality within the context of Germany's capital. Correspondingly, the demonstration took place and started from the neighbourhood of Hermannplatz in Neukölln, following Kottbusser Damm until it reached Oranienplatz in Kreuzberg. It is interesting to regard how the march occupied space and disrupted the usual activities pertaining to work and transport, particularly when considering the area chosen in the execution of this. Both Kreuzberg and Neukölln are integral spaces for the Turkish-speaking migrant community extant in the city since the *Gastarbeiter* era in the 1960s. As Kil and Silver write (2006), Kreuzberg particularly has become "the legendary island of the foreign, the 'Other' and the poor. Turkish 'guestworkers' settled in the area and the neighbourhood came to symbolise the ghetto of 'West Berlin' [and] still dominates popular thinking about ethnic space and cultural difference in Germany" (Kil and Silver 2006, p. 96-97). Thus, the subsequent occurrence of the demonstration in this area became evident as one that furthermore endeavoured to resonate with the hetero-patriarchal Turkish-speaking migrant community in the city, in addition to the German community aforementioned. This was illustrated when querying a QTSM volunteer of the march on the purpose of this route, being told that "*walking [here] as Lubuns in numbers, like our brothers and sisters in Istanbul, gives us the strength to confront not only the Germans and show them that our struggle is international, but also the homophobic and misogynist Turks[sic] in the diaspora who harass us and exclude us from their spaces for being LGBT*"⁵⁹. Another person added that BWIP "*is our Pride March. We are an extension of what is happening today in Istanbul. Although we are not there resisting with them physically, we are spreading the message to Berlin and resisting the racism and queerphobia that we go through as LGBT migrants here*"⁶⁰.

One can hence regard the dualistic endeavour in trans-nationalising the struggles of the domestic queer community in Istanbul through the solidarity march, a simultaneous pursuit to identify the diasporic *self* through the existential links of solidarity with the *other-selves*⁶¹ in *Istanbul*; an engagement in collective identity that furthermore works to exemplify the redundancy of static national borders in limiting transnational modalities of queer existence

⁵⁹ Observation notes from 01/07/18.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ I use this term *other-selves* to maintain the intrinsic connection between the diaspora and the domestic community, whilst simultaneously exemplifying that geospatial separations will inherently establish existential separations.

and resistance. BWIP's enactment of this rhetoric is emblematised fundamentally with the solidarity statements read out during the demonstration, and additionally with the reading of the Istanbul-based activists' statements of action concerning the banning of the march by the Turkish government⁶². A particular segment of the former solidarity statement read as following: "... *not just in Taksim, but everywhere that we are, we will continue to resist homophobia, sexism and transphobia. We will not allow our separation, and in the wake of national borders and policies, we will, as migrants, refugees and queers, continue to strengthen ourselves with love and hope*"⁶³. In advocating for a demonstration of solidarity with Istanbul Pride, QTSMs in Berlin were critically challenging the concepts of national borders and policies; and the subsequent incapability of these borders in restricting their engagement of transnational intersectionality with the queer diaspora. Furthermore, whilst cultivating attention and intersectional solidarity for the resistance occurring in Istanbul, the QTSMs in Berlin were simultaneously drawing attention to their own existential significance vis-à-vis the domestic community and subsequent hetero-patriarchal Turkish-speaking community in the city.

Regarding the pre-existing literature, the most pertinent analytical framework with which to approach these transnational networks of solidarity is the aforementioned concept of the 'sexile' (Guzman 1997), and its subsequent utility in establishing a "heuristic device to think about identity, belonging and solidarity" (Mole 2018, p . 8). QTSMs in Berlin are capable of establishing themselves as 'sexiles' in their detachment from the duties and demands of nationalism experienced by the domestic community within the Turkish Republic; subsequently encouraging a paradoxical liberation into transnational mobility. As a result of this contextual mobility, QTSMs attain the capacity to facilitate a disruption of the socio-political customs and coherences that are expected in the 'home country', as their extra-national positionality provides insulation from accountability vis-à-vis the nation-state; a form of accountability that, for domestic queer subjects, reaches its violent pinnacle annually at the Istanbul Pride march. Similarly to Mole's analysis on the 'gay propaganda' law in Russia and the subsequent role of the queer diaspora in amplifying attention and scrutiny within a transnational context, QTSMs actively subvert the sexual and gendered repression

⁶² This statement details the banning of Istanbul Pride by the governor's office for the fourth time, and the justifications for resistance that have arisen as a result. See Facebook (2018) for original statement; see LGBTI News Turkey (2018) for statement in translation.

⁶³ Observation notes from 01/07/18.

enacted by the Turkish Republic unto its domestic queer subjects with the transnational facilitation of events such as PLQF and BWIP; promoting queer modalities of existence regarding domestic, Turkish-speaking identity with film screenings and discussions, and similarly, publicly condemning the systematic use of force by governmental auxiliaries as a manner with which to assert the pertinence of the diasporic *self*, and engage in act of solidarity with the existential resistance of the domestic *self-other*.

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, by conducting this research I have uncovered the mechanistic contributions of performativity, advocacy and transnational networks of solidarity in the retention of a diasporic identity for QTSMs in Berlin. Regarding *Gayhane*, my analysis cultivates attention to its performative capability in maintaining the significance of a Turkish-speaking identity – and its subsequent diasporic consumption – through the cultural modalities of dance and aesthetic, whilst providing the opportunity for its interpretation through a queer gaze. *Gayhane* thus contributes to the social constructionist approach of multiple diasporic membership, particularly through its function as a socio-spatial architecture that facilitates the QTSM community's simultaneous engagement of queer and cultural identity within the confines of a mutually inclusive and accessible context. As a result, *Gayhane*'s very existence is one that challenges not only the normative modalities of hetero-sexualisation in relation to the wider German and Turkish-speaking community, but simultaneously the ethno-cultural marginalisation that exists within the context of its city-wide, queer counterparts.

Furthermore, when regarding the domestic endeavours of the advocative organisations considered in this analysis, the former *GLADT* can be identified for its historical significance as a socio-political project that has relentlessly endeavoured for the adequate representation of the QTSM community; one that, within its very organisational structure, has continued to provide support through a variety of projects including culturally-sensitive brochures on 'coming out' to one's family, and positive representation through the availability of an abundance of artistic and literary archives from the QTSM community in the city. Whilst the efficacy of the latter *TBB*'s project is yet to become entrenched as a result of its current formative positionality, it would not be premature to commend its potentiality of developing into a capable advocative auxiliary that contributes to positively mediating and representing

the diasporic experiences of QTSMs and their subsequent families in Berlin. Respectively, a criticism of second-wave scholarship within diasporic studies becomes imminent with these advocative findings; as their very nature works to subvert the theoretical assumption that members of a diaspora are intrinsically inclined to collectively (re)imagine the home and fatalistically indulge in the belief that they will remain external to their alleged ‘host society’.

Concerning transnational networks of solidarity, I have uncovered the utility of particular events held within the city in the duration of my fieldwork. Considering the documentary-film screening, one is made aware of the necessity of existential representation as a manner with which to cultivate international scrutiny for the violence experienced by the domestic queer community at the hands of the Turkish government. As analysed, this facilitation of visual solidarity then shifts into a physical enactment of transnational political advocacy with the collective engagement of QTSMs – and their subsequent allies – in the BWIP march held simultaneously to the banned Istanbul Pride march. It is furthermore evident to regard the latent dualistic function of self-representation that occurs for the QTSM community in Berlin as a result of their engagement in solidarity with the domestic community. The events occurring simultaneously in Istanbul become a socio-political point of reference with which to determine diasporic positionality, with the rhetoric of subversion in the Istanbul context being utilised to advocate for representation and equality in Berlin.

Ultimately, the analyses that have been conducted in this paper have fundamentally endeavoured to subvert the precedent hetero-patriarchal focuses of previous academic discourses on the diasporic modalities of existence pertaining to the Turkish-speaking community in Berlin. Aside from Petzen’s examinations on the navigation of home and home-like spaces conducted approximately twenty years prior to this project (2004), there has been a dearth of intellectual pursuit on the intricacies of counter-normative existence within the context of the largest ethnic minority population in Berlin (and Germany). As a result, this paper functions to bridge such a salient analytical and temporal gap in the literature, and undertakes an integral and intersectional examination of a community that exists, resists, and persists within the socio-political, sexual, gendered and ethno-cultural architecture of a metropolitan European city. Determinately, this paper aims to set an intellectual precedence with which to encourage the conduction of further research on the QTSM community in Berlin – and relevantly any queer transnational community within a global context – as a necessary progression for the academy of diaspora studies in recognising the significance of

counter-normative modalities of existence. This is of pertinent relevance particularly in the successful development of holistic, intersectional and thorough manners of intellectually analysing migrant communities; endeavouring to 'break the cycle' as it were of monotonously engaging in the problematic and reductive assumptions of experience and collective belonging that ascertain hetero-patriarchal modes of existence as the rudimentary norms of analytical significance.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1 *Original Dissertation Proposal*

(Working) Title of dissertation proposal:

‘Acting and Reacting’: an ethnography of Queer, Turkish identity amongst first and second-generation migrants in Berlin.

Statement of the aims of the research:

In this research, I aim to utilise my native linguistic and cultural fluency of Turkish to draw attention to an acutely marginalised and underprivileged community within German society. By interviewing Queer, Turkish migrants and exploring their subsequent community in Berlin, I aim to achieve the following:

- A critical analytical approach to understanding the neo-Orientalising and essentialist discourses extant in an urban European space regarding Turkish cultural and sexual identity; challenging their problematic assumptions and asserting an authentic understanding of this migrant community.
- An exploration of the normative assumption of ‘diaspora’ within migration studies that inextricably links the idea of national belonging and social networking to the heteronormative and patriarchal modes of existence and relevance.
- A use of feminist theory, and an avid utilisation of Lila Abu-Lughod’s ‘halfie anthropologist’ concept, to apply an intersectional analytical lens in order to understand whether gender, sexuality, religion and language within Queer, Turkish identity in Europe warrants the establishment of an ‘alternative diaspora’; one that attempts to understand the role of social remittances, transnational networks and diasporic national identity construction through a consideration of non-normative ethno-sexual identity within Turkish minority communities in Berlin.
- Ultimately, given the temporal place of this research, to also consider the impact of a rising ‘far right’ in Germany on the embodiment and performance of Queer, Turkish identity in the contemporary spaces of Berlin; understanding the link between sexuality and nationality and examining the presence of reactionary nationalistic and heteronormative political discourses in Germany **and in Turkey** that have had a detrimental impact on those who possess a dualistic minority-sexual and ethnic identity.

This research pertains authenticity and originality as it attempts to subvert the extant practices of defining the ‘diaspora’ within migration studies, whilst simultaneously utilising the concept of ‘writing against culture’ to provide a better cultural understanding and insight into a politically marginalised group within an important urban, European socio-political context.

A statement of (working) research questions

- 1.1 How do first and second-generation Turkish migrants compose and engage in a dualistic Queer and cultural identity in Berlin?
- 1.2 How are Turkish Queers portrayed within the socio-political confines of Berlin's 'urban multicultural'? With reference to the media, nightlife, music and fashion of Berlin.
- 1.3 What are the normative understandings of 'diaspora' and are they applicable to ethnographic research on Queer, Turkish migrants in Berlin?
- 1.4 Do Queer Turkish migrants consider themselves as 'belonging' to a Turkish diaspora?
- 1.5 Does an analysis of the intersections of gender, sexuality, religion and language for Queer, Turkish migrants warrant the establishment of an 'alternative diaspora'?
- 2.0 What has been the impact of a rising 'far right' in Berlin and Germany on Queer, Turkish identity?

Identification of and brief discussion of some relevant literature

- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1991) 'Writing Against Culture', in Richard Fox (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press), pp. 137-162:

I am particularly interested in the concept of 'halfie anthropology' aforementioned to apply a holistic approach of *writing against culture*; that is, blurring the boundary between the *self* and *other* that in this context is achieved through my analysis of Queer, Turkish migrants in Berlin. My somewhat belonging to the community I intend to study as a self-identifying Queer Turk - whilst my 'foreignness' and 'otherness' that is presupposed through my non-German, British identity and experience - allows me to "reflect on the conventional nature and political effects of [self and other] and ultimately **reconsider** the value of the concept of culture on which it depends" (Abu-Lughod 466). That is, I use the concept of writing against culture that I pertain through my position as a 'halfie' ethnographer to achieve intersectionality in my research and provide an accurate study of my subjects in question; establishing myself as 'different' from my subjects whilst inherently asserting a 'similarity' that subverts the entrenched, hegemonic culture of writing *for* or *with* culture seen in previous ethnographic research (e.g. West and Other).

- Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007):

The concept of 'homonationalism' will be integral to understanding the implications of a dualistic Queer, Turkish identity and its relevance to the urban spaces of Berlin. It will apply both to my research on the neo-Orientalising and essentialist perceptions of Turkish sexuality and identity amongst the domestic German populous in Berlin, in addition to the politics of national identity and the inextricable link between sexuality and nationalism; particularly in understanding the "complexities of how 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects has become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated" ([Rethinking Homonationalism](#)). I will also use the concept of 'homonationalism' to inherently define 'Queerness' amongst Turkish migrant communities as a subversive identity trait that inherently challenges the nationally endorsed ideology of 'LGBT' self-identification. I will argue that migrants inherently challenge the state-system by exerting a culture that may be exhibited as 'foreign' to the familiarity of German culture and

therefore challenge the imagined community of identity and national belonging exhibited by the nation-state.

Proposed methods of data collection and methods of analysis

I intend to use a combination of participant observation in the Queer art, music and nightlife scene in Berlin, in addition to semi-structured interviews with self-identifying Queer Turkish Berliners and employees of Queer Turkish NGOs, to collect qualitative data for my research. My use of participant observation is due to its quality as an exceptionally adaptable research method that asserts flexibility through the opportunity to institute unplanned and/or multifaceted approaches whilst collecting data without any temporal or physical delay. I originally considered the ‘complete participant’ approach of observation in the collection of my research – given my heritage, physical appearance and linguistic proficiency in Turkish – but ultimately decided that the tacit understanding I may cultivate would be overshadowed by the ethical issues of deception and deceit when conducting my research. Therefore, I will conduct my research in the following manner:

- I will act as a ‘participant observer’ and attend a variety of known ‘spots’ in Berlin that are regularly frequented by Queer and Queer-Turkish Berliners. This includes the monthly night ‘Gayhane’, in addition to known NGOs based in Berlin such as GLADT, to socialise with the attendees and engage in *casual* chats to cultivate an understanding of the normative ways and places where Berliners perform their Queer and Turkish identity within urban spaces.
- I will also utilise this participant observation to gather quantitative data through a demographic analysis of age, sex, gender and sexual orientation in these venues amongst Queer Turkish Berliners and produce research that displays a numerical analysis of Queer and cultural engagement within these urban spaces.
- Individuals will be contacted through personal connections made in specific venues in Berlin, through social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and through a selection of ‘support organisations’ in Berlin, and will be invited to an informal collaborative research meeting in which the aims and procedures of my research will be explained. I will detail my positionality as a Queer Turkish researcher of British origin, detail the issues of consent and explicitly announce the need for written consent for those whom allow me to conduct my research through one-to-one semi-structured interviews. This meeting will be held in a familiar and neutral space, and all participants will have their travel costs reimbursed.
- Participants consenting to being interviewed individually will then be contacted after this initial meeting and invited to a private interview in a location *of their choice* that is agreed upon in advance to ensure safety for both themselves and myself. This is as the nature of the topic may mean that some subjects prefer to a covert interview for discretion and comfort. They will be asked to sign a written consent form detailing their agreement to be recorded using audio equipment, and the semi-structured interviews will begin. Travel expenses will, again, be reimbursed for all participants and every individual will be given the option to have a pseudonym, use their first name or be totally anonymised in the final report.
- Ultimately, I will intend to undertake between 13-15 in-depth and semi-structured interviews that last between 45 minutes to one hour. The interviews will be encouraged to engage in a narrative process of story-telling of their experiences and I

will provide minimal input when necessary to guide the conversation in the direction of my topic of research. For contextual clarity, I will ask to interview 5 out of the possible 13-15 interviewees a second time approximately two months after the first interview, in order to guarantee that I collect the most updated and contextual research possible.

Timetable for the Proposed Research

April	May	June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing the lit. review and research on theory - Beginning to establish questions for semi-structured interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning lit. review and writing up methodology - Moving to Berlin in order to begin conducting research - Begin visiting Queer venues in Berlin for quantitative data analysis - Putting callout for subjects for research in person, via support groups and on social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing the collaborative research - Beginning interview process by the end of June

June	July	August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing the interview process - Beginning the transcription of interviews - Considering who to invite back for second interview and sending callouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish transcribing first interviews - Conducting second interviews with five subjects and transcribing them for research - Beginning analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing up project - Returning to London to finish writing up research project.

September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completing research project - Submitting dissertation.

Potential outcomes, rationale and value of research

- Understanding the significance of urban subculture in Berlin for the performance of Queer Turkish identity.

- Regarding the significance to devise new concepts that *write against culture* and detail a more holistic and personal approach to the concept of ‘diaspora’ within migration studies; establishing the idea of an ‘alternative diaspora’ for gender and sexual minorities.
- Understanding the need for a great awareness of protection and identification of minority subcultures within urban European spaces, particularly considering the ‘rise of a far-right’ in Germany.
- Giving attention to a community that historically has experienced massive social, political, linguistic, ethnic and sexual marginalisation within German society and providing a platform to better understand the importance of a unity in diversity and understanding.

Preferred Supervisor:

- Dr Richard Mole, UCL SSEES <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/people/richard-mole>

Working Bibliography:

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7.2 Empirical Evidence Part A: Interview Extract

[INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT FOR RESEARCH ON QTSM MIGRANTS IN BERLIN. EXTRACT FROM INTERVIEW]:

.....

I am with one of my participants now, they give verbal consent to be recorded for this interview that I am doing for my research. Do you give your consent?

Yes I give my full consent.

And you consent for me to use all of this in my research?

Yes, you can definitely.

First of all, I just want to start with something you said to me on FB messenger before we met, particularly about not defining yourself as Turkish?

My mother has Greek roots and their family moved from Thessaloniki in Greece to Turkey, and my father is Kurdish but born in Turkey. I was also born in Istanbul, so I grew up in a Turkish surrounding but I do not consider myself as Turkish when thinking of nationality.

If someone asked you to define yourself ..

I'd say I am from Turkey, but as a nationality I do not identify myself as Turkish.

But you would consider yourself as part of the Turkish diaspora in Berlin?

Of course I am part of them, since I speak their language and since I have my background in Istanbul, with all this political stuff, I consider myself as so.

How long have you been here?

It's been five years. I came here to study, after that I got married and since then I am living here.

Since then I am working, last year I was working at Schwules Museum, it is a gay museum actually – it is supposed to be queer but it is under gay male domination unfortunately – and I was working there as a guest curator for a year and that's it

So how did you find yourself in that professional position? Did you apply or did someone ask you ?

No no I didn't apply for it, I was a part of an artistic collective in Berlin called Pornceptual, and we've been organizing parties for five years now, but I am no more involved as I have so many things to do besides Pornceptual, and when I was doing Pornceptual I was directing a lot of movies. One of my movies, called 'Hypermasculinity on the Dancefloor', which was due to something that really grabbed my attention when I first moved to Berlin. All these hypermasculine gay guys were kinda insulting the drag queens on the dance floor and I really wanted to take them out of the dancefloor and put them in front of the camera and mock them with my questions – (the men). With this idea of documentary movie, I co-directed this movie with #####, who is also coming from Turkish background – we did this documentary together and afterwards Schwules Museum wanted to show it as a premier. We showed it there and after that they invited me to do a show focusing on the Turkish LGBT history background in Germany, but not specifically just here it could be related to Turkey.

They were like 'we have this community here in Berlin so lets give them some space', and then I invited one of my friends ##### to co-curate this exhibition so we did it together.

And what was your experience working with Germans whilst doing that?

It was challenging, definitely challenging. Because they are not very familiar with the terminology and it might be tough sometimes. When I was for example preparing the exhibition for the first time, they called it jokingly this 'hairy man's Turkish exhibition'; I found this an issue as first I do not identify myself as a man if it comes to that, and you cant objectify me. Typical everyday racism...

Apart from those aggressions, did you feel that it was a tokenistic attempt on their front to make themselves look better for institutional diversity, or was it a genuine attempt to educate their community here in Berlin?

The thing is, first their intention was to justify themselves. The Schwules Museum has been open for more than twenty years, and they haven't had such a show which is unacceptable, as a queer museum you should already have had this topic so many years ago. It was already too late so, first I considered it as a justification for them. Then I thought that it might be our queer reading and our moment to say what we needed to say. And then I actually thought that there is this chance to create a space for the next generation. People recently moving here quite often compared to the past, and I think it is time to create a space in the institutions and that is why I found it important and we made that decision.

We knew that it would be difficult to create this exhibition but that we could apply for funding. For example in the exhibition they didn't have any budget so we had to apply for funding, we applied for the Berlin Culture Scholarship, and we got funding from them and this is how we made it possible.

So do you feel once you were doing that project that your intellectual and artistic labour was rewarded? Do you think you are happy to have done this with Schwules or rather have taken a different path in hindsight?

It was worth it. I think we made history in a way. I mean, I still think that ideally this show should have been in the German History Museum (Deutsch Historisches Museum) but as a starting point Schwules museum was an important step to take at that time, because things are happening step by step and we cannot expect immediate advancements. We are living in such a whitewashed and isolating society, it is hard to break into it. That is why I think step by step making ourselves visible is the way we can try to make a difference and ask for spaces from other institutions.

What was the audience demographic like? Did you have a lot of non-Queer people, a lot of Germans, Turkish-Queer people?

There were a lot of straight people. A lot of Germans too.

Interesting ... I am also intrigued to know, as a First-Gen Turkish-speaker in Berlin, how do you feel the second and third-gen communities are like with integrating themselves into the newer first-gen communities?

When we were doing this exhibition, me and Aytan had an idea that we are doing this exhibition but there are a lot of previous turksih generations here in Berlin and of course we invited them to take part, and they took part in the exhibition. Some of them participated in the artists list, some were taking part in the side events – talks and book readings – it is not necessarily queer people but we also invited feminist writers and we re-read their books in a queer context. It was intersectional and we wanted to create this space for everyone, it wasn't just for one specific generation. We probably reached them all, in the audience we even had so many visitors from Turkey. That was really good, I mean we heard that when they saw the exhibition happening in Berlin they did their travel plan accordingly. We took a lot of space in the media in Turkey.

So it was intersectional in terms of generation, age, gender etc?

Definitely.

I saw something on your Facebook, and you had an issue with an intersectional feminist programme for Gay Pride in Istanbul where they wouldn't let you read out the statement of Istanbul Pride in Turkish? Can you tell me about that, how did you navigate with this domestic German group?

Last year during Pride time, LSFD wanted to do an action to create visibility or something for Turkish Istanbul Pride and they wanted to do it in front of the Turkish embassy. When I went there, first of all it wasn't in front of the Turkish Embassy, it was almost 500 metres away which I found quite annoying because they kind of created themselves a safe space but it was nothing to do with the Turkish context – if you are not sure if you are allowed to do an action or event then it is pointless, you should feel sure that you can do it in the right place.

And then I went there and told them I took part in Istanbul Pride for more than four years actively, and I brought Pride's press statement and even printed some copies off to give to

them. They didn't even let me do that and they didn't let me read it. I told them that I don't have to read it but some of them could definitely read it, in English or German and not necessarily in Turkish. They read their own statement which was blaming Turkey, a very superior text where in 'Europe we have all the wealth and enlightened comfort' – very homonationalistic – then I got a bit pissed so I let them finish their event.

After, I shouted in English 'may I have your attention, there is this thing happening and they do not let me read the press statement', and everyone stayed there. The police said to me that what you are doing is not legal because they have the permission but you do not have the permission, I said that they could arrest me and take me into custody but only after I have read the statement in my hands. I read the statement and everybody was clapping and happy, and then they grabbed me and didn't let the police take me, we left.

When you say they, was it the audience filled with Germans who had come for the LSFD rally?

Everyone, but the audience were mostly Turkish people to be honest.

So it was organised by a white, German, feminist organisation?

I wouldn't even really call them feminists, there were probably some feminists amongst them but they referred to themselves as Lesbian Schwules.

They did another action where they targeting especially women with headscarf and pointing out how they might feel as lesbians. For example, they did a campaign showing two women with headscarves and wrote 'Ayse loves Fatma'. I found this offensive, of course they can be with headscarve and lesbian too, so what? This kind of discourse is dated, people were writing about this stud in the 1990s and its 2018, and they only did this like 4 years ago. It was recent. After that I actually raised this with them on social media, and they blocked me.

It sounds like they saw you as a menace to their organisation, an inconvenience who was questioning their intention?

Exactly. They were like oh you have to be grateful to us, we are giving a space to you. Like no bitch this is my space too. You decolonise space and you take over space, you don't wait for permission.

That leads on to my next question about space, you were talking about hypermasculinity, and now a claim of ownership, what has your experience been as someone active in the queer community for Turkish-speaking people in all LGBT spaces? For example anything from Berghain and about:blank/// to spots such as Aquarium, Südblock and Schwutz?

To be honest, the queer community in Berlin is quite diverse. There are different generations with different habits, and different types of nightlife attitudes. For example, there is Gayhane in SO36 but there is also berghain, there are so many Queer Turkish people who go to one or the other who act differently who don't identify or even call themselves Queer in the sense of being Queer ... so, I have to say it is diverse. My observation is that there is still a dialogue because what brings us together is this queerness but everyone is different.

It is evident to see that there is no homogeneity, but I mean more in terms of – ethnicity – something which we may see as heterogenous but is not regarded as such from the exterior. How does a German person react or judge the Turkish community?

Oh, its ... hahaha. My experience did not start very nice, as I started doing the porn parties here in Berlin. I was the first one who exposed themselves as a porn agitator or activist; I was facing a lot of fetishisation and objectification. A lot. Especially in the nightlife, I was going almost naked when I would go out, Germans felt like they had a chance to touch me, this classical oriental practice of othering. They were trying to comment on how my body was, how my hair was, I don't know... they would ask me what my family would think of me? What does your mum say? My mum says have fun bitch, what does your mum say? This classical stuff of course, and you are being kinda known in the scene and after they know you , they create this distance between you and them because they know that if they say something I will slap them back. So, they are kinda stepping back. It is very exhausting for 'the other', I feel like I don't need to have this examination every time I go out. Why do I deserve this? There are millions of ethnicities in Berlin, its such a multicultural place, but still ... I think it is the race and behaviour related with race that you cannot learn in school ... it comes with personal experience.

I think there is a claim of ownership in regards to how Germans view Turks too. The large amount of Turkish-speakers historically in Berlin, a lot of Berliners believe they have a great idea about Turkish identity – they believe they are experts, and act as such, creating a hierarchy in which their knowledge of us, gives them power? Would you agree?

Of course. It is related with diasporic identity, from what I observe. When Gezi happened and anti-Erdogan activists started to move to Berlin, they created an awareness with getting and taking over space.

Is that because before, it wasn't that Turkish migrants wanted to take over space, but they wanted to create their own space, correct?

Yes, they [Turkish migrants in the past] marginalised themselves. I am not blaming them of course, but this is the end result of Germans and what they did to these people. How to say this, when anti-Erdogan activists moved, they don't speak very good German – I don't want to generalise but most of them speak English, and they socialise with other ex-pats and take over space like that. An important move in decolonising this structure is the ability to penetrate normative spaces. Turkish, German-speakers who were born here and from past generations, they were only speaking with German people because they were not socialising with English speaking people that often.

.....[EXTRACT ENDED].

UCL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY



‘An Alternative Diaspora’, is a thesis on the experiences of first and second-generation Turkish-speaking*, Queer migrants in Berlin. The research is conducted as part of an MSc in Global Migration at University College London (UCL), University of London.

In my research, I am particularly interested in:

- Examining the interactions of Queer Turkish-speakers with the heterosexual, Turkish-German population in Berlin. **How are we treated as Turkish-speaking Queers in the diaspora?**
- Uncovering the impact of racist and homophobic discourses amongst the domestic, German population on Queer Turkish-speakers in the capital. **How are we treated by ethnically German Berliners?**
- Assessing how Queer Turkish-speakers ‘deal with’ this potential double marginalisation. **Do we create alternative spaces for our identities, and/or do we attempt to involve ourselves in the normative communities of sexuality and diaspora?**

What do I need?

I would like to have a semi-formal discussion, lasting no longer than 45minutes, about your experiences in Berlin as a self-defining, Turkish-speaking Queer migrant (first or second-generation). The main themes I intend to cover in this discussion revolve around the aforementioned research interests, including:

- **How do you navigate your Queer identity around your family and/or diasporic community in Berlin?**

- **How have Germans treated you regarding your Turkish and/or Queer identity?**
- **How do you respond to these experiences with the Turkish diaspora, and the domestic German population?**

These questions would only be starting points or conversation markers throughout our discussion. I want *you* to feel comfortable talking about *your experience*, and it will be in your control in which direction you would like to take the discussion. If there is a topic you do not wish to discuss, it will be avoided or passed without any questions or *any judgement*.

The discussion can either be conducted in **English** or **Turkish**, depending on your preference.

All participation will be anonymised to guarantee safety and universality, and this will be enforced through a consent form signed at the beginning, and provided by the Department of Geography at UCL, University of London.

I am looking to organise these discussions to take place **by no later than July 6th, 2018**. The location will be a space kindly provided by my colleagues at GLADT. The location can change based on your availability or that of the space provided by GLADT.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm: this is a discussion to be held between two, self-defining Queer, Turkish-speaking migrants. At no point do I wish to assert any authority as a researcher; I merely wish to document *our* experiences as the Queer, Turkish diaspora and I will ensure that our interactions reflect this. You will be a co-collaborator in producing the knowledge for my thesis.

With warmth,

Erkan Gursel
MSc candidate; Global Migration 2017-18
University College London (UCL), University of London.

7.4 Research Diary

<i>Date of Entry</i>	<i>Discussion of Task/Supervision</i>	<i>Task Done</i>
02/06/18	FLYING TO BERLIN.	DONE
02/06/18	DOWNLOADING GRINDR TO CREATE RESEARCHER PROFILE – CONDUCTED READING ON QUEER METHODOLOGY + ETHICS	DONE
14/06/18	ATTENDING FIRST QTSM EVENT IN THE CITY AT BI'BAK IN WEDDING. IT IS ORGANISED BY PEMBE HAYAT KUIRFEST	DONE
15/06/18	DRAFTING COVER LETTER TO BE SENT TO PROSPECTIVE INTERVIEWEES VIA EMAIL	DONE
16/06/18	EVENT AT TBB ON LGBTQI+ FAMILIES	DONE
20/06/18	COMMUNICATION WITH GLADT IN ORDER TO GET ACCESS TO ARCHIVES: CONFIRMED	DONE
22/06/18	RETURN BACK TO LONDON FOR A WEEK	DONE
26/06/18	MEETING WITH BEN RE: HOW TO MAINTAINING HEALTH DURING DISS. DISCUSSING GENERAL STRUCTURE OF WRITING A MSC DISSERTATION; INTRO, CONCLUSION AND LIT REVIEW ESPECIALLY.	DONE
27/06/18	BACK TO BERLIN	DONE
29/06/18	SOLIDARITY DEMO ORGANISATIONAL MEETING TO DISCUSS ROUTE PLANNED TO CONDUCT SOLDAIRTY DEMO WITH IST PRIDE	DONE

01/06/18	BERLIN WALKS WITH ISTANBUL PRIDE SOLIDARITY DEMO	DONE
01-03/06/18	INTERVIEWS 1-2 CONDUCTED	DONE
03/07/18	SEND IN OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCE FORM TO THE GEOGRAPHY OFFICE WITH SORA PROVIDED AS REGISTERED DISABLED STUDENT AT UCL	DONE
04/07/18	RESPONSE FROM MEGAN AGREEING FOR A FOUR WEEK (1MONTH) EXTENSION OF DISSERTATION TO 1 ST OCTOBER SUBMISSION	DONE
04-20/07/18	INTERVIEWS 3 – 10 CONDUCTED IN OVER NINE DAYS EITHER AT SÜDBLOCK IN KREUZBERG OR AT A RESTAURANT/BAR OF THE INTERVIEWEE’S CHOICE.	DONE
16/07/18	COMMUNICATION WITH RICHARD RE: CONDUCTING RESEARCH ABROAD	DONE
18/07/18	BEGINNING READING ON MIGRATION & DIASPORA STUDIES LIT REVIEW.	DONE
21/07/18	BEGIN TRANSCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE INTERVIEWS THAT HAVE BEEN DONE (10)	DONE
26/07/18	BEGINNING WRITING FOR METHODOLOGY SECTION OF THE PAPER	DONE
29/07/18	SENDING REFORMED RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS TO RICHARD	DONE
30/07/18	MEETING WITH YENER BAYRAMOGLU AT FREIT UNIVERSITAT	DONE
06/08/18	RE-EDITING LITERATURE REVIEW AND FINALISING COPY WITH METHODOLOGY	DONE
16/08/18	RETURN TO LONDON	DONE
01/09/18	FINISH METHODOLOGY SECTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW TO START ON EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS	DONE

15/09/18	CORRESPONDENCE WITH RICHARD RE: SLIGHTLY CHANGING THE ANALYTICAL FOCUS	DONE
27/09/18	FINAL EMPIRICAL CHAPTER AND CONC	DONE
01/10/18	PAPER AND ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION	DONE