



ÖberlinÖdeyim Akõm!ÖÖn Performativity , Advocacy and  
Transnational Solidarity amongst Queer, Turkish-  
Speaking Migrants in Berlin

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“Berlin Ödeyim! Kõm!” translates to “I am in Berlin, my love!” in English. It originates from the slogan “Nerdesin kõm, Burdayim Akõm!” meaning “Where are you my love? I am here my love!” It is 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.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkish-speaking 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

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<sup>2</sup>. 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<sup>3</sup>. 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

!! 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.

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(Zanker 2008, p. 10)

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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: 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?

Respectfully, it is possible to theorise that a person be capable of holding a membership 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 is 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

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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] as the migrant's movement through national and cultural borders" (as 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

GLADT<sup>12</sup>, historically involved in providing coming-out 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 Berlin provi4 ( (r)-7 (s)9 ( )-10.0ao20 (t)-2 (-2 (w) (d )-10 (0 (on )-10 (t)-2 (h9 ( )-1)-

gendered freedoms that have become transnational concerns for QTSM communities. This study's 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 and queerness through advocacy organisations in relation to the wider, domestic German population and the hetero-patriarchal Turkish-speaking population performativity, dat , How do

### 3. METHOD[OLOGY]

#### 3.1 Participant Recruitment Tools

Inspired by Blackwell et al<sup>16</sup> (2014), I created a research profile on Grindr<sup>17</sup> and waited for users interested and relevant to my study to contact me. The profile remained active from June 1<sup>st</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>, after which I deleted the account and all conversations that occurred via its online messaging service. Over the forty-five days, I was contacted by eight gay, cisgender men and one queer, transgender woman<sup>18</sup>. 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 or 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

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<sup>16</sup> 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).

<sup>17</sup> A 'geosocial smartphone networking application intended for use by men who are interested in having sex with men' (Gibbs and Rice 2015, p. 282).

<sup>18</sup> 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 Berlin

### 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

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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 English were limited to a proficiency that did not facilitate conversations pertaining to transnational mobility and identity as QTSMs in Berlin.

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<sup>20</sup> 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.

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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 cont (ki)or c (d )-10 (bu10 (ga)4 (p)20 ( ))20 ( )ou10 (g)-7 (r)-7 (

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and simultaneously to the English-speaking academic narrative with which I approach it. In this regard, the QTSM that I research is similarly part of the academic with which I achieve this; encouraging a somewhat uneasy but unique travel between speaking *for* and speaking *from* the experience 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 methodological enquiry. Alongside the departmental ethics committee at UCL, I completed numerous forms including a risk assessment and ethics declaration form; guaranteeing practices that safeguarded 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).

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*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”<sup>23</sup>. Particularly for a queer, trans femme<sup>24</sup> 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:*

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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"<sup>27</sup>. Upon entering *Gayhane*<sup>28</sup>, 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 and symbols of the nouveau-orientalist Western gaze of the Middle East and Islam is reproduced in the media constitutes a salient decorative presence; one that, whether intentionally or not, exaggeratedly mimics and reproduces the descriptions of the Harems and Kitchens of the Abbasid and Ottoman Empires that have cultivated much attention for their subsequent homoeroticisms and queer culture<sup>30</sup>. 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 vibrant 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, *Soud*<sup>31</sup>, is

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(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* *Shane* (ibid). Whilst a regulation of the attendants



Kreuzberg. Whilst one could argue that this consumption ~~study~~ could inadvertently work to produce the imagined community within a diasporic context, it is the subversive pertinence of its queer performativity Æ the other respect Æ 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*"<sup>39</sup>.

Consequently, the salience of aesthetic decoration and ~~dance~~ *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 ~~(the)~~ *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 Æ of culture and of queerness Æ 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 Æbased upon an ethics of change that refuses ontological foundationsÓ (Moffat 2012, p. 127). Both the organisers and the attendants's 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 Æin particular locations forces people to realise É that the space around them É the city

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<sup>39</sup> Interview #5 on 10/07/18.

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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, *Ceyhane'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, 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.

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organisation's catalogue 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;

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



discourses that are loaded with struggles, accomplishments, experiences, and identities unique to Western [read: white] societies (Ibid). As my participant affirms, "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"<sup>47</sup>.

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 c10 (r)-7 (e)10 (r)-r

of discrimination on an everyday institutional and structural level É [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 lifeÓ (Ibid). Whilst the TBB has taken organisational precedence as a socio-political advocate of the Turkish-speaking diaspora in Berlin Ð with a number of projects relating to literacy, housing and education services (TBB 2017) Ð its advocacy for the QTSM community has been of little comparative significance historically. Nonetheless, under the current coordination of a second-generation Turkish-speaker Ð a participant of my research whom has worked as a journalist and activist on QTSM identity in the city for over twenty years Ð 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 Òto stand by and support the sexual identities of their childrenÓ by getting to know extant queer networks and establishing Ònew 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, [ *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 sensitivity<sup>49</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup>, TBB and Bildungswerk Berlin facilitated the launch of this project at Aquarium (Sÿdblock) 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

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<sup>49</sup> For the interviewee whom had previously divulged information regarding the utility of DT'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).

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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

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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 footage of the banned Istanbul Pride March in 2016, and the attendance of the documentary'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 *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*<sup>57</sup> 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 *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 Istanbul.<sup>58</sup> 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

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

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 É we are pacing our heartbeats to walk and say "no borders for

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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~~ the *Arbeitler* 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 *“Talking [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”<sup>59</sup>. 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”<sup>60</sup>.*

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 diaspora *self* through the existential links of solidarity with ~~the~~ *other-selves*<sup>61</sup> 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

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<sup>59</sup> Observation notes from 01/07/18.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> 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.





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".

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counter-normative modalities of existence. This is of pertinent relevance particularly in the successful development of holistic, intersectional and thorough manners of intellectual analysing migrant communities; endeavouring to "break the cycle" as it were of monotonously engaging in the problematic and reductive assumptions of experience and

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## 7. APPENDICES

### *7.1 Original Dissertation Proposal*

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therefore challenge the imagined community of identity and national belonging exhibited by the nationstate.

#### 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

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
- Preparing the lit. review and research on theory -		



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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]:

É..

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.*

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*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*

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?

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*them. They didn't even let me do that and they didn't let me read it. I told them that I don't*

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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.

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- 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 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 later than July 6<sup>th</sup>, 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 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  
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02/06/18

<i>Date of Entry</i>	<i>Discussion of Task/Supervision</i>	<i>Task</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 BIÖBAK IN WEDDING. IT IS ORGANISED BY PEMBE HAYAT KUIRFEST	DONE
15/06/18		
DONE		

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01/06/18	BERLIN WALKS WITH ISTANBUL PRIDE SOLIDARITY DEMO	DONE
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01-03/06/18	INTERVIEWS 1-2 CONDUCTED	DONE
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03/07/18

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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

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