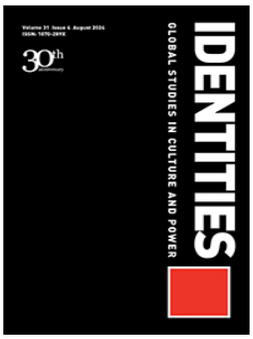

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Queering trialectics among space, power, and the subject: spatial representations and practices of othered identities in Turkey

Ece Yoltay

Architecture Department, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Kırşehir, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes spatial configurations of biopower in Turkey, in other words, of the politics of 'supra-identity'. In the multi-identity social structure of the country, the subjectification process of citizens has been controlled with several exclusionary policies through the definition of 'supra-identity' – incorporating Turkish and Muslim identities and embodying heteronormativity – by the state as the institutional equivalent of the concept of power. In this process, space plays an essential role as a domain of closure, surveillance, prohibition, and punishment for the discipline of the body. This article deals with alternative spatial representations and practices in Turkey through a case study of LGBT-friendly spaces in the capital of the country. As a result of spatial observations, mappings, and interviews, it is noticed that these spaces, as encounter and solidarity domains for individuals with diverse ethnicities, beliefs, and genders, hold the capacity for queering bio-politics in Turkey.

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KEYWORDS The state; power relations; supra-identity; social space; LGBT-friendly spaces

1. Introduction

This article is based on a critical reading of the relation between power and the subject by analysing how the notion of 'supra-identity' has been constructed with the Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus in Turkey. Since the Republic of Turkey was founded as a nation-state in a Muslim-majority society, legal and social regulations that determine the state and citizen relationships have been made by different governments. Although each hegemonic power produces its own political interpretation of the 'ideal' citizen, the emphasis on Turkish and Muslim identities, particularly within

CONTACT Ece Yoltay eyoltay@gmail.com Architecture Department, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey

The author graduated and earned a doctorate from the Department of Architecture. She currently works as an academician in Turkey. Her research spans various fields, including architecture theory and criticism, contemporary architectural history, architectural design knowledge, architectural language and representation, social production of space, linguistic landscape, and gender studies.

the heteronormative social structure associated with Islam (Marcus 1992; Gökarıksel and Secor 2017), have been common values for the definition of 'supra-identity'. In the multicultural society of Turkey, homogenizing differences over these identity values of the 'majority' has been thought of as necessary for the 'unity of the state'.

My empirical analysis examines how othered ethnicities, beliefs, and genders establish alternative social and spatial relations out of the representations and practices of 'supra-identity' in the recent political arena of Turkey. In the genealogy of the subject (Foucault 1995), the body is shaped with a set of discursive and performative practices and space as a domain of closure, surveillance, prohibition, and punishment produces 'positionality' and 'situatedness' of the discipline of the body. In the country, the body has been controlled through the definition of 'supra-identity', those who do not fit or internalize this identity have generated an alternative socio-spatiality against the conservative structuring of nationalist and Islamist policies. In order to understand the relation between space, power, and the subject, this empirical research is based on an analysis of social production (Lefebvre 1991) of LGBT-friendly spaces in Ankara. It provides the potential to directly observe relationships between the state and citizens as the capital city and to offer alternative socio-spatialities to this relation as a multicultural city. In Turkey, LGBT-friendly spaces correspond to the spatiality of alternative subject formations against the discipline of the body through the 'supra-identity' politics of power. In this respect, this article analyzes spatial representations and practices of LGBT-friendly spaces in Ankara as a case for deconstructing biopower in Turkey.

2. "Supra-identity" politics in Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was founded upon the semi-theocratic heritage of the Ottoman Empire in 1923 as a secular nation-state after the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922). The state was ruled under a single-party system by its founding political party (the Republican People's Party, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*/CHP) until 1945. After the War of Independence, the social and political arrangements made by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (founder of the party) and CHP aimed to construct a modern and secular state by defending the freedom and unity of citizens who were accepted as Turks, regardless of religion or ethnicity, in the Article 88 of the first version of the 1924 Constitution (Ciddi 2008). With the transition to the multi-party system in 1945, a new political period was constructed because of the affinity of newly formed right-wing parties with emerging and strengthening Islamic groups. Since then, religion has become integral to the political scene as election propaganda for these new parties in this Turkish Muslim-majority society (Çinar and Gencel Sezgin 2013). Starting from 1945, the right-wing parties that ruled the country adopted the

politics of conservatism, thus gradually moving away from the secular state ideology. In the political history of Turkey from the 1990s to the present, nationalist and Islamic conservative parties have risen and strengthened in the state administration (Kalaycıoğlu 2007); people have been organized socially and politically over the emphasis on nationalism and religious values, enabling the concept of citizenship to be shaped by both Turk and Muslim identities.

The main step towards the transformation of the individual into a governed society is the regulatory interventions in their subject-formations through the identity definition of citizenship. The concept of citizenship idealized over these features has influenced not only the political tendencies of individuals but also their social and cultural relations. Governance is an act to direct people for what they do and what happens to them in everyday life; governmentality is conceptualized as the total of techniques and procedures in order to control human behaviours (Foucault 1973, 68–82). In this respect, the governmentality operates through communizing differences of individuals with a consent culture they are subject to. Homogenizing differences and anonymizing individuals by emphasizing their common values are methods to manage people easily and keep power because of disciplinary mechanisms over the body by identity categories (Butler 1997). For the discipline of the body, not only a definition of ideal identity but also regulatory and supervisory mechanisms are necessary since bio-power operates intervention in the process of subjectification through exclusionary and punitive acts (Foucault 1973). Subjectification is realized on a set of experiences embodying identity categories through discursive and performative repetitions that are defined by certain norms and rules. This formation where power relations crystallize and function best is collectively generated in the government of a society. The state, thereby, constructs a 'supra-identity' that intervenes in the subjectification of individuals and makes them subjects of a hegemonic power beyond mechanisms that govern society.

Governmentality does not proceed solely through the punishment and discipline of the body but also through the subject's adoption of this process of their own will. This requires a culture of consent in which the subject consolidates their social existence by orienting their discourses and performativities depending on the interests of a hegemonic power that operates through the state apparatus (Gramsci 1976, 238). The state is governed in collaboration of 'functions of violence' (the Repressive State Apparatus, the RSA) and the consent of the society (the Ideological State Apparatus, the ISA) (Althusser 1970). Power practices like surveillance, discipline, and punishment that determine the process of subjectification of the body become functional in social life with the combination of these mechanisms. Since the Ideological State Apparatus does not contain violence, the subject is often unaware of its

dual functioning, and their consent for the establishment of power relations occurs through the sharing of public interests, which creates assurance of the functioning of the state and maintenance of hegemony of ruling class that guides this functioning.

Although the Republic, founded on the legacy of the Ottoman State, has a multi-religion and multi-national society structure, a 'supra-identity' was determined through Turkish and Muslim identities in the country's political history governed by different political parties and ideologies. After the 1924 Constitution, Turkish identity was legally reformed in the definition of citizenship in the 1982 Constitution of the Republic (Article 66): 'Anyone who is bound to the Turkish State by citizenship is Turkish'. Besides the definition of the nation, Islam was defined in the 'religion' part of the Turkish Republic identity card despite the article 'Islam is the religion of the State of Turkey', which was introduced in the 1924 Constitution and abolished in the 1928 Constitutional Amendment. In the application made to the European Court of Human Rights, it was concluded in May 2010 that registering the religion of citizens in the official civil registry and papers was contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Therefore, the expression of religion was removed from identity cards with a new format made in 2017.

In Turkey, constitutional rights are guaranteed for citizens within the definition of 'supra-identity', and people benefit from the 'right to life', 'immunity of person', 'freedom and security of person', 'freedom of thought and opinion', 'right and freedom of assembly', and 'freedom to seek justice' owing to anonymizing around this definition. In the political history of the state, those who live in Turkey have been directly or indirectly expected to adopt this identity by assimilating or hiding their ethnic origins and beliefs with the culture of consent and/or violence (Üstel 2012; İnce 2012). Turkish and Muslim identities have been the main factors determining the definition of citizenship, and different identities have been perceived and propagated as a threat to the 'unity of the state' by hegemonic powers (Yeğen 1999; Altun 2013). After the foundation of the Republic, non-Muslim groups were subjected to identity politics like population exchange, domestic exodus, and wealth levies despite The Lausanne Peace Treaty. With the settlement law (İskan Kanunu) enacted in 1934, large Muslim groups (Kurdish groups) were also exposed to some assimilation policies to increase the Turkish culture population by resettling in specific settlement zones to homogenize the population. With this aim, about three million people were exiled from East to West of Turkey until the 1990s (Bacik 2010).

Although minority rights in Turkey were guaranteed with The Lausanne Peace Treaty signed on 24 July 1923, the concept of minority has been used with a very narrow definition (only referring to non-Muslim groups), and these rights have been applied in a limited context (Oran, 2013). However, the European Union membership process has an important role in

recognizing the minority rights of citizens. Unanimously accepted as a candidate country for the European Union at the European Union Heads of State and Government Summit in Helsinki in 1999, Turkey made constitutional amendments to minority rights. With the reforms implemented as a part of the European Union Harmonization Package between 1999 and 2004, the definition of the 'minority' concept has been refined, and the fundamental human rights of groups with different ethnicities and beliefs have been officially guaranteed (Baç 2009; Tocci 2009).

In the Europeanization movement of Turkey in the EU membership process, The Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) won the elections in 2002 with an ideology of conservative democracy and ruled the country until now. The AKP, in its first political term, made different political arrangements and regulations on minority rights in line with the EU membership criteria, and full membership negotiations were started in 2005. However, political and legal reforms on minority rights have not been sufficient, and so negotiations stopped in 2016 because of criticism over the implementation of human rights and freedoms (Oran 2013; Girdap 2020).

In 2016, Erdoğan, the leader of the party, announced his socio-political project on the country with a discourse of the 'New Turkey', in which the society would gradually gain a more conservative structure. This project has been thought of as a regime change from the Turkish modernization project known as *Kemalism* (founding ideology of the Republic) to the Islamic-oriented state project (Öztürk 2019), reinterpreted the definition of citizenship based on a strict conservative identity (Yilmaz et al. 2017). Erdoğan's political power has allowed conservatism to become more robust and widespread in society. So, people who do not embrace conservatism due to their living habits, social behaviours, daily practices, and ideological views have become vulnerable groups opening to any discrimination and oppression in public life. The legitimacy of this policy has been made through discourse on relationships in the family, which is interpreted as an 'essential' and 'natural' institution in conservative society (Moghadam 2004), by propagating that they do not fit the 'Muslim family structure' (Yilmaz 2018).

The gender issue is critical in this populist discourse regulating societal family relationships. Even within the policies of modernization, Turkey has always had a patriarchal structure consolidating the definition of 'supra-identity' over nationalist and religionist values, but conservatism strengthened the heteronormativity through the 'New Turkey' project. In 2017, a regime change from the parliamentary system to one-man rule was made within the scope of this project, and Erdogan was elected the first president of the 'New Turkey'. In this regime, people who do not fit into the 'Muslim family structure' due to their sexual identities or gendered roles are systematically marginalized (Coşar and Yegenoglu 2011; Gonzales 2016). One of the most striking examples in this sense is withdrawing from Combating Violence

Against Women and Domestic Violence by presidential decision, Erdoğan, in 2021, which is known as the Istanbul Convention that Turkey signed in 2011. Regarding the termination of the convention, the claim that some articles damaged the 'Muslim family structure' was systematically propagated by media close to AKP (Kaplan 2021), and it was argued by Erdoğan and the Minister of Family, Labor and Social Services (a member of the AKP) like that 'there have already enough articles in the Turkish constitution to ensure gender equality' (Yasin 2021).

Withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention and discourses on it has provided the most current and visible case for reading the gender policies of the hegemonic power of the 'New Turkey' project. One of the views defending the justification of the annulment of the convention has been based on criticism of the legal recognition of the existence of LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other non-binary sexual identities) individuals and the claim that it encouraged same-sex marriage (Çelik 2021). The justification that the Convention does not fit the 'Muslim family structure' has been tried to be generated through discriminatory discourses on these identities.

LGBT+ individuals exposed to exclusionary politics for a long time have struggled for their human rights and freedoms in an organized way for 30 years in Turkey. The first LGBT+ organizations in the country were established in the 1990s (LambdaIstanbul in 1993, Kaos GL in 1994, LEGATO in 1996) and became members of The International Lesbian and Gay Association, ILGA, during this period. Pressure on these organizations has been increased in the AKP administration; they have been attempted to be closed through the provision 'No associations against law and morality can be established' (in Article 56 of the Turkish Civil Code No. 4721). Conservative politics in the 'New Turkey' has gradually normalized homophobic rhetoric and practice, and so gender inequality and discrimination have become more widespread in the country (ILGA-Europe Report 2021).

This political climate, which nourishes the conservative properties of the 'supra-identity', has increasingly empowered intolerance towards criticism and discontent against the AKP administration. The U.S. State Department's Turkey 2018 Human Rights Report announced grave human rights violations in Turkey with the medium of statistical data and case samples. The report emphasized that the government's policies 'had far-reaching effects on the country's society and institutions, restricting the exercise of many fundamental freedoms'. It also documented that Turkish authorities violated fundamental human rights by infringing on 'respect for the integrity of the person'. Moreover, the lack of independence of the judiciary system binding the legislative-executive-judicial power to the president in the 'New Turkey' created obstacles for any attempts to reclaim human rights. According to the 2021 statistics of the European Court of Human Rights,

approximately 22% of the 70,150 applications waiting to be evaluated were related to Turkey. Out of a total of applications pending evaluation in 2021, 15250 were related to Turkey; this number was 11,750 in 2020 and 9257 in 2019.

Considering that the concept of majority is based on not only quantitative numbers but also hegemonic power relations (Foucault 1978), the concept of 'minority' has taken a more complex form in Turkey in recent years. People who do not comply and consent to the 'supra-identity' politics (Althusser 1970; Gramsci 1976) in the 'New Turkey' as citizens have become vulnerable to being deprived of their fundamental rights and freedoms. This article discusses how these people – who do not embody or appropriate Turkish and Muslim identities within the heteronormative social structure reinforced by conservative policies of AKP – represent and live their social beings freely by analysing their spatial relations in the 'New Turkey'.

3. The critical role of space for subjectification

Subjectification, in the 'New Turkey', is directed through collectivization around nationalist, religious, and gendered policy in order to hinder a heterogeneous structure in a conservative society for the functioning of power mechanisms. People who embrace values that determine the 'ideal' citizen become subjects who provide decentralization of power by producing it on micro scales. In this regard, Butler (1997, 31–62) formulates subjectification of the body as follows: the subject weakened by the pressure of power (subordination) begins to internalize and indirectly accepts power conditions. This indirect relationship is that subjection is not people's choice but an unaware adoption through performativity. In this respect, subjection contains both subordination and subjectification since it constructs a self-identity by transforming transcendental and external conditions into internal and immanent ones.

Public space has a vital role in the subjectification process by establishing positions and situations in the formation of 'ideal' citizens and domains where othered identities are rendered invisible by power. The state apparatus has formed the subject with consent and/or force, and they perform identity politics of power relations in space. Performativities and discourses that define the 'ideal' citizens are generated massively within public space, which is essential for constructing a majority, in terms of population, on values of nationalism and conservatism in the 'New Turkey'. Many social conflicts have occurred in Turkey because of the visibility of the othered identities in space, and people are subjected to verbal and physical violence in spaces because they speak Kurdish, perform their non-Islamic religious worship, or do not fit into the binary gender category due to their appearance.

According to Foucault (2000, 72), the functioning of power is not only a relation between power and the subject, but it is also an action of some over others. Power operates its existence by establishing its representations on micro scales, and violence that emerges at the subject for other one is the most visible form of this representation. Pressure by some on others is based on the consent of a kind of power relations, and this consent is dependent on the subject's desire for acceptance by society. Besides, belonging to the 'supra-identity' that has generated the 'majority' in the society determines the domain of hegemony is necessary to gain a share of power.

Social injustice through identity politics affects the control of the use of space for constructing 'ideal' citizenship. Space plays a vital role in regulating the relation between society and the state as a domain of prohibition, supervision, and surveillance of individual behaviours (Foucault 1995). According to Foucault, it is impossible to construct a social relationship independent of power relations because everybody who experiences the subjectification process cannot escape from being the object of bio-politics. In Turkey, where nation-state structure and Islamist values have increasingly gotten stronger in recent years, identity politics in the administration have depended on the segregation within the society by determining the uses and users of public spaces. This is because public space, whose spatial representation and practices are determined within bio-politics, is not autonomous (Lefebvre 1991). Being citizenship constructed on the 'supra-identity' with non-inclusive determinations in Turkey's multicultural society is an important criterion for how to live in space. In this respect, while individuals belonging to the 'supra-identity' in Turkey are the users of public space, those who are out of it only live in a limited way and domain. In other words, the spatiality of power is provided by regulations of public spaces. The inability of individuals who do not comply with the definition of 'supra-identity' to benefit from constitutional rights has caused restrictions on their public accessibility and visibility. In the hegemonic relations, spatial performatives have been produced as a condition for people to provide their social security, which guides the subjectification process as citizens within space. The subject (citizen) capable of using public space continues to generate power on micro scales owing to this performativity and discourse. In this context, the inability to benefit from human rights such as health, education, and work has occurred through spatial exclusion and discrimination in Turkey.

On the other hand, space has the potential to produce counterforces for eliminating the oppressive and restrictive politics of the government. Demands of othered identities for human rights and freedom are politically and spatially constructed through the consciousness of how power disciplines the body. This article analyzes spaces of othered identities, which are defined as LGBT-friendly spaces. They are venues to analyse how alternative/other identities within the 'New Turkey' project freely produce their social

beings as a citizen. This research claims that LGBT-friendly spaces — as a domain of diversity and multiplicity in terms of subject formation, instead of the standardized identity — have the potential to produce an alternative practice and representation to spatiality of power.

4. Research on an alternative relationship between state and citizen

4.1. A queer model of socio-spatiality in Turkey

This empirical analysis began with analysing the spatial representation of LGBT-friendly spaces defined as 'safe' zones for the cultural and social relations of non-binary and genderqueer individuals in Turkey. A Turkey guide for 'safe' zones has been prepared and shared online (Turkey Gay Net)[1] according to the generalization of subjective experiences of members of LGBT+ organizations in different cities of the country. In this data collection for a Turkey guide, while LGBT+ organizations in megacities have shared openly mapping of 'safe' zones (cinema, theatre, park, Turkish bath, cafe, pub, bookstore), organizations in relatively less developed cities have not preferred to report lists and locations of public spaces in order to prevent making their owners, employees and customers targets of homophobic and transphobic violence.

Defining these spaces as LGBT-friendly within the heteronormative social structure in Turkey plays an essential role in discursively naturalizing the existence of non-binary and genderqueer individuals in society. This definition represents spaces consisting of non-homophobic and non-transphobic practices, where LGBT+ individuals can socialize without being exposed to physical or verbal violence as well as discriminatory or exclusionary attitudes. Considering the semantic representation of these spaces, 'LGBT-friendly' is a strategic choice because it legitimizes the existence of LGBT+ individuals, one of Turkey's most oppressed, ignored, marginalized groups. This representation in the conservative society of Turkey refers to the spatiality of identities against heteronormativity. These spaces have different social and cultural functions for the safe interaction of these individuals whose public visibility and accessibility have been restricted not only through the ISA but also through the RSA by criminalizing homosexuality on the grounds that they corrupt public morals within the scope of the 'Law on Misdemeanor' (Sunata, Makaracı Başak, and Öktem Çevik 2022).

Even though Turkey has a heteronormative political structure, 'minorities' have become conscious of human rights and freedoms and have organized struggles against discrimination thanks to both global and local dynamics. Considering the spaces specified in megacities, what makes these spaces LGBT-friendly is the tolerance of owners, employees, and other customers towards the existence of non-binary and transgender individuals. Attributing

spatial representation with the label 'friendly' indicates that their users do not consist only of LGBT+ individuals. These spaces have occurred as a result of social production (Lefebvre 1991) of othered identities (because of their ethnicities, beliefs, or genders) over time with their strategic coexistence. In this context, my empirical analysis is theorized through the trialectics among space, power, and the subject since LGBT-friendly spaces provide an alternative socio-spatiality for not only gender politics but also identity politics in Turkey. I claim that such coexistence of othered identities generates a spatial setup of the notion of 'queer' in the case of Turkey, where dialectic relation between repression and resistance embodies in public spaces. Queer features of these spaces come from being domains (i) where individuals who are excluded due to their ethnic and religious identities interact openly, (ii) where individuals who do not comply with conservative social life socialize freely, and (iii) where LGBT+ individuals are not subjected to verbal or physical violence.

My analysis is based on reviewing LGBT-friendly spaces in Ankara through socio-spatial observations and user interviews. There are two important reasons for conducting this empirical research in Ankara: (1) considering the economic and cultural context of Turkey, the city's feature of being a metropolis allows possibilities for public visibility of othered identities to analyse their socio-spatial formation as an alternative citizen; (2) considering that its feature of being the capital of the country as well, the city has a critical role in understanding directly how ideological and administrative practices and representations of the state work. Ankara hosts both oppression and control mechanisms as well as opportunities for resistance to them, embodying the spatial relation between power and the subject in Turkey. For six months in 2016, I observed spatial representations and practices of LGBT-friendly spaces reported in the guide by Kaos-GL (LGBT+ Association of Ankara) in 2011. These spaces, determined through the experiences of LGBT+ individuals living in Ankara, include 10 social and cultural spaces, including pubs, cafes, and bookstores.

In this research, interviews were held with six venue frequenters encountered in LGBT-friendly spaces during the observation period. The interview consists of three categories of open-ended questions, which were audio recorded with the permission of the interviewees (Yoltay 2016). In the first category, interviewees were asked to introduce themselves socially, culturally, and politically. This questioning aims to understand how they individually express themselves outside of the definition of 'supra-identity'. In the second, they were expected to tell reasons for the frequency of using these spaces to understand representations and practices in the social production of LGBT-friendly spaces. In the third category, interviewees were questioned on whether or not there were other spaces they frequently used for similar reasons stated in the second category in order to understand the topicality in the existence of spaces reported in 2011.

4.2. Social production of LGBT-friendly spaces in Ankara

Representation of LGBT-friendly spaces in Turkey has been produced with interactive relationships among othered identity groups with multi-identity formations rather than monotype identity categories embedded within power relations. It was observed that individuals formed relationships out of discourses and performatives of the 'supra-identity' and experienced their own othered identities in these spaces without any discrimination or violence. These spaces have produced a variety of possible combinations of bodily beings, leading to the dissolution of solid formation through an infinitive array of mixtures across identity categories. In this regard, interviewees were asked first to introduce themselves in order to decipher this variety in their subject formations. One interviewee introduced themselves as a 'Zaza', '*Alevi*,' 'woman', as well as 'Marxist', 'vegetarian' (subject-1); another one as 'Kurdish', 'gay', as well as 'sympathizer' of the Kurdish political movement (subject-2); another one as '*Alevi*,' 'man' as well as 'eco-socialist' (subject-3); another one as 'gay', 'woman', 'liberal' as well as 'animal lover' (subject-4); another one as 'Kurdish', 'woman' as well as 'socialist'(subject-5); another one as 'gay', 'Balkan immigrant' as well as 'humanist' (subject-6).

According to Butler (2011), the body gains meaning with identities attributed to it in society, and subjectification of the body is an inevitable reality in social relations. Becoming a subject is established by several repetitive practices and discourses in identity categories that are naturalized and normalized before the body is born. These categories, which are mostly based on binary oppositions, are processed into the body as performative and determine its psychological, sociological, cultural, and ideological formation. Indeed, the process of subjectification is established due to the inclusive and exclusive practices and discourses of certain values, producing identities that are not only attributed to the body but also owned by the body through performativity.

While establishing the process of subjectification apart from the definitions of Turkish nationalist and Muslim identity, interviewees built ideological and cultural codes that have not adopted the conservative lifestyle in Turkey. For Foucault (1973), questioning the relation between power and the body is an ontological inquiry that examines the historical constitution of the subject. Thinking on genealogy provides a consciousness on subject formation and allows us to overcome contingent boundaries of 'dispositions'. Therefore, the struggle of individuals against an imposed identity is a resistance against social, cultural, and ideological domination. Foucauldian debate on the genealogy of the subject proposes a method for rejecting given identities and proves that different identity formations can exist by deconstructing fixed subjectivities through self-production (producing own behaviour, emotions, desires, thoughts, etc.).

In Turkey, the basis of identities formed by the overlapping of 'non-standard' values lies in occupying or appropriating the social, cultural, and ideological areas that produce the periphery of what is centred (of the 'supra-identity'). These identities are political because of produce the other of power, so the emphasis on alternative identity formations that interviewees used in expressing themselves stems from this. On the other hand, it is noticed that although this otherness has positioned itself at the periphery of the definition of 'supra-identity', it has had transitive values in particular; in other words, it has generated exclusive and inclusive values defined within identity politics at the same time, such as the coexistence of 'gay' and 'male' or 'Kurdish' and 'socialist' in the interviewees' introductions themselves. The fact that the boundaries of otherness seen in subject formation are not fully defined adds a queer feature to the representation of users because it does not contain fixed categories into dual values defining centre-periphery, external/internal, exclusive/inclusive even if it is constructed on opposition to hegemonic power. This article benefits from the notion of 'queer' in order to develop a critical approach to spatial and bodily construction of governmentality by emphasizing 'non-uniform', 'non-ordinary', and 'non-normalized' subject formation (Browne 2006; Duggan 2003), beyond its uses as a synonym for non-heterosexuality in gender studies. The notion — which has been used to humiliate, exclude, and marginalize LGBT+ individuals and then which has been strategically adopted by these individuals owing to its creative dynamism — is re-theorized semantically by critical geographers (Avilez 2011; Oswin 2008; Rouhani 2012) as all othered representations and practices of individuals who embrace their identity differences. It is interpreted as challenging any idealized and standardized subject formations.

In this regard, one of the main features of these spaces lies not only in the fact that users tolerate differences but also in naturalizing these identical differences. The spatial representations and practices of multiple and contradictory identities have not produced a single social, cultural, or ideological truth or good; they have not fixed themselves in certain identity categories (Butler 1997, 31–62). In this regard, one interviewee stated that:

> Because of my masculine appearance, people's eyes are on me everywhere I go. On the bus, in the market, in the park, on the street... This is very disturbing! The fact that people are watching me all the time... But in these places, I am less exposed to this kind of gaze of straight people. The only reason why I go there is this. I feel more comfortable there. (Subject-4)

Qualifying the spaces as LGBT-friendly is not the result of physical features since they do not have material differentiations that distinguish them from other spaces having similar functions, but their spatial ambiance and experiences. Differentiating feature of these spaces is the absence of masculinist,

nationalist, or conservative behaviours and discourses in relationships between customers and employees and relationships of customers with each other. In this respect, an interviewee has stated the following:

> These spaces are where I can communicate with my lover safely and freely. My lesbian and gay friends have informed me about the existence of these LGBT-friendly spaces, but mostly, I have learned where they are through my experiences. In some cafés or pubs in Ankara, for example, I have not been allowed to go inside because of my sexual identity . . . I have been immediately kicked out as soon as I touched or kissed my partner, while all heterosexual couples live their loves freely. Therefore, I have stopped going there. (Subject-2)

These experiences have produced, over time, spatial belonging of individuals, and this belonging has led to positive perceptual and cognitive effects towards LGBT-friendly spaces, as a case of social production of space (Lefebvre 1991). The comfort of self-expression has caused sincere and intense interactions that have affected the behaviours, ideas, and emotions of individuals. The fact that functions of these spaces (pubs, cafes, bookstores) are suitable for socialization enables an interactive subject formation, which creates self-confidence within individuals to be different. In observing the behaviours of owners, employees, and other customers, it is noticed that socializing without feeling the pressure of identity politics has strengthened their interactions with each other. Tolerance for differences has facilitated communication and ensured freedom of expression among users, and this has paved the way for sharing their political identities like leftist, Marxist, socialist, environmentalist, humanist, and animal lover freely. Indeed, these LGBT-friendly spaces are not only domains of an assembly of the othered identities but also domains of consolidation or multiplication of counter formations to the definition of 'supra-identity'. One interviewee has stated that:

> I have used these spaces for chatting about political issues and for meeting new people. They have some effects on my life. These spaces have shown me the presence of those who think like me about the government (the AKP), and this has increased my strength to resist inequality. (Subject-3)

This analysis reveals that the configuration of spatial differentiation of LGBT-friendly spaces in the city is organized on a desire to construct a locus of freedom against the prohibitive and discriminative spatial politics of the government (Harvey 1996). The social production of these spaces has led to fatefulness among othered identities, which has stimulated noteworthy solidarity for the success of their resistance (Gounelas 2012; Yoltay 2021). Being opposed, like 'radicals', 'progressives', 'advanced democrats', and 'revolutionaries' to social discrimination and inequality has led to break (*détournement*) in trialectics among space, power, and the subject, depending on subversive behavioural 'conspicuity' of otherness (Bell and Gill 1995; Brown and Knopp 2008; Cossman 2007). Regarding this, an interviewee has said that:

> I believe that the owners of the spaces determine the characters of the spaces. I find their political stances close to me (even though I don't know most of them personally). Therefore, to contribute economically to these businesses, I prefer to go to these spaces. It also makes me feel good to be in these places because I think that these spaces are not run by big businesses and brands. (Subject-1)

Such spatial belonging has come from the fact that subjects establish their own social and cultural identities outside the 'supra-identity' formation. Besides, the reason these spaces have created a culture of solidarity among the users has fed from a wish to deconstruct identity politics by producing variety and plurality in subjectification. In this respect, one of the interviewees has asserted that:

> This café where I work as a waiter has been defined as an LGBT-friendly space because I, other workers as well and the manager are not homophobic. Gay people have not been treated differently from other customers (heterosexual ones) when they come here. They are safe here. Because not just us, but also our customers have a political consciousness, and so they struggle for human rights and freedom . . . I know them (customers) from some socialist parties and press releases against the injustice. They're also my comrades. (Subject-5)

It is understood that they are spaces where othered individuals construct an assembly against social and political positions in uniformist and separative identity politics. Moreover, LGBT-friendly spaces are where othered identities have the right to be different and reveal these differences that have been introverted or suppressed in society. The spatial togetherness of othered identities has essentially created a subjectivity in which power relations have been abstracted and/or ignored rather than struggling directly against some class, institution, or ideology. It is because the state, which has categorized society with identity politics, has interfered with daily life. These spaces, thereby, have produced an alternative association to governmentality, subordinating the subject to the 'supra-identity' and its representations of micropower.

LGBT-friendly spaces are also encounter spaces for their users who have frequently preferred to go there for socializing in the city. All interviewees have stated that they have established close relationships with people they have often met in these spaces. The absence of pressure and surveillance of hegemonic power motivates the use of these spaces isolated from discourse and performativity of the 'supra-identity' as 'safe' zones. Therefore, in the interviews, they have emphasized that even if they have gone alone, they have not spent time alone in these spaces due to this acquaintance. Owing to 'plural', 'polyscopic', and/or 'polyvalent' relations (Phillips, Watt, and Shuttleton 2000), LGBT-friendly spaces produce strategically potential zones of cities for widening the social environments of their users. In addition to their subjectivity, interviewees who have associated with different identities can reproduce their subjectification processes because of the consciousness of multiple ways of subject formation.

When examining these spaces on an urban scale, it is noticed that these spaces are located in the city centre (in Çankaya district), where the urban transportation network and built environment are dense. This is the structural and transportation zone where the city's entertainment, rest, work, education, and health needs are met. Therefore, this urban part is used by different identity groups for various public uses. Also, since it is located on the east-west and north-south transportation axis of the city, it is a stopover point for urban access and circulation for citizens. Besides, these spaces have spatial proximity; they are within walking distance of each other. This positionality is important not only for spatial access to LGBT-friendly spaces but also for ensuring spatial solidarity for their users. In addition, their proximity to the streets, squares, and parks where mass actions of the city were taken and their closeness to many political parties, associations, and professional organizations of which the actors of these actions are members affect this solidarity significantly (Figure 1). One interviewee has stated that:

> I care about the proximity of these spaces to the city's political and resistance places. I feel freer to live my sexual identity where there are dissident subjects. Although I have the risk of encountering my students or their parents in these spaces, I think that crises that may occur may be less. (Subject-6)

The reason why these spaces are not located in different parts of the city but are instead concentrated in the city centre– which develops in line with different functional needs (education, entertainment, health, work) and has a wide user base– is analogous to the urban-rural division concerning the existence of LGBT-friendly spaces in Turkey. Even if each policy of oppression and violence in the government of society is capable of producing its own domain of resistance, such an alternative socio-spatiality could not be possible in settlements that have become relatively more conservative structures with identity politics. The guide indicates that LGBT-friendly spaces can only exist in the most socially, culturally, and economically developed districts of metropolitan cities, typically in city centres. This implies that conservatism intensifies in settlements with lower levels of development, leading to a decrease in tolerance for the existence of diverse identities. This research reveals that the effect of masculine, nationalist, and religious hegemony on the subjectification process in Turkey is directly related to the level of awareness of human rights and freedoms. It has been observed that awareness and tolerance of differences increase in more cosmopolitan settlements. The city centre of Ankara, with its diverse user identities, has facilitated the social production of LGBT-friendly spaces by contributing to the politicization of these differences within the socio-spatial interventions of power.

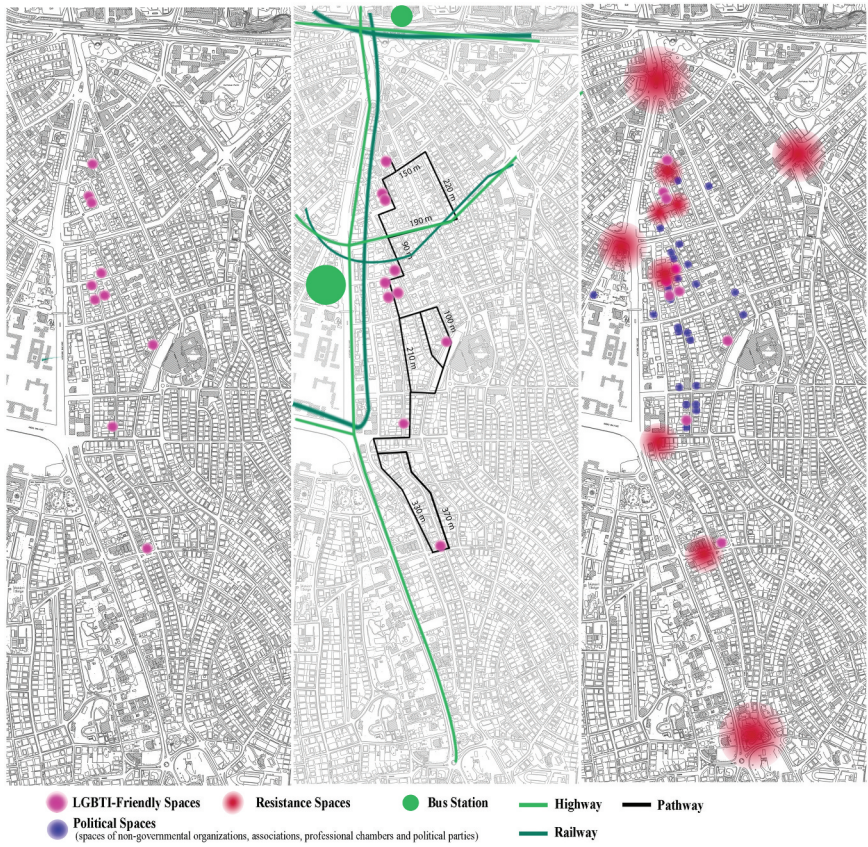

Figure 1. Urban location, public accessibility of LGBT-friendly spaces and their spatial proximity to political and resistance spaces in Ankara. Notes: 1.https://www.turkeygay.net/turkce/visitorlist.html

Conclusion

The socio-cultural formations of inequality in the 'New Turkey' have spurred demand for social spaces facilitating interactions among citizens for collective struggle against the politics of 'supra-identity' (Innes and Booher 2007). A subversive production of spaces is necessary to prevent a uniform subject formation (Swyngedouw 2005). I argue that this constitutes a transformative model of human existence by spatially experiencing or creating another possibility in the relation between power and the subject through variety and plurality in identity formations. In this respect, queering space is a method for the production of alternative spatial representations and practices, and so LGBT-friendly spaces have a potential for non-/out of/beyond power formation in opposition to inequality and injustice constructed through the 'supra-identity'. Considering the decrease in tolerance for

different identities in the 'New Turkey', LGBT-friendly spaces are domains of encounter and solidarity where individuals who are outside of their ethnic origin, belief, and gender values within the definition of 'supra-identity' can freely experience their social beings. Relations among space, power, and the subject produce their own dynamics of both resistance and repression, and LGBT-friendly spaces provide a model for forming an alternative socio-spatiality to conservative social and political structure in the 'New Turkey'.

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ORCID

Ece Yoltay http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0051-2711

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