

INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES IN  
THE CASE OF TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

EZGİ BORA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

OCTOBER 2021



Approval of the thesis:

**INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES  
IN THE CASE OF TURKEY**

submitted by **EZGİ BORA** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and Public Administration, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI  
Dean  
Graduate School of Social Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_

Prof. Dr. Ayşe AYATA  
Head of Department  
Political Science and Public Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kürşad ERTUĞRUL  
Supervisor  
Political Science and Public Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

**Examining Committee Members:**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayça ERGUN (Head of the Examining  
Committee)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Sociology

\_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kürşad ERTUĞRUL (Supervisor)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Başak ALPAN  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Onur BİLGİNER  
Başkent University  
Department of Sociology

\_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Kurtuluş CENGİZ  
Ankara University  
Department of Sociology

\_\_\_\_\_



**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

**Name, Last Name: Ezgi BORA**

**Signature:**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **INTERNATIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES IN THE CASE OF TURKEY**

**BORA, Ezgi**

Ph.D., The Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kürşad ERTUĞRUL

October 2021, 312 pages

Considering the social movements as critical agents of change through challenging and subverting the authoritative legitimate values and norms by creating new subjectivities, and queer subjects as today's critical political agents, this thesis researches and discusses critical subversive agency of queer subjects against the class habitus as the normative structural constraint, from an intersectional perspective. The study analyses how queer subjects in Turkey experience the intersection of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and religion. The extent to which queer subjects in Turkey show the components of intersectionality is investigated. The study mainly discusses class habitus of Bourdieu as an unquestioned normative constraint and structural limit against the critical queer performativity of Butler. In other words, Bourdieu and Butler are argued in relation to one another in terms of opposing post-structuralism to constructivist structuralism. And the thesis suggests two types of habitus; critical and conservative. The study argues that the precondition of performing critical subjectivity

is exhibiting critical habitus. In other words, it is claimed that the critical agency attributed to LGBTQ subjects requires critical habitus.

**Keywords:** Dichotomy of Structure-Agency, Intersectionality, Queer Theory, Class Habitus, Turkey

## ÖZ

### TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİNDE KRİTİK QUEER ÖZNELİĞİN KESİŞİMSSEL ANALİZİ

BORA, Ezgi

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kürşad ERTUĞRUL

Ekim 2021, 312 sayfa

Toplumsal hareketleri otoriter meşru değer ve normalara meydan okumaları ve onları yıkmaları sebebiyle değişimin eleştirel aktörleri olarak ele alan, kuir bireyleri de günümüzün eleştirel politik özneleri olarak ele alan bu tez, kuir öznelerin normatif yapısal bir kısıtlama olarak sınıf habitusuna karşı eleştirel yıkıcı failliğini kesişimsel perspektiften araştırıyor ve tartışıyor. Çalışma, Türkiye'deki kuir öznelerin cinsiyet, cinsellik, sınıf, etnisite ve din gibi çoklu faktörlerin kesişimini nasıl deneyimlediklerini analiz ediyor. Türkiye'deki kuir öznelerin kesişimselliğinin bileşenlerini ne ölçüde gösterdiklerini araştırıyor. Bu çalışma temel olarak Bourdieu'nün sınıf habitusunu, Butler'ın eleştirel kuir performatifliğine karşı sorgulanamaz bir normatif kısıtlama ve yapısal bir sınır olarak tartışmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, Bourdieu ve Butler, post-yapısalcılığın konstrüktivist-yapısalcılıkla karşılaştırılması açısından birbirleriyle ilişkili olarak tartışılmaktadır. Ve tez iki tür habitus önermektedir; eleştirel ve muhafazakâr. Çalışma, eleştirel özneliği gerçekleştirmenin ön koşulunun eleştirel



habitus sergilemek olduđunu savunmaktadır. Bařka bir deyiřle, LGBTQ 6znelerine atfedilen eleřtirel failliđin eleřtirel habitus gerektirdiđi iddia edilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yapı-Fail İkiliđi, Kesiřimsellik, Kuir Teori, Sınıf Habitusu, T6rkiye

*To the memory of my beloved grandmother*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kürşad Ertuğrul for his continuous guidance and support. Without his guidance, contributions, wisdom, generosity and patience, this study would not be possible. He gave me insight and hope for my future academic life as well. I am truly thankful. I would also like to express my genuine thankfulness to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayça Eren and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Başak Alban. I was very lucky to have them in my Thesis Committee and receive their comments. They gave their time, support, detailed critics and advices in all stages, from the beginning till the end. I am grateful for all the insightful constructive feedbacks and contributions. I am deeply grateful to Assist. Prof. Dr. Onur Bilginer and Assist. Prof. Dr. Kurtuluş Cengiz for their valuable inspiring contributions during my thesis defense. I am truly thankful to all my instructors for their support throughout my difficult challenging doctoral journey.

There are no words to describe how grateful I am to my participants and those who helped me get access to them. Without my dearest participants, this research would not be possible. My special thanks go to my beloved family, and my beloved friends. Without the support of my family, I wouldn't have survived this challenging period. Thank you for your love and trust in me. Also I am grateful to my beloved friends Tuba, Selda, Serkan and Tan for their contributions, comments and support while I was preparing for my thesis defense. I am very grateful for their companionship, for every minute they have spend with me at the library throughout the whole process. I would also like to express my gratitude to Zeynep and Ertuğ for the labour they put in reviewing my thesis. I am so happy that our roads have crossed with my dearly beloved friends Tan, Tuba, Zeynep, Berk, Selda, Serkan and Öznur. I feel so lucky to have you in my life. Thanks for all the joy.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

For whom is outness a historically available and affordable option? Is there an unmarked class character to the demand for universal 'outness'? Who is represented by which use of the term, and who is excluded? For whom does the term present an impossible conflict between racial, ethnic, or religious affiliation and sexual politics? (Butler, 1993:227)

This study aims to investigate the dichotomy of structure and agency. What it refers to structure is the normative intelligible order which consists of factors such as social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality. In response, there are also critical subversive actions against the structure, resistance against power relations, except for those that recreate the intelligible normative order. And the thesis explores critical subversive agency of queer subjects against intersectional oppression, in the case of Turkey.

There are two positions within the political field; class and identity. Class politics and identity politics seem to mutually exclude each other. But the aim has to be both structural transformation, and the transformation of social relations, culture, meanings and perspectives. The theory of intersectionality brings class and identity together. And queer movement proposes building a bridge between class-based and identity-based social movements as it struggles for both employment rights, social policies, economic redistribution; and for the definition and construction of meanings, public opinions.

Considering the social movements as critical agents of change, through challenging and subverting the authoritative legitimate values and norms by creating new

subjectivities, queer movement offers the opportunity for emancipation for all kinds of minority others. It prefers becoming the “other” instead of being a part of the normative structure. Queer politics, being the intersection of excluded identities, proposes subverting the normative identities; including race, ethnicity, nationality, religion and class.

Butler suggests the concept of queer in terms of coalition of all kinds of minority others. It functions as a critical category and stands for a radical political potential. She interprets the concept as an intersectional political action. She does not refer just to homosexuality, but all systems of oppressions. In other words, to Butler, the category of queer consists of race, ethnicity and social class in addition to gender and sexuality. All these factors overlap. From this perspective, sexuality can not be recognized and analysed independently. And queer politics stands for political resistance to the normative intelligible order. It is a force for “democratization.” (Butler, 1993: 227) It links “different levels of exclusions and oppressions.” (Kornak, 2015:60)

As a post-structuralist, Butler emphasizes the subversion potential of queer politics. She states that queer politics is open for new political practices. It claims to encapsulate social class and race as well as gender and sexuality. In other words, Queer theory and intersectionality mutually complete each other. Intersectional approach is complementary method of queer theory and queer studies fit in with the theory of intersectionality as “queer identity is intersectional, since most queers face multiple aspects of discrimination, as women, as people of color, as poor people, as cross-gendered people, and as sexual subversives.” (Rosenblum 1994:89) Intersectionality examines how multiple identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class...etc. and how power and the forms of discrimination intersect. On the other hand, queer theory with its destabilized, deconstructed fluid and permeable identities overcome the limitations of the theory of intersectionality which polarize identities, differences. Hence, alongside being a theory and a movement, it is a method and a strategy as well; querying and deconstructing dominant ways of knowing; normative discourses, structures, practices, power relations that construct the subjects from Foucauldian perspective. Queer transformation begins with problematizing sexual categories and



broadened its scope by deconstructing gender, social class, race, ethnicity and religion. (Eng, 2005) It is even used as a critique of the term itself. In other words, it is possible to criticise and subvert the LGBTQ movement itself, instead of focusing on a privileged white middle class sample.

And the theory of intersectionality analyses social relations like an assemblage, made up of power relations, multifaceted networks with fluidity of relations, identities, discourses and it is also open to new articulations. Subjects are born into class, gender, sexuality, race and ethnic relations and positioned within the social space based on the capitals they own and the resources they have access to, as capitals are available to certain positions. (Moi, 1991) In addition, the meanings associated with these positions are interiorized by the subjects. As Skeggs (2002) indicates, subjects are born into historically constructed social relations of capitals, through which inequalities are reproduced and in which they have access to locations and positioning. For this reason, it is crucial to focus on social locations instead of groups of people with certain identities, and on both differences and inequalities. All subjects are located historically and socially and they occupy more than one structural positions such as the intersection of gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and religion.

In other words, both economic-material relations and culture are crucial in analyzing the social reality. It is through culture and symbolic representations that the subjects access to and manipulate reality. It is implicated in all social practices. It is the signifying system through which we experience, reproduce and transform reality. Social life is produced based on the use of meanings. But the practices of social actors emerge from and are constrained by structures. Therefore, class relations can be articulated here to reveal these structural constraints; politics of individual lifestyle can be brought together with class politics and oppression with exploitation. Foremost, intersectionality would enable us in making these articulations in terms of relating to different paradigms in accounting for a pattern of oppression rather than grounding on one.

In contrast to post-structuralist Butler, Bourdieu's constructivist structuralist theory of practice focuses on the structure. He is more concerned with the structure than the agency. According to Bourdieu, individuals are constituted by structure. He conceptualizes social class as the structure which limits subject's agency. As for Bourdieu, those occupy the same class position develop similar dispositions which is conceptualized as "habitus". (Bourdieu, 1987) He links agency with structure and asserts that the practices of agent's result from their class positions, habitus.

This thesis aims to discuss Butler's conceptualization of performativity of gender and sexuality emphasizing discourse against Bourdieu's notion of habitus with the emphasis on class and embeddedness of the subject. Because in contrast to Butler's emphasis on the critical agency of the queering subject, agents are embedded in the social structures in Bourdieu's frame, through their habitus. In other words, constructivist structuralism and post-structuralism are compared; bringing queer theory and Marxism together. In order to better understand the performativity of the identities, the intersectionality of multiple systems of oppressions, including class relations, are examined. Because only those with legitimized backgrounds have the power to speak which tend to legitimize relations of power and domination discursively.

This study explores literature based assumptions within the field and discusses the case of Turkey in this framework: Are there queer experiences of critical agency against the limiting (normative) structures? In this sense, this study also questions the critical subjectivity of queer subjects against the structures that are constraining and limiting their agencies. These constraints include ethnicity, religion, gender, and social class. Do queer individuals with different contradictory identities chose one identity over the other; and if so which one and why; or whether they mediate them; accept them as interlaced and fluid. Do they subvert the material constraints and other normative constraints just as they subvert gender and sexuality? If so, to what extent they question, challenge and subvert structural constraints and which normative structural constraints they question or subvert? How? For which they remain rather uncritical like Bourdieu's subjects living in a habitus in an unreflective and unconscious way?

Why? And do they offer intersectional resistance against intersectional oppression? In this sense, the possibility of transformation from queer in itself into queer for itself, the social positioning of the queer individuals, their relations with LGBTQ associations and political-ideological standings will be inquired as well. But their critical subjectivity will not only be questioned in terms of being political activists but also regarding daily life. Because this thesis argues that the precondition of performing critical subjectivity is exhibiting critical habitus.

In other words, this study searches for Butler's categorisation of critical subversive queer subjects within the field. This thesis aims to investigate the extent to which queer subjects in Turkey show the components of intersectionality. How do they subvert and deconstruct the normative intelligible orders in which they live? Are there any attempts to explore and establish new in-between subjectivities? Do they subvert and challenge other material normative structures the way they subvert gender and sexuality? Or do they perceive social class as an indestructible limit-structure and fit in with Bourdieu's habitus theory? Because studies conducted on queer theory mostly evade the question if it represents the dynamics of sustainable multifaceted resistance. Most of the queer studies focus mostly on gender and sexuality and ignore other material constraints that repress individuals. For this reason, multiple varied systems of oppression that constitute the matrix of domination have to be analyzed. This thesis explores the politics represented by queer subjects in the case of Turkey. Starting from literature based assumptions, the study explores the possibility of critical subversive queer subjectivity in the field.

And the significance of this study lies in its attempt to combine gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and religion as components of normative structures, while most of the studies based on intersectionality within the literature are on migration and race. Especially social class is ignored in most of the studies.

Consequently, to take class as a structural limit, as an unquestioned normative constraint, this thesis refers to Bourdieu as a constructivist structuralist. And to discuss the possibility of critical agency against and in relation to these "structures" this thesis

refers to poststructuralist Butler. She underlines the possibility of critical subversive agency against the intelligible discursive norms.

### **1.1. Literature Review and Main Discussions:**

As Hennessy (2018) states, Black and Third world intersectional feminists brought histories of colonialism, capital accumulation and patriarchy together within their analysis. This type of approach towards social inequality that focus on intersections of multiple oppression systems links cultural categories to historical reproduction of capitalism. (Hennessy,2018) This thesis aims to adopt intersectionality as its approach. Because some theorists consider economic issues and class based claims as more important and universal than particular identity based claims. But as Kelley argues, class struggle is not “some sort of race- and gender-neutral terrain.” (Kelley,1997:86)

Some scholars assert that the notion of “gender” refers to one’s social class as well; representing it as an analogy of social class (Hartmann, 1979 for instance); while as for some scholars the notion of social class defines one’s gender as well. But indeed, politics of identity and politics of class have remained mostly divergent. To overcome this gap and to expose interlocking systems of power and oppression, intersectional approach would be apt to the task. It can be applied to the intersectional relationship between race and gender as well; this would make it possible to mention of gender within black spaces and refer to race within woman spaces. Every theory that focuses on a single identity excludes others but intersectional approach allows for revealing multiple systems of domination and their interlocking; such as race, sexuality, ethnicity, religion...etc. The theory of intersectionality tries to bring identity politics and class politics together, focusing on social locations as the intersection of multiple forms of oppressions, or power relations. Intersectionality demands recognition of heterogeneity of identities; replacing single axis with multiple one. The theory studies the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class; interactions of different social identities. As Matsuda defines;

The way I try to understand the interconnection of all forms of subordination is through a method I call ‘ask the other question’. When I see something that looks racist, I ask, ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, ‘Where is the heterosexism in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, ‘Where are the class interests in this?’ (Matsuda 1990:1189)

As the new capitalist global order generates multifaceted inequalities; both cultural, political and economic spheres have to be analysed. Even though these spheres are distant from each other in terms of their structure, functioning and rigidity, they are also intertwined. Roseniel and Frosh (2012) argue how both exploitation and socioeconomic redistribution relations, legal discriminations and struggle against symbolic power and cultural marginalization are equally significant in terms of political struggle;

This is, of course, why Marxists needed to formulate some notion of ‘class consciousness’ (hardly an economic manifestation), quite as much as gays, lesbians, anti-racists and feminists needed some way of naming the identity markings (or lack of them) that have been used to oppress, marginalize or abject those deprived of the symbolic way and relative privileges attached to straight, white men. (Roseniel and Frosh, 2012:45)

Because as Hennessy indicates; identities such as gender, sexuality and race are also “historically and materially bound to the labor of production”; and that they are also “values vital to profit.” (Hennessy, 2018: xvii) Social relations are too complicated that neither political economy nor cultural politics can analyse it by itself. Because as Anthias asserts; the material and the symbolic are intertwined, and that material practices incorporates social relations as well. (Anthias, 2001a). The intersectional approach brings queer theory and Marxism together; analysing every system of oppression and exploitation from a historical perspective. Here, the aim is to link the debates on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity to political economy. Because as Anthias asserts, these social categories also refer to struggles over resources, locating subjects within the hierarchical order based on access to both material and symbolic-cultural resources. (Anthias, 2001a) Besides, all of these are related with each other; mutually constructing each other, in addition to being conditioned by capitalism. (Lewis, 2016)

As a result, intersectional approach is crucial in revealing the process of differentiation and how power relations work by analysing from a historical perspective.

However, there are very few studies taking social class into consideration. Most of the studies conducted on intersectionality focus on gender, immigration and racism in the West. And those conducted in Turkey focus on space, body, geography, family but neglect social class. As for Pakulsi and Waters, “inequalities such as postcolonial racism, sexual preferences, gender discrimination, environmental degradation, citizen participation, religious commitments and ethnic self-determination... has nothing to do with class.” (Pakulski and Waters, 1996:26) On the other hand, as Fathi asserts; “class is an important element of intersectionality and needs to be brought back to the analysis of identities and positionalities.” (Fathi,2017:13) Because as Mitchell (2013) indicates, identity categories are the products of exploited labor themselves. In other words, exploitation and oppression are interlaced.

Crenshaw (1991) emphasizes the relationship between identities and oppression. Patricia Hill Collins (1998) improves the theory by focusing on multiple forms of oppression that overlap and introduce the idea of “matrix of domination”. This study does not put the emphasis on identities, based on Crenshaw’s interpretation; but stand by Patricia Hill Collins’ conceptualization of the theory which focus on the structure; the multivalent, contingent systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, racism...etc. Likewise, Sheyla Benhabib (2008) criticizes identity politics asserting that identity groups create a ‘we’ and exclude others in order to mobilize. For this reason, this study is not identity-focused. In addition, it aims at combining old and new; in other words, Marxist approach with feminism and queer theory. Because as Anthias (2001b) asserts; instead of identities and differences, the hierarchy and power structures within societies have to be acknowledged. For this reason the aim is to reveal power relations. Nancy Fraser (1999), for instance, priorities the emancipatory potential of “politics of redistribution” against the “politics of recognition” as a solution regarding the fact that cultural recognition and domination displaces socioeconomic redistribution and exploitation. And the solution of Diane Fuss (1991) for the exclusive nature of identities is to build coalition politics, which fits in with the queer theory. Because as

Phelan (1995) asserts, queer politics functions as coalition politics. Because queer theory and method have the potential to overcome these constraints by queering and deconstructing the identities, notions, dominant ways of knowing. In response to the multifaceted matrix of oppressions; the resistance has to be intersectional as well, such as the intersection of Marxism, feminism and queer theory. Because as Browne and Nash (2010) assert

queering destabilizes dominant epistemologies and methodologies used in the social sciences...challenges hegemonic assumptions and social arrangements that have long governed social science research. (cited in Macke, 2014:15)

It promotes new possibilities, new forms of subjectivities. In other respects, as post-structuralism suggests, there are no fixed, essential, biological subjectivities but that all are human constructs. Queer theory is interested in revealing how identities are constructed based on multiple social positions including the fields of family and kinship, education, work life, politics, religion...etc. The chapters and sections of this study are based on these fields in order to both reveal how the gender, sexual, ethnic, religious and class identities are constructed and analyse the structure and reveal the power relations. Because these interlaced power relations affect every structure, field, relationship; including the field of family, education, work life, politics, culture, ideology, language...etc. And every chapter within this study begins with discussing the system of domination from a historical perspective.

Within the literature, Hennessy (2018) focuses on political economy of sexuality, which she claims to be lacking in the form of empirical study. Dunne's (1997) work on lesbian lifestyle is limited as it only focuses on middle classes. Valentine (2007) focuses on the lifestyles of transgenders in terms of gender, class and race and Hill Collins (2004) places sexuality as the base of intersectionality. This thesis, on the other hand, discusses habitus as the limiting structure consisting of not just social class but the intersections of other social categories such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion. And the power relations, the systems of domination that construct, shape and maintain these identities are discussed from an intersectional approach, questioning

whether the critical subversive agencies of queer subjects challenge these structures or normalize and legitimize them.

This study follows the track of Taylor (2014) by bringing Bourdieu and Butler, and queer theory and Marxism together; researching whether critical queer subjects challenge and subvert class habitus or do they perceive it as a limit, in an unquestioned way, just as Bourdieu asserts. The multiple and emotional narrations, experiences of the intersection of gender, sexuality, class and ethnic religious identities are discussed. Both the personal and social aspects are discussed through the narrations of the subjects. Intersectional approach brings personal, social, historical, political and economic dimensions together. In conclusion, this thesis researches and discusses the critical subjectivity of queer subjects against the habitus as the limiting structure from an intersectional perspective. The intersectional approach of the thesis is based on power relations, but not essentialist identities. Polarities between the economic, political and cultural spheres have to be negotiated. Intersectional analysis is open to multiple approaches in order to subvert intelligible normative order of which social sciences is also inclusive. It is important to criticize your paradigm as well, instead of viewing and analyzing the social reality based on just one paradigm. For instance, this study uses feminist approach by applying intersectionality and focusing on narrations; Marxist approach by analyzing from a historical perspective and focusing on class relations; and Queer theory by deconstructing norms and identities to focus on power relations that construct them. The old and new actors of the field of politics; and the social, cultural, political factors that have impact upon the construction of critical subjectivity will be discussed.

This thesis originally brings Bourdieu and Butler together in addition to what Taylor (2014) did previously; bringing together Queer theory and Marxism. Hence, the significance of this study lies in its attempt to include ethnicity & religion, and its attempt to argue Bourdieu and Butler in relation to one another in terms of opposing post-structuralism to constructivist structuralism. In this frame, this study does not intend to define social class; nor social class is discussed based on income. In Bourdieu, the social class is conceptualised in terms of habitus which, in this study, is



taken as the structure limiting the critical agency of individuals Butler mentions of. Therefore, the aim is to question whether class habitus as a structure is normalised and legitimised by queer subjects, or do they exhibit subversive critical agency against the restrictions of the class habitus. Moreover, this thesis attempts to analyze whether the critical subjects of the queer movement subvert and ‘transgender’ the class position or other conflicting constraints as well; if so how, and if not for what reasons.

The thesis follows the works of Taylor and Skeggs, in analysing how the intersection of gender, class and sexuality are experienced; trying to test them in the case of Turkey. As for Skeggs and Adkins (2004), Bourdieu’s approach is restricted as it does not include gender, while according to Fathi (2017) it is restricted in not including ethnic and racialized identities. This thesis applies intersectional approach to include all. Regarding the social structure of Turkey, Korkut Boratav (1995) also mentions of the importance of going beyond economic findings that fail addressing the ideological-political attitudes of working class. For this reason, I have explored the economic, political and cultural fields as they are interlaced. Moreover, my interpretation of habitus comprises of ideological-political behaviors, as it is a set of dispositions that reflect how the individuals perceive and identify the history and the world around them. In my interpretation of habitus, cultural dispositions also comprise political consciousness.

Skeggs, for instance, applies intersectional approach to respectability; asserting that different groups in terms of gender, class, race, sexuality have different access to generate and display respectability. In other words, respectability mediates these social categories; class, gender, sexuality, race. (Skeggs, 2002) Within my study as well, respectability is a crucial signifier of social class. Likewise, one of the most crucial concern of my working class interviewees is being considered respectable. Because as Skeggs (2002) asserts, being respectable refers to having social value. My respondents segregated themselves in terms of morality and respectability. My working class respondents referred to morality in order to create themselves as classed subjects. Only those who reject every fixed identity including social class did not attach importance

to what others think of themselves, attributing a positive meaning to the fact that they have lost every war they have waged with.

As a result, the central themes of this study are the dichotomy of structure-agency, the construction of identities, social positioning, political consciousness and critical subversive agency of queer subjects against normative/structural constraints which are experienced in the fields of gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and religion. The approach of the thesis is intersectionality; in both focusing on different systems of domination and in bringing different types of theories together. Within the literature, those studying sexuality focus on citizenship, geography, immigration and race but they ignore social class. This study includes social class as well in addition to ethnic-religious identities. As such, formation and experiences of class are analysed based on childhood, schooling, performing and politicization of queer subjects. How gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion are experienced within everyday interactions, in classed spaces and fields and how power relations shape daily life experiences, identity performances and political consciousness of queer subjects is discussed. Their social positionings based on structural categories such as class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and the way they move into positions as a result of the resources they have access to based on their capitals are analyzed. The intersection of all these social categories locate subjects into a certain social position; constituting identifications, dispositions, resistances. As a result, these categories are not abstract entities; they are displayed through dispositions. They are both emotional and material identifiers, as Taylor (2014) states.

Additionally, I have used “queer” as an umbrella term and tried to reach individuals with different declarations of gender and sexuality. In fact, the concept of queer has emerged in the 1990's. It began to be used in the LGBTQ circles and also quickly adopted by the feminist and social sciences community as well. At the beginning it was used for gay people in the meaning of “weird, low”. But in the 90's it was subjected to creative repetition like the word “nigger”. In both political activism and theoretical conceptualization it was appropriated, positively reconstructed, defended

and turned into political activism. Butler's (1990) *Gender Trouble* is the foundational text of the queer theory, along with Sedgwick's (2008) *Epistemology of the Closet*. Queer theory questions the relationship between power, subjectivity and identity. As a result, it both has a relationship with LGBTQs and also rejects identification and calls for a total emancipation. As for Butler we need to reject identification, while Halberstam (1998) emphasizes the multiplication of identities. Feminists criticize it for being too liberal, asking how one can build politics without using an identity as a base, as mainstream politics are always based on an identity. However the aim is to uncover power relations instead of rejecting identities, as constructing an identity always involve exclusions. In other words, queer theory is not against the identity itself but its oppressiveness. Queer calls for political alliance. It is both used as an umbrella term that encapsulates all members of the community, and as the name of a political movement.

This study does not intend to attribute critical subversive subjectivity to queer subjects but explores literature based assumptions in the field. At first it questions whether Butler's conceptualisation of critical subversive queer subjectivity has a corresponding reality in the field. If so, do they subvert restrictions of the class habitus as well? If not, for what reasons? To put it another way the theoretical debates in an attempt to counterpose Bourdieu's constructivist-structuralist definition of class to Butler's post-structuralist conception of critical agency from within an intersectional perspective are tested through ethnographic research based on LGBTQ subjectivities in Turkey. The experiences of queer subjects belonging to different social positionings in terms of the intersections of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion are discussed from an intersectional approach. How they experience and resist the structures and whether they constitute new subjectivities or not are analyzed.

But literature based assumptions did not bring about the expected findings in the fieldwork, which will be discussed in detail in the methodology chapter. Therefore, the original research questions have been transformed through the experiences in the field. I did not find what I was expecting. In other words, I did not intend to impose critical subjectivity to agents but depart from Butler's category of queer which

proposes critical subversive agency by default. In this sense, this study argues that the category of critical queer subjectivity does not correspond to reality in the field. There was a hierarchy within the community as well. Queer subjects do not exhibit critical subversive subjectivity immanently but the critical agency attributed to LGBTQ subjects requires critical habitus.

In other words, this study suggests two types of habitus; critical and conservative. Within fieldwork, just as two types of performances of Butler, or the theorisation of two types of actions of Foucault, two types of habitus are revealed; the critical and the conservative one. My respondents displayed two types of habitus; critical and conservative. The factors that affect the constitution of these habitus will be discussed in detail. And it is claimed that critical habitus is a precondition for critical queer subjectivity of Butler. In other words, the critical agency attributed to LGBTQ subjects requires critical habitus. And what the thesis refers to critical habitus is triggering and revealing critical subversive subjectivity, while the term conservative habitus is used for not exhibiting critical subversive queer subjectivity Butler mentions of.

Similar to Taylor's (2014) respondents, not all of my respondents were simply bearers of the social positions. Either identifying with or dis-identifying from their classed positions, my interviewees displayed either critical habitus or conservative habitus against the structural-normative constraints. They were aware of their classed positions, even though they didn't mention of, it was there expressed through feelings. Just as Skeggs (2002) asserts; my respondents were struggling for recognition trying to be considered as respectable. Because as Skeggs (2002) indicates, the way individuals recognize themselves as the subjects of the positions they occupy is also a classed act based on the capitals they own. Similarly, Taylor (2014) notes that the structures of feelings or emotions connect performativity and materiality; class and identity.

As a brief introduction of the chapters; chapter one outlines the significance and scope of the study. In chapter two the fieldwork is discussed. Chapter three focuses extensively on the theoretical framework. Chapter four discusses how social class,

gender & sexuality, ethnicity and religion are experienced by queer subjects and the possibility of critical subversive subjectivity against these. In chapter five, an analysis of the types of habitus the respondents displayed in the field is put forward. Chapter six traces the possibility of an intersectional resistance against the intersectional oppressions the respondents have been experiencing. Finally, chapter seven tries to make a conclusion on the critical subversive agencies of queer subjects against the intersections of gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and religion.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

I started out my research to reveal how different power relations and multiple layers of oppressions are interlocked within queer subjects. I have departed from the literature and searched for the critical queer agents Butler defines in the field. I entered the field in the summer of 2019. As the first LGBTQ organizations formed are in Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir; I started searching for my respondents through organizations in these cities. A huge number of activists have migrated to Mersin; and I went to Mersin as well in order to meet them. Later on, I met my respondents who are not activists and have no connection with associations in the streets they are working at; at Balo street in Istanbul and Bülbülderesi in Ankara. But my profile of respondents consists of individuals. I applied to organisations in order to reach interviewees and I reached both activist and non-activist interviewees. Through snowball sampling, I reached some of them from Diyarbakır and had a meeting online. I managed to contact queer subjects from Adana and Zonguldak whom I consider to be reflective of the experiences from the countryside.

In fact, through snowball sampling, I have reached out queer individuals from a variety of age, occupation, social class, political orientation and declaration of gender and sexuality. The organizations were issue based and divergent. Bisexual and lesbian women, transsexuals, Kurdish LGBTQs, those from lower classes and those who are more elitist were all organized separately and I had a chance to have an access to these organizations and through these organisations I have reached my respondents.

I have faced many problems reaching people and mostly received rejections. The most difficult thing has been developing trust. Associations already said that helping

researchers and finding contacts was never their duty at all. I have tried to reach people via snowball sampling but many people were unwilling to provide referrals. They were afraid I would turn them in and spread their private. Furthermore, they were tired of helping theses which do not produce solutions to their problems. Some even questioned my intentions of choosing this topic, while some demanded for money in exchange for answering the questions. I did not accept due to ethical reasons. Also women were not allowed in the houses they work at in Istanbul. As a result, some of them offered to meet on their weekly leave day, but did not answer their phones later. Political pressure and instability were other factors that obstructed my progress in fieldwork. As common forms of activism have been increasingly criminalised, the community continues its activism mostly in the field of arts. This also affected my field research. Eventually, my field experience has been unstable and discontinuous similar to other sexuality studies.

Most of my interviewees stated that they would prefer survey instead of in-depth interview. Most of them asked for close-ended multiple choice questions. They couldn't understand why I have chosen to do face to face interview. Because either they didn't know what I was asking and what the answer would be. Or they had no clear answer. This was the case for most of the questions, whether regarding their social class, their socio-cultural background or their families. Because when I turned off the recorder, my interviewees said different, contradictory things. Especially with my respondents I have had a chance to sustain long term relationship, I had a chance to apprehend the contradictions. In other words, another limitation I have faced during the fieldwork was reliability as statements were contradictory.

Even though the movement is fragmented and everybody established its own organization, they are all aware of each other and try to act in solidarity. It was especially difficult for me to reach working class queer subjects, since most of them are not out and live their sexuality secretly. The ones I was able to reach were through my left-wing activist friends. And to some of them I have reached on the street. In Istanbul, it was easier to reach my interviewees on the street because they have their own streets and neighborhoods. And they established my connection with Diyarbakır

as well. The movement in Mersin was very left oriented. It was a pleasure meeting them. HEVİ LGBTQ Association also helped me a lot. It was a pleasure meeting them likewise. The association focuses on the problems and rights of both Kurdish LGBTQs living in Istanbul and immigrant LGBTQs. Finally, I have reached some of my interviewees on my own effort and relationships. I managed to meet with some of them outside our formal interview as well, mostly with those I have had a chance to sustain long term relationships. One of my transsexual sex worker respondent wanted to meet at the office of a feminist organization, asserting that she couldn't invite me to her house because I was too white. After all, I have conducted interviews with forty-seven people aged between eighteen and sixty. With the exceptions, most of them come from working class families and work as precarious workers. And pseudonyms are used instead of real names. I have defined their socio-economic status based on their family backgrounds, educational skills, occupations, incomes, housings, leisure activities, consumption habits and ethnic identities. Except for family backgrounds, the other factors were unsteady which made it difficult to keep the track. I have tried to include individuals from a variety of profiles in order to be able to discuss religious and ethnic identities, political position, different geographies, education, age and gender. Some of my respondents work at formal sector, while other at informal. Some of them are unemployed, while some of them are white-collars with a regular job.

The respondents are asked about how they perceive social class, social discrimination and systems of oppressions, associations, religion, politics, social movements and queer theory in addition to their demographic info; family, education and employment backgrounds, intimate relationships, daily life activities. The questions based on family, education, occupation, leisure time, and religion are asked as the sexual order affect all these institutions. The questions focus on the way they experience and interpret social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion in addition to their political consciousness and relations with organizations. The way they identify themselves, the ways they interpret judgements of others, their sense of feelings and belongings; and their daily life practices are researched in a relational social context. Because the way interviewees produce and narrate their subjectivity differs from how they are positioned in terms of their economic, social and cultural capital. They were



encouraged to share additional informations as well. The interviews have been recorded when accepted. Those who rejected being recorded asked me to take just notes. Some of the respondents rejected meeting face to face and asked for talking on the phone or online. One of them was for political reasons while the others felt more comfortable that way.

The questions I had prepared before the field were mostly based on the concept of class and intersectionality. Also academic language was used. But both the questions, the language and even my intentions and thoughts have changed once I entered the field. I set out to investigate how class is felt and experienced, yet I came across with other identities. The research of social class has unfolded into different categories. Different political ideological understandings have developed from the field. My prior assumptions based on literature have changed and I tried to re-categorise my findings. I did not intend to impose or attribute any identity or agency to my respondents, but tried to convey the way my respondents identified themselves in terms of identity.

In fact, the questions prepared continued changing during the field. Questions based on social class had to change into politics, activism and organizations. I had to replace the word ideology with political identity; social class with wealth and poverty. The questions regarding their leisure time activities had to be replaced by their use of public transportation and public space for those from lower class. The questions regarding their families seemed meaningless with my transsexual respondents as most of them had to leave their families at a very early age. Likewise, regarding the questions on transition to work life, sex work and being in the closet came out to be discussed. As a result of being unemployed, dependent on their families, and unable to become self-sufficient; they have to stay in the closet. In addition, only middle class subjects knew what queer meant, while lower classes haven't even heard of LGBTQ. I had to use the word "lubunya"<sup>1</sup> for my transsexual respondents. In other words, the language I used had to change based on the social class of the respondents.

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to effeminate gay men and trans women. Twink.

In addition, I had difficulty in talking with those who are not familiar with the terminology I use. A friend I met at an organization couldn't understand what I was asking; as a result, we ended up applying nail polish instead of having an interview. There were also those who have comprehensive knowledge but afraid to speak as a result of political pressure. Some of them praised the government which I suppose was by reason of fear, once again. Some of them rejected having the interview as a result of their disbelief that it won't resolve any of their problems. This disbelief created silence. Especially transsexual sex workers rejected having the interview and choose to remain silent as a result of not being certain about its benefits, in addition to oppression and fear. They asked if I was going to inform the authorities regarding the problems and issues transsexual sex workers face. It was obvious that they expected some solutions for their problems from this thesis.

I have experienced a self-transformation in this process as a result of self-reflection. My values have changed, especially regarding morality. As my field was not limited with certain time period or location, I have also become a part of it. It is not possible to know when the field starts and when it ends. My before and after experiences have interlaced. In other words, I can not mention of a certain time period as a result of the reflections of the field on me.

Even though my core sample is working class individuals, I conducted interviews with subjects from different classes as my approach towards class is relational. In other words, my interpretation of class experience is not limited to working class but to marginalized others. This study does not intend to define social class. It refers to habitus conceptualization of Bourdieu as the limiting structure, which is not an economic category. As a result, how subjects interpret, experience and resist in the limits of habitus have been the focus of the research. There were those identifying with lower class with an average income; and those who consider themselves as middle class in spite of being paid less.

I have applied the relational method of Bourdieu to the interviews, according to which, cultural practices are analyzed based on binary oppositions. (Swartz, 1997) In other words, the meanings of the practices are ascribed in relation to other practices. Everything is investigated contextually. In this frame, some cultural practices become legitimate in relations to others. As Bourdieu puts;

What exists is a space of relations which is just as real as a geographical space, in which movements have to be paid for by labour, by effort and especially by time (to move upwards is to raise oneself, to climb and to bear the traces or the stigmata of that effort). (Bourdieu, 1991:232)

Instead of using programs in order to assign codes I have preferred to analyze the data by myself in order to undertake a symptomatic reading<sup>2</sup>. In other words, I have preferred to perform a paper-based analysis in order to feel closer to the data and to examine it contextually. And making a paper-based analysis let me use multiple techniques as well.

I have focused on the experiences of the individuals in a detailed and descriptive way and tried to contextualize the patterns, as experiences are embodied forms of subjectivity and that they are crucial for those lower classes who lack the language and agencies. For this reason, in addition to narrations and patterns; silences and contradictions are of critical importance. In other words, I have tried to analyze the experiences of individuals within a social context, focusing on how they evaluate their own and other's behaviors and that to what extent they are involved in the construction of their selves. Likewise, as for Bourdieu (1984) subjectivity is formed within experience. And that experience is not an ontological data but a construction. In short, experience is embodied within a discourse and it is comprehended through language. In this sense, the subject forms and is formed by culture; which is the basis of structures that create meaning. Then again, culture includes political-ideological attitudes as well. Therefore, the construction of the experience by the subject has to be explored. In other words, from a feminist approach, not only the experiences of the respondents

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<sup>2</sup> Althusser, 1965

but also the way they construct the interpretation of these experiences have been discussed.

Ultimately, I have tried to focus on how the interviewees position themselves and others; and that how they interpret relationships that are normalized and legitimized by them and the others. At this point, how they express themselves, the words they choose to identify relations, and their emotions have been discussed. And in addition to what they assert consciously; their unconscious behaviors, statements that they let slip out; those implicit meanings have to be taken into consideration as well. That's why I have preferred paper-based analysis.

To sum up, this study is a collection of narrations instead of statistics. I have tried to wander within the narrations and focus on how queer subjects produce, identify, recognize and experience intersectional oppression. And that how social class is constructed in real experiences, what it means and how is it experienced have been explored. Because narrations reveal how people interpret their relationships and experiences. They “provide accounts of how individuals view themselves in relation to others and are therefore central to how we construct social identities.” (Lamont et al., 2010:17) For this reason, this study questions the critical agency of queer subjects against the multiple systems of oppression, based on their own narrations and interpretations of how they experience stigmatization, exploitation, exclusion, discrimination, and their political consciousness as a result of these.

As asserted above, the content of the interviews, narratives, testimonies are paid attention to. Because the way they narrate their stories tell us how class and identities are experienced in distinctive ways. Factors such as family, education, ethnic identity, religion and immigration came to the forefront.

In total forty-seven interviews have been conducted. Twenty-three of these are gay; seven of them lesbian; four of them bisexual; six of them trans-woman; four of them trans-man and finally one of them is pansexual. Twenty of these belong to working class, while the rest belong to lower middle class and middle class. The socioeconomic

status of their families, their educational backgrounds, professions and income are varied. Twenty-two of them are organized, while the rest react negatively to LGBTQ associations in a conservative manner. Most of the activists are white-collar. Even though the educational backgrounds differ, most of them are at least self-educated. None of them gave a definite answer to their income which is the indicator of precarization. Furthermore, regarding the political opinions, it is possible to mention of three groups; individuals that support Justice and Development Party<sup>3</sup>, those supporting People's Democratic Party<sup>4</sup>, and apolitical ones that do not believe in politics. Regarding the intersectionality, interviewees could be separated into four groups. Those who identify themselves with their class and reject their gender identity in order to climb the social ladder; those who identify themselves with their gender identity at the expense of living beyond the poverty line; those who reject identifying themselves neither with their identity nor their class; and finally those who do identify with both and wage a struggle for both; as they need class in order to live their identity. Ultimately, two different habituses, the critical and the conservative, are displayed by the interviewees.

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<sup>3</sup> AKP

<sup>4</sup> HDP

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **3.1 Structure and agency conceptualization of constructivist structuralism versus post-structuralism**

Constructivist structuralism assumes a structure which constitutes the agent. This structure is made up of common shared ideas, rules, norms, language, everyday knowledge, social consciousness; in other words intersubjectively shared ideas and understandings of everyday. According to which, identities, subjects, agents are constituted by the structure. In the end, social reality is a construction that appears as structure. And Bourdieu, as a constructivist structuralist, is less concerned with agency but with structure, named habitus. Habitus reproduces structures, and that, subjects begin with a particular type of habitus and end up with the same. But as for post-structuralist Butler, individuals can resist and subvert these structures.

In the post-structuralist theory, structure is again the normative intelligible discourse and intersubjectively shared knowledge about everyday life. But counter performances, critical subversive actions against these never ending repetition, in order not to reproduce but to challenge the structure, is possible as well. In other words, the structure conceptualisation of post-structuralists posits the possibility of critical subversive autonomous subjectivity. Both habitus and gender are embodied bodily practices. But Butler conceptualizes opposition to these practices. In fact, post-structuralism claims that identities do not have given essences, as identities and even subjects are social constructs themselves. Identification is rejected as a result of creating power relations. It re-creates the structure; such as the segregation of transsexuals based on who has undergone surgery and who has not. Butler names

‘norms’ what Bourdieu conceptualize as ‘habitus’. But she mentions of a possibility of critical subversive agency who performs the norms differently instead of reiterating them, a disruptive critical subversive queer subjectivity...

In fact, as Skeggs (2002) discuss, experience is also a historically constructed structure which constitutes subjects. The experiences that are recognised and legitimised reveals social locations of the subjects, which are the combinations and intersections of class, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, religion... etc. In other words, some experiences are recognised while others not, based on the power relations.

This thesis inquires the critical subversive agency of queer subjects against the class habitus as the limiting structure. Similar to Butler’s conceptualisation of two types of performativity; or that of Foucault’s conceptualisation of actions; my respondents displayed two types of habitus; critical and conservative habituses. Former is influenced by the ethnic religious minority identifications and exposition to multiple oppressions. Moreover, the leftist political involvement and activism background of the families and socialisation with associations and activists are significant in this form of habitus. On the other hand, the conservative habitus is influenced by nationalism, religion, and poverty. These will be discussed in detail.

### **3.1.1 Butler’s critical queer subjectivity**

#### **3.1.1.1 The social construction of gender**

According to the framework of the gender theory, gender categories are classes created by the power of men over women. After the 1920s, studies began to combine social Darwinism with psychology (Haraway, 1978:29); correlating hormones, behaviors and genders in a reductionist way (Shilling, 1993:51) by adapting the results of experiments based on sexual division of labor conducted on animals to humans. As Ortner asserts, biological determinism is the reason for the justification of gender inequalities. (Ortner, 1974) The problematicization of why women and other

secondary groups do not oppose this situation of inequality has been blocked by biological determinists. (Köse, 2014) The socio-biological approach raises the concept of intelligence in order to explain the qualifications between species, races and individuals. (Haraway, 1978: 28) The duality of intelligence / body together with the dualities of human / nature, male / female and civilised / primitive pave the way for domination. These dualities work for the sake of men as being intelligent as a privileged position is attributed to man. (Köse, 2014) The superiority of intelligence naturalizes the exploitation of the body and justifies exploitation of labor. (Plumwood, 2004) Those who are not smart enough are condemned to their bodies and are subjugated to intelligent people who have the authority of decision making upon their bodies. As Plumwood asserts, the shortest way to control human behaviors is to include them in the category of “nature”, as in the case of children, women, slaves and animals. They are accepted as the creatures of nature as a result of lacking cultural completeness. (Plumwood, 2004:146) While discussing civilization, Elias emphasizes the differences between adults and children based on lack of intelligence and physical control as the ability to control oneself and emotions are the main conditions for social engagement. (Elias, 2000; Shilling, 1993: 160 cited in Köse, 2014) According to Firestone, childhood refers to weakness just like femininity. And together with children and women, other marginalized people such as insane people or proletariat are also being suppressed physically. (Firestone, 1993:83) In this form of social construction of gender, female biology and psychology is reduced to fertility of the female body. This corresponds to difference within the political language. The differences of women from the biology and psychology of men are emphasized.

The concept of gender has been used by feminists since the 1970s to criticize and transform sexual role models. According to which; the enemy is not biological men but the historical and cultural masculinity that is associated with power and sovereignty. Gender is remarked as a sociological category, avoiding biologicalization and essentialization of social and political relations between sexes; as social relations are changeable, unstable. (Gatens, 1996:30) According to feminist theorists, the gender system is the main determinant of human social existence and serves as a model for other unequal power relations. And that the patriarchal society builds a series of



masculine and feminine identities and behaviors on what kind of a man and a woman should be. (Öğüt, 2013) Different disciplines discuss womanhood in a variety of ways. However, by referring to dualities they reintroduced what they had criticized. But during the 1980's, the differences between women became prominent. The voices of the black, third world, working class women began to be heard. During these debates, feminist theory has developed itself based on post-structuralist approaches as well and two paths arose based on the conception of subjectivity; Irigaray following the Freud / Lacan line and Butler following the Nietzsche / Foucault line. (Bora, 2018)

Psychoanalysis puts gender at the center of the subject's development. As for Freud, the male body is the desirable form, and the absence of a penis is determinant at identifying differences between men and women. According to Freud, the only determinant factor to achieve gender is penis. (Weedon, 1999:80) Unlike Freud, Foucault does not discuss sexuality as an instinct against power. Instead, it is made up of power relations and that gender is the product of discursive practices. His main thesis is the fact that gender does not have a "fixed biological or prediscursive essence." (McNay, 1992: 17) Gender system based on fixed binary structure is a result of a discourse. It is "an historically and culturally specific construct rather than an innate phenomenon." (McNay, 1992: 6)

Irigaray's (1985) following the Freud/Lacan line, does not question the relationship between sex and gender and focuses on female subject. She identifies woman based on its distinctness from man. On the other hand, Butler questions the concept of subject and deconstructs it. She interprets biology from the perspective of culture but not the nature. She criticizes feminists for ignoring the importance of compulsory heterosexuality while analyzing the social construction of gender. She asserts that as long as sexual differentiation is classified only as the difference between men and women, gender will reflect sex in all cases. (Butler, 1990)

Butler implies that gender is more than simply internalized patterns of behavior. Instead, it is imposed on the individual. Though individual is partially conscious of it.

For her, gender is a system of performances based on repetition of behaviors. But there is the possibility of resistance. Gender norms could also be violated. As Butler states,

‘The possibilities of gender transformation are to be found precisely in the... possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmatic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction. (Butler, 1990: 179)

In other words, she discusses subjects who can resist. Her subject is established by power relations but has the opportunity to either adapt or resist.

### **3.1.1.2 Critical Subversive Queer Subjectivity of Butler**

As for Butler, subject or agent is neither pre-given nor stable but only a “political prerogative.” (Butler, 1992:13) In other words, she investigates the conditions of possibility of critical subversive agency as it is a “contested possibility under certain political conditions.” (cited in Thonhauser, 2013:147) She investigates how one transforms from subject in itself into subject for itself. And for her, power has no reality except from its role in the constitution of the subject.

She starts with stating that “no individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing ‘subjectivation.’” (Butler, 1997:11) In other words the agency of the subject is determined by its subjection. It resembles Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, as being a product of established orders, but Butler mentions two kinds of power; one that constitutes the subject and the other that transforms the subject. As Butler asserts “...power shifts from its condition of agency to the subject’s own agency.” (Butler, 1997:12)

As she puts it:

In fact, the norm only persists as a norm to the extent that it is acted out in social practice and re-idealized and reinstated in and through the daily social rituals of bodily life. The norm has no independent ontological status, yet it cannot be easily reduced to its instantiations; it is itself (re)produced through its embodiment, through the acts that strive to approximate it, through the idealizations reproduced in and by those acts. (Butler, 2004b:48)

In other words, she refers to everyday life and reiteration as the structure limiting the subversiveness of the agents. But the subject also emerges as the condition of possibility for a critical subversive agency. The subject and power are linked and reproduced repeatedly. Norms are produced, things are normalized as a result of this repetition, reiteration. Power has to be reiterated in order to be sustained. But the agent can alter, reverse this process. Here Butler's theory of subversiveness steps in; the possibility of the emergence of a critical agency. This repetition is mostly a conservative one, re-producing the intelligible normative order. But it could also be a subversive one.

Butler's notion of performativity is based on this process of reiteration, as she also puts it:

Here, ... I would suggest that performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. (Butler, 1993:95)

And that as she states in *Gender Trouble*; "The iterability of performativity is a theory of agency, one that cannot disavow power as the condition of its own possibility." (Butler, 1990: xxiv)

In conclusion, a subversive repetition, iteration reveals and challenges the non-natural status of the hegemonic normative order. And as Butler indicates, the emergence of critical subversive agency is dependent upon political conditions. That is to say, while our bodies enable us to act, our shared precarious presence triggers collective action. (Butler, 2004a) She puts emphasis on the body while discussing the emergence of political consciousness. This means that, as asserted before, agencies are both conditioned and powerful.

For Butler, social agents re-constitute reality through their performing of language. Through this, they can reiterate gender performances, subvert hegemonic norms that are being totalized and universalized. And as for queer theory, if gender is a doing, is thousand plateaus but not binary; how can one resist class oppression then? How do critical agencies challenge and subvert class relations?

### **3.1.2 Bourdieu's habitus as a limit**

Bourdieu's notion of the habitus might well be read as a reformulation of Althusser's notion of ideology. (Butler, 1997:2010)

Bourdieu's theory of practice claims that a set of socially organized dispositions, named 'habitus' organizes how members perceive, appreciate, and act in relation to specific situations. (Solomon & Sterponi, 2005) Habitus is the basis of social action. It produces individual and collective practices which are engendered by history and internalized by the subjects unconsciously. In other words, as for Bourdieu, action is based upon the relationship between the conscious choices of agents and external structures; meaning agency and structure have a dialectical relationship. Social action is the product of neither subjective intentions nor external structures. Therefore, habitus is both bodily and cognitive basis of action as a result of being the "cultural unconscious, habit forming force, set of basic, deeply internalized master patterns, mental habit, mental and corporeal schemata of perceptions, appreciations and action", "a structuring structure that generates action." (Swartz, 1997:101)

Habitus is a result of socialization experiences. Individuals internalize external structures through their childhood, within the family, school...etc.

What agents judge as "reasonable" or "unreasonable" for people of their situation in the social world stems from habitus. Habitus tends to reproduce those actions, perceptions, and attitudes consistent with the conditions under which it was produced. It is "necessity made into virtue. (Bourdieu, cited in Swartz, 1997:103).

Those who internalize similar dispositions, opportunities share the same habitus, meaning they belong to same social class. And not all actions are possible for

everyone. There are those you can reach and you cannot, depending on your habitus. Opportunities of the class are “incorporated in bodily form as well as in cognitive dispositions.” (Swartz, 1997:108) In other words, actions are not rational but agents, having been socially embedded, act in accordance with their social position. Additionally, as for Bourdieu, habitus is resistant to change.

And the structure in which the habitus operates is called “field”. Fields are made up of a functioning logic, and agents struggle to accumulate and monopolize different types of capitals in order to improve their positions within this arena. So fields are arenas of struggle for control over resources, in other words different types and amounts of capitals. As a result, they function as a space of possibilities in which agents’ mobility depends on the capitals they own. Every field has its own functioning, like a game. Bourdieu mentions of three types of field strategies; conservative strategies carried by those that hold dominant positions; strategies of succession carried out in order to obtain the dominant position; and finally strategies of subversion pursued to produce a rupture from the dominant. (Bourdieu, 1993)

To sum up; as for Bourdieu, social class is a social space within which agents are distributed in terms of the capitals they own. Those that belong to the same class, meaning those that occupy similar positions within this social space possess similar dispositions and so develop similar practices. As Bourdieu explains;

The dispositions acquired in the position occupied involve an adjustment to this position, what Erving Goffman calls the sense of one's place. It is this sense of one's place which, in a situation of interaction, prompts those whom we call in French *les gens humbles*, literally humble people perhaps common folks in English to remain humbly in their place, and which prompts the others to keep their distance, or to keep their station in life. It should be said in passing that these strategies may be totally unconscious and take the form of what we commonly call timidity or arrogance ... This sense of one's place is at the same time a sense of the place of others, and, together with the affinities of habitus experienced in the form of personal attraction or revulsion, is at the root of all processes of cooptation, friendship, love, association, etc., and thereby provides the principle of all durable alliances and connections, including legally sanctioned relationships. (Bourdieu, 1987:5)

Social locations of individuals depend on the types of capitals they possess. Bourdieu identifies four types of capital; economic capital which includes income and wealth; cultural capital which consists of educational qualifications; social capital which is based on social relations, connections and finally symbolic capital which is made up of legitimized forms of other capitals. As Skeggs assert; “Cultural capital has to be legitimated before it can have symbolic power. Capital has to be regarded as legitimate before it can be capitalized upon.” (Skeggs, 2002:8) And that, the structure conceptualisation of Bourdieu, in other words ‘habitus’ is generated from movements of different forms of capitals which enable access to resources and legitimation. (Skeggs, 2002)

### **3.2 Intersectionality**

each domain of power illustrates how intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation are organized in unique ways. (Collins, 2000:276)

all, everything, every person, every event, every context, every intersection, matters greatly, singularly, unique(ly). (Collins cited in Lee, 2012:472)

The theory emphasizes the fact that social injustice and inequalities emerge from intersecting oppressions that work together. As Combahee River Collective defines, our lives are a creation of the “synthesis of these oppressions.” (Combahee River Collective, 1974 cited in Lee, 2012:470) It aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it. (Pattynama & Phoenix, 2016) The term is bigger than sexism and racism, focusing on intersecting systems of discrimination and oppression. It draws attention towards unique social locations shaped by racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and capitalism. Collins argues that intersectionality is the “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women.” (2000: 299 in Vries, 2015:4)

Crenshaw's (1991) conceptualization of intersectionality focuses on systems of oppressions in the form of multiple exclusions but race and gender have been emphasized while social class is neglected. As Brah and Phoenix point out, "the concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands." (Brah and Phoenix 2004:76). Similarly, Collins and Bilge define the concept as follows; "when it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other." (Collins and Bilge, 2016:2) Anthias and Yuval-Davis criticize theory of triple oppression as it does not explore systems of oppression. Instead, they stand for focusing on power relations from a historical perspective. (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) Likewise, Brah and Phoenix (2004) justify the concept of intersectionality asserting that it "focuses on how such differentiations are produced rather than who and what is affected." (cited in Fahti, 2017:31) Lastly, according to Phoenix and Pattiyama, "intersectionality foregrounds a richer and more complex ontology than approaches that attempt to reduce people to one category at a time." (Phoenix and Pattiyama, 2006:187). This perspective enables us to see that a focus "on processes and systems shifts the gaze from the othered identity and category of otherness to a critique of the social production and organization of relations of othering and normalization." (Dhamoon, 2011:6)

Collins prefers using the term "matrix of domination" instead of "intersecting oppressions" as "matrix of domination and exclusion" refers to the ways in which multiple various forms of oppressions are experienced (cited in Harr and Kane, 2008:287). And that in order to analyse and oppose these systems of oppression, one has to realise the fact that these systems of oppression, discrimination and exclusion are not independent of each other; that they mutually construct each other, work together, and should be considered together.

As for Collins and Bilge, the theory of intersectionality addresses six main themes; inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity and social justice. (Collins

and Bilge, 2016) On the other hand, Crenshaw defines three forms of intersectionality; structural, political and representational. (Crenshaw, 1991)

All in all, the theory of intersectionality and focusing on power relations lead us off the binary oppositions and enable us to see identities as not fixed but as unstable, changeable processes, positions within a matrix. And it allows us to analyze a phenomenon within systems of oppression that are interlaced; in other words, dynamics of a system; such as capitalism, patriarchy, nationalism, militarism, heterosexism, racism...etc.

What is critical here is that while some hierarchies are considered as being socially constructed, others appear as naturalized. (Crenshaw, 1991) In order to avoid this, relations of power have to be unveiled, instead of focusing on identities. As these systems of oppressions, naturalized hierarchies mutually construct each other; it is very possible to repeat and replicate some hierarchies while resisting others. Collins gives the violence of black men on black women as an example to this; as they hide domestic violence as an internal family issue. The O. J. Simpson trial can also be given as an example; according to which O. J. Simpson uses issue of racism in his defense when he was arrested for the murder of his wife who happens to be white. Bourdieu gives an example as such:

The normal development of the trade union organization produced results that were the complete opposite of those that had been foreseen by trade unionism: the workers who had become trade union leaders completely lost their vocation as workers and their class spirit and acquired all the characteristics of the petty-bourgeois functionary, intellectually lazy, morally perverted or easy to pervert. (Bourdieu, 1991:283)

Identifying yourself as a feminist between friends within socialist movement but acting according to normative gender roles at home against your wife could be another example. Once again, middle classes acting reactive and sensitive against issues of gender, race, sexuality but ignoring class exploitation could be another example. In other words, focusing on identities instead of unveiling power relations is dangerous and prevents seeking justice. As systems of oppressions such as nationalism,



patriarchy, heterosexism, racism, capitalism construct each other, instead of focusing on identities, power relations embodied in the structures have to be analyzed. Because, as Butler argued, power constitutes both agency that opposes the structure and that reproduces the oppression by exercising power over others. As Hankivsky asserts, “a person can experience both oppression and power.” (Havinsky, 2014:9) Transsexual sex workers both being exploited and exploiting other transsexual sex workers could be given as an example to this. As a result, as Havinsky states; the focus of an intersectional analysis is thus not only to identify the dominant and the marginalized, but also to understand “the processes by which power and inequity are produced, reproduced and actively resisted.” (Hankivsky 2014:9)

Instead of developing policies based on a single discrimination; in other words instead of setting up single issue politics, multiple issue politics, joint actions have to be organised that share resources and experiences. (Prabhudas, 1996) And that power relations, oppressions, exclusions within the community itself has to be analysed, in addition to those against the community.

Within the literature there are different types of intersectionality approaches. Structural intersectionality focusing on intersecting structures; political intersectionality focusing on political movement; and representational intersectionality that focus on representations. (Colfer, Basnet & Ihalainen, 2018) The perspective of intersectionality which this study adopts is informed by McCall’s intracategorical approach analysing intersecting structures focusing on a single group; queer community. Accordingly, anticategorical approach rejects categories while intercategory approach uses them strategically in order to “document relationships of inequality among social groups.” (McCall, 2005: 1773) The approach of this study is intracategorical because it focuses on a single social group, queer community based on narratives and individual experiences. And the intracategorical approach “also maintains a critical stance toward categories.” (McCall, 2005: 1774)

Besides, the most important contribution of the study is including social class as one of the categories which is ignored in most of the studies. As Seidman indicates;

"the concept of lesbian and gay identity that served as the foundation for building a community and organizing politically was criticized as reflecting a white, middle class experience." (Seidmann, 1997:91) Therefore, the analysis would be incomplete if it privileges social class, or grounds politics in an identity, focuses only on a single social position within the totality (Bohrer, 2018). Because they are both one part of a complex system, matrix of domination, which Ashley Bohrer calls capitalism;

I argue that to claim that capitalism is the root of the modern class, gender, sexuality and race systems of oppression is not to say that class is the primary or privileged axis of oppression. Slavery, colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy; all these were developed in and through capitalism, at least in their modern and contemporary forms. (Bohrer, 2018:69).

Within the literature on intersectionality, Collins conceptualizes sexuality as a social location systems of oppressions intersect at. (Collins, 2000) Along with Collins; Nagel and Yarbrow also studies intersections of gender, race, social class and sexuality. (Collins, 2000; Nagel, 2003; Yarbrow-Bejarano, 1999) Franks (2000) add religion; Mohanty (1991) and Nagel (2003) adds nationality, and Bettie (2003) adds ethnicity to these categories. Hennessy discusses the relationship between sexuality, race, gender and capital accumulation. (Hennessy, 1993)

And within the previous literature on intersectionality of gender, sexuality and class; Moran (2000) attributes homophobia to the working class, which this study avoids, as it is controversial due to different outcomes. John and Patrick (1999) discuss the negative consequences of being a lesbian in poverty, whose work fail to notice the worsened conditions of transgenders. Murray (1999) discusses the notion of underclass, while Dunne (1997) finds a positive correlation between being a lesbian and being rich, as a result of having a privileged sample. After all, the habitus of class is "instilled, entrenched, recreated and embodied, is also gendered and sexualized, generating a series of dispositions, attitudes and tastes." (Taylor, 2014:117) On the basis of her study based on working class women, Skeggs's (2002) interviewees assert to be conscious of belonging to working class; emphasizing poverty and mistreatment. Though some of them dis-identify with their class giving reasons as not living in public houses, paying taxes or receiving high education; while for some, being obliged to

work in order to survive means belonging to working class for sure. This was the case for my interviewees as well. And finally Taylor draws attention to the varied agencies of individuals towards intersectionality of class and sexuality. Her interviewees either romanticize or pathologizes their social class. However, as for this study, two different habituses; the critical habitus and the conservative one that appears as the limit against the critical subversive agencies of queer individuals, are suggested. Ethno-religious identities, socialization within left-wing milieus, family background and educational skills have impact upon the development of critical habitus; while likewise family background, educational skills and national religious identities have impact upon the development of conservative habitus, which will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

Eventually, this study explores how queer subjects experience various forms of oppression within the matrix of domination and that how categories of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and religion are intersecting at the social positions of queer subjects. Because as Hennessy asserts; both gender, sexuality, and race are also inequalities of capitalism masked by the practices of culture-ideology. (Hennessy, 2018) This thesis seeks internal differences within queer movement as one can experience both oppression and power at the same time. In other words, instead of intersection of identities, power relations are examined. After all, experiences with gender and sexuality inequalities are intertwined with social class, ethnicity, and religion as well. And unlike most studies conducted on LGBTQ subjects that focus on only privileged subjects; this study aims to reveal the inequalities within the LGBTQ movement itself based on social class, gender, ethnicity and religion.

Finally, this study interprets intersectionality as a critical praxis, discussing the critical subversive subjectivity of queer subjects against the intelligible normative structures; in other words political consciousness of queer subjects, which happens to stem also from multiple inequalities; intersections of social class, gender, ethnicity, and religion based discriminations. As Harnois asserts; “intersectionality theorists have argued that those who experience mistreatment based on multiple social statuses often develop a broader understanding of intersecting social inequalities.” (Harnois, 2015: 972)

In the next chapter, intersecting oppressions my interviewees are exposed will be discussed based on the dimensions of gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and religion.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES IN THE CASE OF TURKEY**

Back then, we were attaching great importance to the transformation of the society. There were homosexual grocers, butchers, and tailors. In those times, we were not just focusing on the intellectual field and the left wing politics... There was a trans woman making a living through selling lottery tickets. This was also part of the struggle. Relations with the left-wing intelligentsia is also important, but it is just as necessary to struggle in daily life as well. (Güneş, 2016:17)

In this chapter, the critical subversive queer agencies of LGBTQ subjects against the gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and religion in the case of Turkey will be discussed. At first how subjects experience the intersection of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and religion will be researched. Then, the possibility of critical subversive agency of the queer subjects against these limiting structures will be discussed. To do so, the intersections of power relations behind the process of identification will be explored.

The complexity of habitus creates different opportunities. And the social positionings of the subjects in the fields are determined in terms of the types and amounts of capitals they own. Here below, who are formed as privileged and excluded in each field, and the critical subjects who attempt to challenge, deform and subvert these structuring power relations in order to explore new subjectivities will be analyzed.

#### **4.1 Brief history of LGBTQ in Turkey**

Within the literature of social movements, on the one side there is an approach that evaluates social movements psychologically as pathological irrational collective behavior; while on the other side Marxist approach reduces them to working class politics and labor movements. But new social movements that emerged after 1968 showed features that could not be explained with neither of these approaches. (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2016) “New social movements... have the ability to redefine the political or transform social values and symbols through cultural politics.” (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2016:250)

As for Tilly and Tarrow, social movements have to be evaluated as contentious politics, which focus on political opportunity structures. Tilly and Tarrow define contentious politics as making claims on authorities through either inherited collective actions or inventing new ones. Contentious politics bring contention, collective action and politics together, taking advantage of both institutional and extrainstitutional politics. (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015:7) This thesis uses the theory of contentious politics and claims that LGBTQ movement in Turkey takes advantage of both institutional and extrainstitutional politics. It builds a bridge between old and new social movements by adopting the characteristics of both. New social movements focusing on demands for recognition and access, differ from old class-based social movements that organize around redistribution of resources. But queer movement suggests deconstructing this binary. It includes the features of both old social movements that target the state and new social movements that aims to change the perception of people. Also it has the potential to include both class based and identity based politics.

As Tilly (1978) puts it, “social movements are the result of long-term changes in group resources, organization, and opportunity for collective actions.” (cited in Torrecilha, 1986: 89) In other words, they depend on structural changes. According to resource mobilization theory, “elite third parties have important impacts on social protest because the oppressed group, on its own, rarely possesses the power and resources necessary to organize and sustain movements.” (DeFilippis, 2015:33) Feminist

movement and LGBT movements in other countries have significant impact on the emergence of LGBTQ movement in Turkey. LGBTQ movement in Turkey has professionalised, constructed its own intelligentsia, and has been benefiting from funding opportunities. It has established associations that focus on laws and policies. As Nash notes, it “aims of economic redistribution and the extension of citizenship rights” (Nash, 2010:88), which is a feature of old social movements. But it also tries to queerify the definition of politics, opens up new fields when conventional ones are blocked. In addition to addressing state apparatus and formal institutions, it also “struggles over the definition of meanings and the construction of new identities and lifestyles” (Nash, 2010:87) which is a feature of new social movements.

Here below, the evolution and turning points of the LGBTQ movement in Turkey will be discussed in detail.

As Saritaş states; it is possible to trace homoerotic relations back to the Ottoman Empire, through narratives and journals. (Saritaş, 2018) However, LGBT movement as a political movement emerges in the 1970s. Those were the years feminist movement gained momentum. First World Conference on Women was held in 1975. After 1980, studies on women, education and law gained momentum. In 1990s, gender was accepted as a relational term. Studies and projects started to address the relationship between men and women as a system. And finally, in 2010s, gender was perceived as a system of governance apart from relationships of women and men. In the first years of Justice and Development Party, feminist movement was acting in alliance with the state apparatus, but later regression starts with President Erdoğan’s statement that women and men could never be equal.

Just as the case of USA, LGBT movement and the political identity in Turkey emerged in urban context as well, in 1970s when feminist movement was gaining momentum as asserted above. The first step to establish the movement was the tea gatherings İbrahim Eren organized in İzmir. Meanwhile, there were trans-women living and working around the Abanoz Street in Istanbul. There were around thirty trans-women living and working in houses. In 1978, they were removed from the street by the

Branch Police Chief of Istanbul Public Security. As a result, they had to move to Dolapdere and started working in mobile houses, established mobile brothels, like the system of slums. For a while the cops were pulling the houses down and they were rebuilding. But at the end they had to hit the streets. Most of the population moved to Bursa as it was not forbidden to work at night clubs there. At the time, there were girls working at Mersin as well. There were no houses they can work at in İzmir. The only possibility was to take the costumers to hotels or to their homes if they trust. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2012) But after the 1980 coup, transsexual women were put on trains to Eskişehir, tried to be exiled. In 1981, a stage ban was imposed on Bülent Ersoy as well. Stage bans caused serious housing and employment problems. As a result, they had to start working during daytime under dangerous circumstances, taking their costumers to Belgrad Forest most of the time.

In the meantime, arbitrary treatments of the cops based on Law of Police Powers leave its mark on this period as well. Especially the Istanbul Police Department in Sirkeci, the Sansaryan Han and the hospital of venereal diseases called "Cancan" were working collaborately. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2012) Police officers were forcing trans women into sex, cutting their hair, and beating them with sticks. Cats were put into their baggy trousers to have their legs stratched. And the hospital staff were being offered bribes to get their work done. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2012)

In 1985, five-six streets turned into their ghetto. (Kazancı Slope, Pürtelaş-Başkurt-Ülker Streets) Afterwards, Harbiye became popular. They started working from windows. In addition, in 1985, political subjects such as LGBTQ individuals, atheists, anti-militarists, environmentalists, feminists came together under the Radical Left Green Party Initiative. The Radial Left Green Party Initiative was the first entity that enabled the autonomous organization of the LGBTQ movement. (Güneş, 2016) And in 1987, transsexual women hold a hunger strike in Gezi Park against the violent policies of the state. This was their first public protest. After this protest, about a year cops put an end to violent treatments and LGBT community continued organizing. However, soon after trans people get annoyed of the atheists who contradict with their faith and the movement collapsed. (Güneş, 2016) The re-appearance of Süleyman the



Hose<sup>5</sup> mobilised the organisation once again. But after İbrahim Eren got arrested, LGBTQ wing left the party as the politics of the party gravitated mostly towards ecology. (Güneş, 2016)

The 1990s were the years when the struggle against homophobia and transphobia, what we define today as the “LGBT movement”, was born. There was no visibility yet but it could be asserted that 1990s were the years of solidarity and coming together. Home gatherings started in the 1990's. When İbrahim Eren got arrested, a protest was held in front of the Turkish Consulate in Berlin. People gathered signatures, collected donations. Gay associations in Germany decided to organise pride, Christopher Street Day in Istanbul and Heribert Mürmann came to Istanbul as a representative of the gay associations of Germany to organise the event. Their argument was that in whichever country pride was held, gay movement started or gained momentum. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) Because, as Della Porta defines global social movements, “transnational networks of actors that define their causes as global and organize protest campaigns and other forms of action that target more than one state and/or international government organization.” (Della Porta, 2007:6) At the time the political atmosphere of the country was not appropriate for such a parade. Later on they decided to establish an association instead of organising a parade. But even finding the people whose signatures are required in order to establish an association was a problem as everyone was afraid to declare their identity either because of their family or workplace. After gathering for a year, in 1993 they organized the first Pride Parade and a three day activity program under the name of ‘Sexual Freedom Activities’ but the Governship of Istanbul banned the events on the grounds that they contradict the values and customs of the society. Cops blockaded Istanbul Avaneue, raided houses of the activists, and deported the participants from abroad. Another attempt to organise parade was banned once again in 1995. But the gatherings continued at TAV (Social Research Foundation) which belonged to Ufuk Uras. But there was no political affiliation. The foundation was just paid and rented. Because at that time there were not even women’s

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<sup>5</sup> He was the Chief Police Officer of Beyoğlu Police Department during those times. He was forcing transgender people to choose a höse and torture them with it.

branch of Freedom and Solidarity Party<sup>6</sup>. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) In fact, here we observe the impacts of elite third parties in terms of resources, just as resource mobilization theory suggests. (DeFilippis, 2015)

Feminism was yet being discussed during women meetings on Friday's. Though, this first prohibition in 1993 led to the establishment of Turkey's first LGBT organization, Lambda. Their communication with the public started in the late 1990s. The first gathering of Istanbul and Ankara branches was held in 1998 under the name of Güzistanbul. These gatherings continued once in every six months; in Istanbul in the fall and in Ankara in the spring. They were also organising boat trips in Istanbul and trips to Şengül Bathhouse in Ankara. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) The agendas of these gatherings, such as LGBTQ refugees and the field of art are still valid even today.

1990s were the years when LGBT movement started to write its history through magazines published by associations. A group of homosexuals started to organize as the circle of Kaos GL Magazine after the first issue of the magazine was published on September 1994. They started by renting a mailbox with the nickname Mikelanj from the Cebeci post Office at Dikimevi. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) And people started to send letters to there. In a way, they were actually providing consultancy. Even once a guy from a village of Denizli had arrived and waited in front of the Cebeci post Office hoping to meet people there. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) Afterwards the circle of Kaos GL established a LGBT commission within İHD (Human Rights Association) but were dismissed after the new administrative committee was elected. They continued publishing their magazine until 1999. The fact that majority were students made it easier spreading the magazine to different cities. In some cities, the magazine was delivered regularly with the volunteering of friends. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) But in some cities, for example, a student friend in Samsun volunteered to leave the magazine to a bookstore, but when he graduated, the magazine was no longer going to Samsun when the second volunteer did not appear. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) And after receiving a complaint, they rented an office on Konur Street in order to register

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<sup>6</sup> ÖDP

the magazine. And that address became both the address of the magazine and a cultural center. (Kaos GL, 2019a)

Later on, a few women coming to meetings of Kaos Culture Center established their own organization under the name of Sappho's Daughters. There were similar organizations established by women only in Istanbul as well such as 'Sisters of Venus' or 'Eksik Etek'. There was a strong feminist organisation in METU as well. Sappho's Daughters and the feminist group of METU gathered once a month for six months and discussed a lot of topics.

Another important event that hit the headlines in the 1990s was the Ülker Street incident. Ülker Street is a street just behind the Etap Marmara Hotel in Taksim Square. It was one of LGBTQ ghettos made up of bachelor pads. Nearly a hundred trans people were both living and working there. Istanbul was just beginning to receive trans and gay immigration. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:57) Girls living there all knew each other. There was no such thing as private life or secret. Everything were shared. It was like a communal life. Some were Kurdish, some were Turkish, some supporting religious nationalist parties, while some were liberal, getting along with each other all together. Usually two people were sharing a house and everyone was making very good money back then, having sixty-seventy costumers per day. It was the Golden Age of transsexual sex workers as a transsexual activist asserts. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:57) They were getting along well with all the residents. Or at least they thought they were. Yet, when Süleyman the Hose came to expul trans people, break their doors and burn their houses, the residents known to be their friends took side with the cops. Even their drug-dealer next-door neighbor turned his back on trans people and took sides with the cops as a transsexual activist states. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:59) Through the early 90s, they had to work in the clubs as a result of the police pressure trying to prevent them from working on the streets. Girls were getting dressed up, and working at the club until three or four o'clock in the morning. Cihangir was also black peoples ghetto at those times. Before trans people, black people were exiled in order to clean the area from marginal people. After girls were displaced from Ülker Street, some could managed to move to Şişli, Harbiye, Kurtuluş and Tarlabaşı. Those who

were unable to do that had to start working on highways. Trans murders started to increase after Ülker Street events. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) But also, it could be asserted that trans movement emerged from Ülker Street incidents. Transsexuals mobilized spontaneously which is a feature of new social movements. But later on, their mobilization turned into an organization. They established their own trans association and began making long term plans, which is a feature of old social movements.

Transsexuals also published a magazine called Gacı in 1996 which aimed to function as the communication bulletin of transsexual sex workers. It was released between 2004 to 2007 as well, but failed to reach transsexual sex workers as they were not doing a desk job. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) Broadcast failed to connect them but after the incident of Ülker Street, they started to gather at their houses. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013)

Afterwards LEGATO<sup>7</sup> was organised within universities; first at METU and then Boğaziçi and Hacettepe. They started organising their events under the name of Political Science Community before creating their own community.

One of the significant feature of new social movements is the use of new communication technologies. As Tilly & Tarrow state, internet has a major role in contentious politics. (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015) Internet also has had a completely different impact for the LGBTQ community in the 1990s. It was very effective in the rise of the movement, and it was effective in shaping the identity of the community. Before the Internet there were parks, cinemas, baths that LGBTQ people could meet each other. Before the availability of internet people could get in contact or denounce their experiences of homophobic assault only through writing letters to Kaos GL magazine. But internet provided access to other LGBTQ from all over the country. Because as Tilly puts it; the use of internet “increased the ability of organizers to expand their reach.” (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015:17) And that “through these tools, people

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<sup>7</sup> The Lesbian and Gay Inter-University Organization

who had never met, and might live thousands of miles apart, came to see themselves as parts of an “imagined community” with a common identity.” (Anderson, 1991 cited in Tilly & Tarrow, 2015:55) It lowered the age of coming out as well. It even changed the relationship with the state. Before it was invented, as there was no computer as well, trans people taken into custody could not leave the police stations before a couple of days. But thanks to the instant mobilization via internet such incidents started to get decreased. (Kaos GL, 2019a:76)

Afterwards, the mailing groups and forums emerged and the content has changed. As Tilly puts it, with the use of new communication technologies; “social movement organizations transformed themselves into public interest groups and shifted their main forms of mobilization from the streets and campuses to direct mailings, educational campaigns, and lobbying.” (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015:54) The use of internet “also enable sharing of knowledge about a movement’ s concerns, expertise, and strategic thinking to an unprecedented extent.” (Nash, 2010:125) Within LGBTQ movement as well, in addition to sharing experiences, they started to generate knowledge. Beforehand, Kaos GL was only constructing the memory of the LGBT movement and building up a network, but later on it started to produce information itself, publish news and articles. Another milestone is the launch of its website. It changed the readership as the readers could reach the articles directly without need to wait for two months. (Aslı, 2020) In other words, people started to share experiences at forums, while the magazine focused on generating knowledge. (Aslı, 2020) Because as Tilly & Tarrow argue, contentious politics develop consciousness raising organisational strategies. (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015)

Apart from that, in 1996, Turkey’s first gay and lesbian program began to be broadcasted at the radio channel Açık Radyo. ÖDP (Freedom and Solidarity Party) became one of the political parties to address LGBT policies. As the Turkish Penal Code was being changed, a group made up of fifteen LGBT people made an appointment and went to the parliament with the support of feminists. Since Amargi<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Feminist Organization

had not been established yet, they held a meeting with the Emekçi Kadın Birliği (Working Women's Union) and DISK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions). They prepared a guide called 'Sex work and common laws in the World and Turkey' in collaboration with Kadın Kapısı (Women's Gate). (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:149)

Kaos GL and Lambda Istanbul organised a meeting called 'The Meeting of Turkish Homosexuals' and declared themselves as a Turkish movement as a result of being accused of an importee movement by both Islamist conservatives and left wing. They suggested to use the word 'gay' in Turkish as it is read. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:14)

On the other side, it could be asserted that the beginning of 2000s were the years of visibility and the diversification of the movement. In 1997, Kaos team participated in the May 1st Labor and Solidarity Day demonstrations, but without banners, as some of the participants got scared. But in 2001, after the opening of the Kaos Cultural Center, with the confidence gained from regular meetings and workshops, they participated in demonstrations with rainbow flags. This is considered as the second turning point within the movement. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013)

In 2002, a declaration named "What do Turkish homosexuals want?" came out of a meeting. In 2003, Symposium on Problems of Lesbian and Gays and Seeking Solutions for Social Peace was organized. And finally the first Pride Parade took place in 2003, by a group of about forty people. Later on, in 2004, a forum on queer theory was held.

On the other hand, the agenda of transgender people and gays were very different. Trans people were working at nights, doing sex work. Gays and lesbians were off to the office while trans people were sleeping during the day. They had to share a house with two or three friends in order to survive. And it was also a period of incredible violence, the period when trans people were thrown into Mamak garbage dumps or thrown out of the city with buses. Trans people were exposed to violence, beaten and taken out of the city by the Balyoz team. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013) In 2006 Eryaman events broke out. Trans people were expelled from their homes in Eryaman. During

this period, they established Pembe Hayat Trans Organization. They were just a few activists who were struggling for their right to live against the policies of the state, the cops and the gangs. Because they were deprived of their right to education and forced to sex work in order to survive. Today there are some exceptions but in that period only option was sex work. As a result they organised and established their own association. Their protests staged every week in Yüksel Street against Eryaman events played an important role in the capture of Eryaman gang. The Eryaman trial process started after the names, surnames and even the registration numbers of the vehicles of the perpetrators were revealed and published in the newspapers. (Kaos GL, 2019a:110)

Later on, The Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association started as a project of Pembe Hayat (Pink Life LGBTTT Solidarity Association). Kaos organised seminars on homosexual rights and human rights in Istanbul, İzmir, Ankara and Diyarbakır. Listag was established. In 2004, a group from Kaos went to parliament again with the support of the feminists from Amargi, to demand insertion of gender identity and sexual orientation into the law. In 2010 Judith Butler attended anti-homophobia event of Kaos in the Faculty of Political Science of Ankara University. Another important event in 2010 was the demonstrations against Aliye Kavaf who declared homosexuality as an illness. On the other side, some feminists didn't accept trans women to International Women's Day march.

In 2011, just as Ülker and Eryaman events, this time trans people living in cheap houses damaged by the earthquake in the Avcılar Meis Housing Complex were expelled from the neighborhood and their houses were sealed. In addition, SPOD (Social Policy, Gender Identity, and Sexual Studies Association) was founded in 2011; in order to contribute to the fields of law and academia, trying to increase political representations of LGBTQs. In order to guarantee the right to life of the LGBTQs, the Constitution and the social policies have to include sexual orientation and gender identity as well, and SPOD organized campaigns in line with this purpose. Nevertheless, LGBTQs are still forced to achieve their goals through the back door, by way of the relationships they establish when laws do not recognize them. (Karahan, 2020)

Relationships of LGBTQ movement with Justice and Development Party is similar to those of feminists. They had a sympathy for Justice and Development Party in its first years. They tried to work in alliance with Islamist NGO's as a result of the packages of progressive laws Justice and Development Party had been passing in order to fulfill Copenhagen Criteria. (Savcı, 2011) And as a result of their anti-militarist principles and objection to mandatory military service, they were "extremely skeptical of both the Turkish army as an institution, as well as Republican People's Party as a political party that did not hesitate to mobilize the Armed Forces to antidemocratic action, and was happy to have them as protectors of democracy." (Savcı, 2011:84) But later on, their relationship have changed as Justice and Development Party started to exclude and marginalise those who are againts moral order together with those who are against economic development. It started to seek moral order which excludes women and LGBTQs. The anti-abortion agenda, the campaign that advocates having at least three children, the mission of segregating girls and boys are some of the moral based policies of Justice and Development Party.

But essentially through the process of making of the new constitution, only Republican People's Party (CHP) and Democracy and Peace Party (BDP) supported the demands of LGBTQ movement. Only the programs of Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) and Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) involved them. In addition, up to the present, Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), The Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), Republican People's Party (CHP) and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) nominated LGBTQ candidates. In addition, as Çetin asserts, "when the association LambdaIstanbul was facing closure in 2006 and 2009, it received support from the DTP (especially from Sebahat Tuncel) and from the ÖDP (especially from Ufuk Aras). In both parties it was Kurdish and leftist feminists in particular who campaigned for LGBTQ issues." (Çetin, 2016:25) And as for Çetin, the political allience of queer people and Kurdish people results from the intersection of nationalism and heterosexism. (Çetin, 2016) Also as Tilly states, "movements learn from each other; the success of a particular tactic on the part of one movement is likely



to lead to its adoption by another.” (cited in Nash, 2010:98) And queer movement has been open to collaboration with both Kurdish Movement and feminist movement.

On the other hand, Kurdish LGBTQ associations began to be established as well. In 2013, LGBTQ individuals in Istanbul who experienced voluntary or forced migration and as a result have been exposed to multiple discrimination because of their both LGBTQ and ethnic identities established HEVÎ LGBTI Association, in order to encourage Kurdish LGBTQs living in Istanbul to organize, and fight for their identities. They believed in the necessity of such an organisation in Istanbul in order to force the Kurdish movement and the Kurdish society to change in this area. Unfortunately, they have not been able to fully contact the Kurdish society, but only staying in touch with democratic institutions. As they assert, when you say you are gay from Kurdistan, you could be insulted by some nationalists in the movement. (Güneş, 2016) In addition, the problems of homosexuals in Kurdistan were discussed over the Roşin Çiçek case from Amed, and as a result, a formation called ‘LGBTQ organizations in Kurdistan’ is formed, which consists of six structures. Keskesor LGBT Formation is also established in Diyarbakır and it organized a pride parade at Munzur Festival. Subsequently, those who came together in Munzur in 2013 declared their existence as the Dersim Roştıya Asme LGBTQ organization in 2014 and organized the first pride march. (Güneş, 2016)

Gezi uprising is a breaking point. Not just because different segments of the society and LGBTQs came together to struggle; but there was also a change in the perspective of left-socialist parties after Gezi. They used to think like the nationalist conservative wing. As Tarrow states; “social movements do not arise individually, but rather as part of a general wave of social unrest, generally precipitated by some unpredictable event and facilitated by changes in political opportunity structures.” (cited in Nash, 2010:98) Thus, after Gezi uprising new political opportunities had developed. As Tarrow puts it; “the effects of the peak of the protest are not felt immediately, but become apparent later in the agendas of political parties, policy decisions, and changes in attitudes and values among the general population.” (cited in Nash, 2010:99) The formation of AK-LGBTİ is a good example for this.

After all, as Güneş asserts, LGBTQ movement is a movement that continually opens a field of struggle for itself. Feminist movement ignored them; human rights association, people's houses and other left-wing associations suspected them. It has been struggling for twenty-two years. (Güneş, 2016) And today it is faced with a more organized and complex repression compared to 80s and 90s. Because repression intensifies as they organize and their visibility increases. One of my respondents<sup>9</sup> complained about EU projects, asserting that they increased the transphobia as a result of making transsexuals more visible. On the other side, achievements are nonignorable. With the effort of the movement, transsexuals are no more hosed but are served with fine. Because the organised movement kept reporting, publicizing transsexual murders and pursuing the lawsuits.

On the other side, at the end of the 2000s, with the rise of the right populism, and as a result of the global impact of the financial crisis and Syrian War, attacks on social movements increased. (Aslı, 2020) Attacks on LGBTQ movement started to increase especially in 2015. LGBTQ people started to lose the rights they had acquired in the past. Hatred and acts towards organizations increased. As a result, defenders and activists had to retreat from public. (Aslı, 2020) ISIS threatened KAOS GL, and they had to close the cultural center and move the office. And finally in 2017, all LGBTQ events were banned for three years.

However, as the common forms of activism are increasingly being criminalised and the shrinking of the space for civil society continues; LGBTQ movement continues its activism in the field of arts, over another language. (Aslı, 2020) The movement had to change repertoire and focus on the changes in the field of culture. As other doors were closed, alternative ways of thinking was in need. As Nash puts it; "a repertoire of collective action includes all the ways in which a group uses its resources to bring about a common end." (Nash, 2010:97) Struggle for redefining the cultural, the symbolic, the norms and values which are features of new social movements replaced

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<sup>9</sup> P24

the politics of the street which is a feature of old social movements. In other words, their artistic activism and cultural resistance is from necessity. Additionally, they started to publish peer-reviewed journals by reason of the lack of queer publications and resources in Turkish. (Aslı, 2020)

After all, as Tilly (1978) suggests, social movements represent the interest of groups excluded from the polity. (cited in Torrecilha, 1986:14) As Tarrow states, they interact with “elites, opponents and authorities.” (Tarrow, 1998:9) LGBTQ movement in Turkey both aims to affect formal political institutions, laws, politics and culture of meanings, values and norms through an organised struggle. It has relationships with trade unions. Associations such as SPOD directly target social policies, and political parties. These are features of old social movements which target state apparatus. But the movement also aims to change social values, norms, perspectives, prejudices and public opinions. It brings up issues which were excluded from the political sphere, such as sexuality. It offers new forms of non-violent protests. And these are the features of new social movements. (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2016) The slogan of pride parade *‘Where are you my love? Right here, darling!’* influenced the whole society. But still, the movement also aims for changes in employment and laws. It is both after political change through legislative channels, and also aims to change the public attitude towards LGBTQ subjects. It struggles for both recognition and redistribution. Because both class based politics and identity based politics remain incapable on their own. Instead, intersectional analysis, coalition politics, and multi-issue organising are required.

#### **4.2 Butlerian critical subversive queer subjectivity within the field:**

I should also like to talk to men about Judith Butler and queer theory. Theory or bread and butter? You name it. The diary of a nightclub singer. (Jilet Sebahat<sup>10</sup>)

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<sup>10</sup> A drag queen taking the stage at Anahit Sahne in Beyoğlu.

As Obaid-Chinoy asserts, feminism can and does remain incapable in facing all the exploitation and oppression arising from the systematic dominance of men. According to Obaid-Chinoy, sexuality has to be discussed also as a white heterosexual male privilege. (2020)

Before the institutionalization of modern medicine, human sexuality was equated with reproduction by means of traditions and language. Again, modern medicine equates sexuality with reproduction. Wittig states that the heterosexist organization of the society creates a sexual economy that divides people into men and women and equates sexuality to reproduction. (Wittig, 1996: 27 cited in Köse, 2014) Regarding reproduction, only two gender categories are mentioned; male and female. In 1800's France, brochures were illustrating boys getting sick and dying by spitting blood as a result of masturbating, as masturbating is not for reproduction. (Başar, 2019)<sup>11</sup> In other words, sexuality is considered healthy if only it results in reproduction.

Heterosexuality is an institution and a discourse within which the way we experience sexuality is regulated and legitimated. It is the form of sexual order under capitalism. Because in addition to being positioned within a binary gender system, subjects are also positioned within a sexual orientation system what Warner (1993) calls the '*sexual order*'. We are born into it and contribute to its legitimization by repeating the norms, rituals on daily basis, even though when we define ourselves against it. As Skeggs indicates, it is the "acceptable, dominant and for some often the only known way of speaking sexuality." (Skeggs, 2002:120) As Foucault defines how sexuality is;

I try to make an archaeology of discourse about sexuality which is really the relationship between what we do, what we are obliged to do, what we are allowed to do, what we are forbidden to do in the field of sexuality and what we are allowed, forbidden, or obliged to say about our sexual behaviour. That's the point. It's not the problem of fantasy; it's a problem of verbalization. (Foucault & Kritzman, 1988:8)

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFSR\\_byDyTU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFSR_byDyTU)

It is not just a discourse or representation but also a material institutionalisation. It could be asserted that it is a matrix around which various axes of difference such as race, gender, class are intertwined. As for Evans,

...as with all capitalist social relations, sexuality's material construction is effected not only directly through the market, but also mediated through the state's formal machineries and practices of citizenship, and in all these arenas sexuality is, albeit attenuated, a channel of class relations. (Evans, 1993:35)

Or for Hart (1994), it maintains race and class. Since both women of color and working class women are stigmatised as non-feminine and therefore unrespectable; it is assumed that lesbianism is prevalent among them. Because as Nead and Lury indicate, femininity is a category assigned to ideal bourgeois women, which can be achieved through economic and cultural capital. (Nead, 1988; Lury, 1993 cited in Skeggs, 2002) In other words, as a result of being associated with middle class women; heterosexuality refers to being respectable. Hence, dangerous, perverse, unrespectable sexuality is associated with Black and White working classes. (Skeggs, 2002) In this sense, feminism does not appeal to them. However, in a paradoxical way, self expression of sexuality is considered to be a characteristic of bourgeois mentality. (Marshall, 1981 in Skeggs, 2002)

In other words, as Adkins claims, heterosexuality can attribute privilege and respectability to certain social positions in relation to other forms of inequalities, such as gender, race and class. (Adkins, 1995) It is one of the other systems that produce both normalisation / legitimisation and marginalisation / exclusion; though as Skeggs asserts, it is mediated by respectability because subjects are categorised as unrespectable not only due to their sexual locations, but also due to their class, gender and race locations. (Skeggs, 2002) In fact, sexuality is a key signifier in the struggles of class, gender and race. Because it marginalise subjects, designating them as '*the other*' based on their raced, gendered, classed locations; attributing indecency to Black lower class women. As Gilman asserts, for instance, black female sexuality was equated with working class prostitution. (Gilman, 1992) Furthermore, as Skeggs

claims, middle class white women are purified by their race and class differences. (Skeggs,2002)

Since sexuality is regarded as a threat to morality, and regulated on the basis of being respectable, just as the case in USA, in Turkey as well trans people “change genders in relation to androcentric, middle-class, white-normative, and heterocentric cultural narratives.” (Vries, 2015:6) They try to position themselves as natural and normal in terms of gender and sexuality.

In this section, how my interviewees conceptualised gender and sexuality as they are constructed through intersections of various capitals, as a result of different social positionings will be discussed. Because as Skeggs asserts, sexuality is not just “an expression of their inner selves, but an expression of the unequal power relations in which they are located and struggle against.” (Skeggs, 2002:120) Additionally, it will be explored whether the movement in Turkey is after normalisation of homosexual identities by employing identity politics; or apply queer theory in order to break the normalizing structures and proliferate all sexual identities, as Seidman argues. (Seidman, 1997) The analysis of Turkey in a comparative framework would be significant in this context.

As for Butler, gender is not what one is but what one does. But most of my interviewees have chosen one particular gender to enact. They reassign their gender and re-create the normative structure instead of challenging and subverting the authoritative legitimate values and norms by creating new subjectivities. They try to articulate themselves to the normative structure. One of my working class trans woman respondent<sup>12</sup>, for instance, defines herself as a woman. She reacts to the behavior of gay men, finds it extreme while accepting the same behavior exhibited by cisgender woman and man as ‘normal’. In other words, she is desirous of repeating the gender norms and becoming the normalized woman of the normative order.

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<sup>12</sup> P11

The performances depend on a class background though. While the working class subjects lacking the capitals they need in order to challenge the normative intelligible order try to change their gender, the middle class ones, who accumulated different forms of capitals do subvert the given gender binary and the normative intelligible order. They reject every type of classification and choose to be labeled as *'the undermost'*. They do prefer becoming the other instead of being a part of the normative structure as a result of holding cultural and educational capital. Even drag queen shows can be considered on the basis of social class. A transsexual sex worker, from the documentary called *'Paris is Burning'*, based on black gays and transsexuals of New York in 1980s, defines the drag queen performances as an effort of agency. She explains how they do it on the dance floor instead of fighting;

The well dressed men of 80's gets into the suits and get into the pumbs. In real life you can't have a job as an executive unless you have the educational background. And the opportunity. The fact that you are not an executive is merely because of the social standing of life. That is just a pure thing. Black people have a hard time getting anywhere. And those that do are usually straight. In a ballroom you can be anything you want. You are not really an executive but you are looking like an executive. And therefore you are showing the straight world that I can be an executive. If I have the opportunity I can be one. Cause I can look like one. And that is like a fulfillment. (Livingston, 1990)

As Taylor asserts, queerness as engaging in subversive parodic practices can only be accessible to middle classes who own the economic, cultural and symbolic capital needed. (Taylor, 2014) In other words, queer theory is speaking to middle classes. Only they are able to associate queerness with subversive critical agency; while lower classes have even never heard of it.

Furthermore, it could be asserted that queer is in reality not an umbrella term that covers all gender minorities or other type of minorities. There is a hierarchy within themselves as well, that depends on the appearances and the masculine power. Gay men hold power within the movement. Bisexuals are the least exposed to discrimination while trans-women are the most. One of my lesbian respondent<sup>13</sup>, for

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<sup>13</sup> P13

instance, suggested conducting the interview with her bisexual and political roommate instead of her. In another case, two lesbians have made the decision to quit the committee for the Pride Week as a result of white male domination within the movement. This, in fact, reveals the oppression lesbians have been suffering because of their gender identity within their own community as well.

Gezi uprising happens to be the peak of the LGBTQ movement. In its aftermath, the movement had reached over the conservative provinces as well. Even though it is weakened and almost diminished at the moment, it can still be revived. Regarding the queer movement, though, it is made up of English speaking intellectual activists most of whom live in metropolis. Because establishing a classless society becomes utopian when workers are dying every day and so queer theory's conception of anti-identity seem meaningless for other social movements, such as socialists or feminists, as they claim to be fighting for acquiring and protecting social rights yet. In other words, one needs those identities in order to be comprehensible, to be able to contact and transform society.

While left-wing organizations attack sex labor from a moral perspective, feminist movement attacks their terminology. In fact, for the same reason, a part of transsexual sex workers are statist, and they expect support from the state. They complain that associations have done nothing but unfurl banners and show off, and furthermore force them to walk during Ramadan. They express that their states are actually supporting them. In other words, it could be asserted that while public is pious, activists are like modern elitists. Those who play a part in both leftist movement and LGBTQ movement are mostly Kurds. However, except for working with refugee LGBTQs and transsexual sex workers, there isn't any class dimension within the queer movement.

After all, they are aware of the fact that even among themselves; damages they suffer due to their sexual preferences and appearances differ. While bisexuals and gays get hurt the least, they are followed by lesbians and transsexuals respectively. On the other hand, should one mention different capitals of Bourdieu, there are also exceptions



along this generalization. For example, one of my working class interviewee<sup>14</sup> has little cultural capital and she fled from her family living in Antakya, which is a provincial city. As a result, she struggles for her life alone. And yet, she states that a transsexual friend of hers suffers more, as she cannot participate in some events of the football group they are both players of, since she is afraid that bad things may happen while she tries to go back to her home alone late at night. The transsexual friend of hers she mentioned, is from Tunceli; and yet her family supports her. She underwent the surgery at an early age; took her identity, and she is now enjoying life while studying at university, in contrast to lonely and broke life my working class respondent<sup>15</sup> is suffering from. In other words, my working class respondent evaluates the situation just taking gender into consideration and believes that her friend is living under worse conditions because of being a transsexual woman. In fact, she herself is living under worse conditions, as a result of the class she belongs to. In fact, most of my working class respondents mentioned of those who are in worse condition even though they represent themselves as at the bottom.

Another working class respondent<sup>16</sup> mentions that bisexuals suffer oppression to a lesser degree in a manner closer to biphobia and recommends me to ask questions on politics to her bisexual roommate. However, both she and her roommate are both working class Alevi Kurds. What she says is somehow conflicting;

You know, there is a cycle that keeps getting worse. And every layer in between is harmed separately. I don't understand how I got hurt this bad when I am this far down. (P13)

The co-founder of Street Travestite Action Revolutionaries, Sylvia Rivera makes similar points regarding the LGBTQ movement of USA. She complains about the fact that those privileged gays left the transsexual community behind after getting their right to marry. As a street worker and drag queen, she feels betrayed by the movement

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<sup>14</sup> P37

<sup>15</sup> P37

<sup>16</sup> P13

and states that she will never forgive the gay liberation movement for what they did to trans people. As she asserts;

You live on the streets. You have no place to go. Most of the girls are underage, thrown out of their houses. The older ones started working at young ages. Most of the girls that started the business at the same time were either murdered by costumers or pimps; or died from overdose. (France, 2017)

The movement in Turkey experienced similar things. As it is stated;

We held house meetings both to chat and find supporters. A trans wanted to attend the meetings. She needed help and wanted to share, which caused discussions. Because a group of people thought if transsexuals join the movement, it could get more reaction towards homosexuals, as most of the participants were gay with just one or two lesbians. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:114)

It is asserted in the oral history project of the Black Pink Triangle İzmir Association<sup>17</sup> that those educated ‘White Turks’ within the organisation did not want to be equated with transsexual sex workers. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:115)

Most of my interviewees interpret social class on the basis of transsexuals; because of the fact that most of the transsexuals are deprived of their fundamental rights and are forced sex workers. Not every woman has to work as a sex worker while most of the transsexual women are forced to sex work. On the other hand, transsexual women are not even accepted to brothels, but only ciswomen are allowed to work. As Zengin asserts, this is an indication of the “spatial construction of the state’s sexual margins and marginal bodies belonging to those places.” (Zengin, 2007:45) That is to say, body is the site for both state policies and capital regulations.

In addition, many of the interviewees complained about the masculine domination within the movement. They mentioned of the regulation of the streets by those that hold power. For example, one of my working class respondent<sup>18</sup> stresses how gays are

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<sup>17</sup> An association representing the LGBTQ community in İzmir

<sup>18</sup> P4

more active in associations like KAOS GL<sup>19</sup>. Looking at distribution of roles, she points out that founding members, general coordinator and those responsible with financial affairs are gay, and that they take more active roles. The reason why gays come out so early is that they have different external relations compared to women. Women are more secretive and obscure. But the external relations and socialization of the gays start at early ages. After all, it was gays who were organized at first. But most of my respondents stated that even though the visibility of bisexuals and lesbians has begun five years after those of gays; it is still not legitimate.

Most of my lesbian and trans-woman respondents stated that the male dominant gay politics rules over the relations and dominate every type of networks. Compared to transsexuals, gays are a more elite group; they are more isolated and have a more privileged social circle. Whereas, transsexuals are prostituting and their only functionality is their sexuality. Since they are just regarded as being no good, they have nothing to lose or be afraid of.

On the other side, even though transsexuals have to work at night and sleep during daylight; they are much more active and recusant. As one of my Alevi Kurdish transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>20</sup> states that this certainly has to do with their class;

You can observe this in the birth of the movement. After the 1980 coup d'état trans people were exiled. They were tortured. They staged their first hunger strike in 1987. It was the first visible struggle. They were not accepted to the first pride march. The decision was made to not accept them. But despite this, trans people have been persistent in participating the marches. In fact, you can see how this is reflected in their practices as well. I mean, the gay rights movement has been, how do you say, more effectively intimidated. It is a movement with more fear. But then look at the developments after July 15 coup attempt. Ankara ban was declared but not a single thing was done about it. Why? Because people are afraid... Because this is related to the social class you belong to, and the fear of losing; if you have a lot of that, you can't focus on what you can achieve. But if you don't have fears, what you can achieve will become more alluring. You will be more willing to participate in the struggle. (P21)

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<sup>19</sup> Research and solidarity association of LGBTQ individuals

<sup>20</sup> P21

Especially trans-women, who are involved in sex work, do leave their home at a very early age and in order to survive they constitute their own family; they act in solidarity and form their own habitus. One of my respondent<sup>21</sup> who had organized within Kurdish movement and socialist movement as well as many other active movements, asserts that transsexuals have a different structure and they provide the most powerful solidarity. Even when they fight and stop talking, they support each other in case of need, because they are located into a certain class location and they only have each other to be in solidarity with. They are isolated from their families and society in general and are forced to sex work. Even though they are excluded from social life to such a degree, they do not marginalize each other. Because they do not have neither health insurance nor life insurance. Ultimately, she emphasizes their intimacy. She had been taken into custody through May Day demonstrations or Newroz demonstrations and been forgotten by her political companions but she emphasizes the fact that this would never happen with her transsexual companions. As a trans activist (2016)<sup>22</sup> also puts it;

Why is it necessary to be organised, because we are being beaten, raped, murdered, soaked with water cannons, we are taken to police stations, we find ourselves needing pimps, we are deprived of our rights to health, our families kick us out, our rights to transportation are violated, we have trouble renting a place, we become victims of honor killings, we are forced to use drugs, we become alcohol abusers, we let our husbands rent our houses and have to depend on them for a living. We are the downtrodden of the world, victims of violence and murder. There were also people who would rather be exposed to these things than become organized. But we've seen that when a sex worker gets in trouble, they immediately call us and we provide solidarity.

But as for most of my respondents, they re-create the power relations within these relationship networks. One of my respondent<sup>23</sup> mentioned of those transsexuals who are rich and have eight houses in Esat<sup>24</sup>; those that settle new transsexuals of seventeen- eighteen ages and takes forty percent of their incomes. He emphasizes the

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<sup>21</sup> P34

<sup>22</sup> etkinlikizi.org (2016)

<sup>23</sup> P5

<sup>24</sup>A middle-class residential district in Ankara

fact that instead of offering them a new life and encouraging them to pursue their education or opening a café and making them work in this café, they make these new transsexuals become drug addicts. In other words, the oppressed continues to oppress others, which is like a vicious circle. Instead of providing them a new life through financial and educational support, they are in pursuit of increasing their income. A few of my respondents accused a well known transsexual sex worker of acting like a mafia in order to control the streets and sex work. In fact, I think this is again about class. The transsexual sex worker they mention of is a transsexual sex worker coming from a middle-class family and she maintains the tradition of exploiting people and obtaining additional values. She takes the young unexperienced ones into her service and monetizes them. This resembles maternalism, as they name each other family even though one side is making money over the other. On the other hand, she spends what she earns on drugs. She has no trouble of being a man of property and quitting sex work. But my uneducated working class transsexuals who come from a working class family are not like her<sup>25</sup>. They do not want to prostitute. They are against drugs and associations. Despite being in financial difficulties, their biggest concern is saving their honor, and chastity. And while my middle class respondent<sup>26</sup> is against every type of identification, my working class transsexual respondents try to fit into norms.

For instance, one of my trans-woman respondent<sup>27</sup>, who was born and raised in a village and had to work as a ranger, clean stables, milk cows, carry wood on her shoulders until she was twenty years old, is unaware of the meaning of the terms neither queer nor LGBTQ but her description in the first stance seems to fit the queer theory. She claims not to classify anybody. But soon after she sounds contradictory, goes back to normative patterns and states; “I have behaved in a feminine manner from the very beginning. I do not look like a man and become a woman on stage. That’s why I’m respected”. (P1) However, she is also complaining not to be a part of a class. She mentions that she could not be on TV before she got her identity because of

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<sup>25</sup> Such as P1 and P39

<sup>26</sup> P24

<sup>27</sup> P1

“*REYTUK*”<sup>28</sup>. She was presenting herself as not classifying nor labeling other people. But afterwards she started complaining about not being let in a social class. In other words, she rejects queer being and wishes to fit into a class. As for her, if there isn’t identity, there ain’t social class as well. And finally she starts repeating the naturalized norms and asserts that she was lucky to be able to reassign her gender, get married and was not forced to prostitute. Her language signifies conservative codes;

“At least now I am a woman, think about it, I became a woman and got married. I am getting married. If it wasn’t the case, what would I do? Prostitution.” (P1)

Regarding this issue, Fathi asserts that

Class... becomes meaningful when individuals naturalize both their pathways to becoming classed subjects and their performative practices’ as ‘...the formation of class identities happens through showing gender as natural to certain bodies. (Fathi, 2017:77)

And Fathi continues stating that “the ways individuals position themselves is bound to the discursive practices to which they have had access.” (Fathi, 2017:77) In the end, my lower class respondents try to comply with normative order since they lack cultural capital and appropriate language. They try to be respected and approved. Even those who say that they do not stereotype themselves try to adapt themselves to normative gender stereotypes. It is like being a macho transsexual man while kicking femininity society imposes. One of my lower class respondent<sup>29</sup> even takes it a step further and praises family; and states that a woman must act and be like a family woman. Their families do not stand by them but still, they value family above all else. One of my working class interviewee<sup>30</sup>, for instance, attribute eliteness to gay men of Istanbul for being mannerly. As Skeggs (2002) asserts, becoming respectable is the indicator of class. Class differences are expressed not only in terms of economic interests and material needs, but also in terms of emotions and the need to be perceived as respectable. All in all, class is not an abstract notion but it is a construction experienced

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<sup>28</sup> RTUK: Radyo Televizyon Ust Kurulu (Radio and Television Supreme Council). She mispronounces the abbreviation.

<sup>29</sup> P39

<sup>30</sup> P11

in daily life. What sex workers want is to be accepted and respected by the society and fit in with the prevalent cultural codes. (Zengin, 2007) Accordingly, Ortner and Whitehead (1981) make a similar discussion and claim that class is abstract as a social category, but respectfulness is a concrete reality as a sign of social class that people are conscious of and go all out to earn it. In other words, respectability and prestige is not just about economic conditions but manners, even appearance. The expression of a transsexual sex worker from the documentary 'Paris is Burning' is a case in point; "The realer you look; you look like a real woman or a real man. A straight man." (Livingston, 1990)

In a similar manner, another respondent<sup>31</sup>, a transsexual son of a conservative jeweler rejects identifying himself at the first instance as well but later he complains about not having a real penis and as a result not feeling like a real man. He had his surgery and began taking hormones at a very early age compared to other transsexuals, when he was eighteen. He sadly said that he had a small penis and real men were more powerful since they produced testosterone in the womb, and that's why he could not be a national athlete. This is his biggest problem: lack of a big penis and extreme muscles.

On the other side of the conservative working class interviewees, my working class Kurdish Alevi activists and critical respondents were not after fitting into gender norms. As a working class Kurdish lesbian who chose her Kurdish identity over others, one of my interviewee<sup>32</sup> explains what queer means by referring to Hasan Sabbah. She expresses being unidentified as;

Hasan Sabbah states this when mentioning about the İsmaili's. Everything is permissible. Actually everything is for everything. Nothing is forbidden. In fact, this is a little bit of what queer theory is about. There is nothing forbidden. It's like, define yourself wherever you want to, or don't. This is actually a performance. You know, the type of behavior that you have. (P10)

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<sup>31</sup> P16

<sup>32</sup> P10

Nevertheless, she emphasizes the fact that this notion does not correspond to the real life, that even those doing a postgraduate degree are unable to make sense of the real meaning of the term queer. Once again referring to the Kurdish movement, she complains of people accepting Kurdish people as their brothers and sisters supposedly; yet refusing them in practice.

Contradictions and tensions are critical here. Most of my interviewees replied and reacted contradictory. Contradictions arise when faced with power in different domains. Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus would make sense in this context.

As Wacquant elaborated;

[Habitus] helps us to revoke the duality between the individual and the social by capturing the “internalization of externality and the externalization of internality”; that is, the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinate ways, which then guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu. (Wacquant, 2004:318)

Moreover, these socially derived dispositions can produce unpredictable, irrational, contradictory actions. “Bourdieu accounts for the tensions and contradictions that arise when people encounter and are challenged by different contexts.” (Moncrieffe, 2007:84)

Most of my respondents adopted a contradictory attitude towards the explanation of the term queer. One of my respondent<sup>33</sup> complained about the restrictiveness of gender binary at first but recommended utilizing from some other notions in order to overcome that restrictiveness, such as adding ‘person’ after every term. And most of my respondents defined their identities with either religion or Kurdishness or they tried to conform to normative gender.

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<sup>33</sup> P8



On the other side, the solution of my working class Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondents with a critical habitus was rejecting every type of classification. They even criticized academia as forming a class itself. They stated confidently that they gave birth to themselves and rejected being categorized. For instance, some of my respondents<sup>34</sup> both of whom belong to lower class, and yet refuse all identities, are happy being at the bottom and being classless even though one of them comes from a middle-class family. As a matter of fact, one of them carries a step forward and rejects every social movement as a result of the power relations she has been subjected to. As she puts it;

I'm aggressive, of course I'm aggressive. How can I not be aggressive with feminist women. How can I not be aggressive with the Kurds. How can I not be aggressive with other transgender people. Look at you, can't you see yourself? You are still trying to shape me. Look, we are being murdered one by one. That's why my aggressiveness will never end. So first I try to establish myself through fighting. Actually, I want this hullabaloo to end. Somewhere deep inside me there is a full of life kind of woman. I know that. But I've had to stab near to twenty people or so on the streets at night. In fact, I don't enjoy starting a fight everywhere I go, or attacking my community and the society. But I can't seem to go anywhere and not have a fight. I figure out the system, the structure, and I end up fighting and leaving. Declaring that this won't do. Maybe we are all schizophrenics and believe we are the best. Maybe we suffer from other diseases as well. I don't know that either but god be with you sister. (P24)

However, if middle class subjects are activist in particular, and if they are not living through a conservative habitus, they know what queer is. For instance, a cross-dresser<sup>35</sup> studying English literature at Boğaziçi University has comprehensive knowledge of queer theory and he shows the same approach to every field. Whatever subject you ask; politics, social class, gender; he mentions of fluidity. He introduces himself as sometimes non-confirming, sometimes gender fluid, sometimes non-binary, but flowing all the time. And he defines queer perfectly saying that masculine heterosexual woman also happens to be queer. Yet a non-political middle class

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<sup>34</sup> P24, P26

<sup>35</sup> P31

respondent<sup>36</sup> with a conservative habitus, mentioned of evolution when asked about queer theory, stating that religious can not believe in evolution.

Most of my working class interviewees were homophobic themselves. Their reactions were conservative. Most of them were using the conservative language. Only Kurdish ones, coming from the same class, who are not assimilated had a queer consciousness. For example, one of my respondent<sup>37</sup> is one of the six children of a municipal worker father. They are very poor. He is getting an education to become a laborant. He does not communicate with his family because of his sexual identity. However, it is a Kurdish and leftist family. That's why he is also politically conscious. But my assimilated Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>38</sup> displays conservative habitus and mentions of the biological gender here and responds against queer existence. He asserts that:

In other words, if a man wants to wear a skirt, he should wear it; if a woman wants to grow a mustache, she should. Of course, this must have a limit. because sometimes they try to affiliate with movements that are against their nature. I don't consider them healthy. But of course we are OK with whatever mood you're in as long as you act within the boundaries and keep the balance of a certain nature. But there are some you know, how do I explain. I think those overly masculine lesbians and feminine gays who act against their nature are a sham.(P5)

Most of my respondents with a religious and conservative family were acting in the same conservative manner despite complaining about the religiosity of their families. In the same way my other working class Kurdish Alevi respondents<sup>39</sup> with a critical habitus referred to Kurdish Movement in every type of question; one of my working class Kurdish Alevi but assimilated respondent<sup>40</sup> coming from a conservative family,

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<sup>36</sup> P42

<sup>37</sup> P22

<sup>38</sup> P5

<sup>39</sup> P10

<sup>40</sup> P13

for instance, referred to religion in every type of question.<sup>41</sup> At first her definition of queer is coherent even though she does not know the meaning of queer and made me explain it. She claims not to think of such things but prefers just to live. And this is, in fact, an example of lower class' lack of cultural capital and lack of spare time to think of such issues. When I asked her insistently; she refers to religion;

Well, regarding the queer movement there are people who are not aware of it. They are also included. I am not saying that all of the queer people that the whole idea all by itself are wrong. The idea is correct. But you know just like those within nationalism and socialism within all those there are people who join later and misunderstand the whole thing. I mean it. They join later. Those who are inexperienced and young. Then of course in their excitement they misrepresent it to others. That then attracts supporters, one by one. Then other disciple of the supporters are born. Then sects are formed. Then within a single religion you have thirty sects. Things start to go wrong here. I spoke well, right? What am I on today anyway, haha... (P13)

But when I made her talk more, she displayed queer performance in a conflicting way. She claims to be seen as “a Kurdish dyke who brew coffee by others”, as she is a butch lesbian working at a coffee shop. But she chooses not to define herself with anything; even though she is aware of the fact that she is at the bottom. In other words, she has queer consciousness.

People talk, but I don't position myself according to that. You see I don't fit a description such as butch, trans, or active. I am at the bottom. But I am none of them. Therefore I feel like we are all of them. Actually I don't need any identification. I become whoever I have to be at that moment. (P13)

Anyhow, she has a conservative attitude against the activists. As a matter of fact, most of my conservative working class respondents complained about the aggressiveness, extremism and corruptness of the activists. Some of my respondents<sup>42</sup> accused activists of making love by climbing a pole and found it very disturbing and unpleasant, while

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<sup>41</sup> as a result of growing up in a religious family, she had to attend Quran courses for seven years. But after her mother accused her of having devil inside, she had to break her connections with them. As a result, she had to give up education and work a lot.

<sup>42</sup> P13

some of them<sup>43</sup> even accused activists of scoring points over their pains. One of my respondents<sup>44</sup> mentioned of how he cannot accept activists walking around and kissing each other naked in public. He accepts ciswoman and cisman acting in the same manner as normal, but find homosexuals deviant. But he sees himself different from other homosexuals as a result of having high levels of estrogen, in his words. Indeed, what he refers is the fact that the more you conform to gender norms the less you will be oppressed and the more you will belong to a class.

On the other side, my transsexual respondents find it impossible to popularize the queer thought as it lacks centralized tendency. For instance, one of my Kurdish Alevi transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>45</sup> mentioned of the disagreements even within their own community. She mentioned of her friend who happens to declare herself as transsexual without using hormones. And other transsexuals accuse her of being gay just because she does not use hormones. In other words, they deny her declaration. Likewise, another respondent but this time a middle class educated sex worker<sup>46</sup> who happens to speak two languages, also accuses queer subjectivity for re-organizing the hierarchical power relations. She also finds queer theory very utopic and emphasizes the fact that they have been giving a struggle for reassigning their identities. As for her, everyone is seeking after their own identity and existence. In other words, except for those who reject every type of identification<sup>47</sup>, most of my transsexual respondents are after fitting into gender norms no matter which social class they belong to. While my working class respondents try to fit into norms from the beginning; my middle class educated respondents claim to reject every type of identification at first, but their real statements are for being a woman or a man. Only difference is their attitude towards morality and respectability. For instance, my middle class sex worker

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<sup>43</sup> P5

<sup>44</sup> P11

<sup>45</sup> P21

<sup>46</sup> P7

<sup>47</sup> Such as P26 and P24

respondent<sup>48</sup> is doing sex work without feeling discomfort, and becoming a woman is the most important thing in the world for her. On the other hand, as for my working class uneducated conservative singer respondent<sup>49</sup>, her profession and the money she has earned honestly are in the forefront because she needs money for her gender-reassignment surgery.

To conclude, it could be asserted that in reality only those with the right economic and cultural capital, and those who are not conservatives, are after subverting the normative intelligible order. Here transsexuals have to be considered separate as they might constitute exceptions. Though for the most part, those who lack cultural and economic capital, in other words my working class interviewees, wish to transform themselves from one gender to other. Hence, instead of criticizing the normative masculinity that is dominant within the society, they comply with it. Because it is irrelevant to speak of dis-identification to a community who have been marginalized and beaten for the sake of reassigning their identity. Even though they find queer logical, they are, somehow, in a transition process and it is difficult for them to advocate queer. As one of my transsexual respondent<sup>50</sup> puts it;

Some transsexuals might respond as ‘I have faced all these problems in order to change my gender identity. Now how can I refuse to describe my identity, claim that I am neither woman or man, no of course I am a woman. (P21)

Essentially, they are doing this for recognition. The efforts of transsexuals to be acknowledged is related with their social capital as well, in addition to the clinical tests they have to pass through. In other words, gender identity is defined not only by the individual's perception of himself, but also by the perception of himself by others. (Garber, 1992) Likewise Berghan's (2007) interviewees, as for my interviewees as well, being acknowledged was possible only with a man's confirmation of their femininity. As discussed above, femininity functions as a form of cultural capital,

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<sup>48</sup> P7

<sup>49</sup> P1

<sup>50</sup> P21

revealing the social position of the subjects in terms of class, gender, sexuality, and race. (Skeggs, 2002) As Berghan puts it, their need for approval, combined with being lonely and loveless, leads them to do anything for their partners in their emotional relationship. (Berghan, 2007) This is the reason why my middle class<sup>51</sup> interviewees assign a positive meaning to sex labor, unlike working class<sup>52</sup> ones for whom sex work is the worst thing that could happen to them. As Berghan asserts, their exaggerated and outrageous clothings are explosion of their emotions repressed for years. (Berghan, 2007) However, their exaggerated femininity is judged in a negative way. As for Skeggs, as a result of classed reading of bodily appearances and tastes, subjects are misrecognised. (Skeggs, 2002) And being misrecognised “is not simply to be thought ill of, looked down on, or devalued... it is rather to be denied the status of full partner in social interaction and prevented from participating as a peer in social life.” (Fraser, 1997 cited in Skeggs, 2001:295).

According to Marcuse, sex work is the way towards emancipation as a result of being a subversive act. For Marcuse (2006), as a result of being the most reified and objectified version of body, prostitution can lead us to triumph over reification. (cited in Floyd, 2009:123) Because sex work stands in the intersection of capitalism, patriarchy and heterosexuality and in this respect, pleasure emerge “as new sites of capital investment and the basis for a counter-narrative to disciplinary norms and practices.” (Hennessy, 2018: xxiii)

But transgender sites suggest that transsexuals re-produce gender binary, willing to be exploited for the sake of medical world, being influenced by normative sexual orientations, practices and roles. In other words, by reassigning their gender they are repeating the normative structure. On the other hand, by doing this, they are losing the defeatist power of the indefinable third gender as Tanya Olson asserts in her study *The Pedagogy of the Cross-Dressed*. (Olson, 2010) In ‘Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety’, Garber states that this challenge to the idea of traditional, dual

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<sup>51</sup> Such as P24 and P7

<sup>52</sup> Such as P1 and P11

gender creates a “third” category and a third space. (cited in Olson 2010) And as for Öğüt, this third space is potentially revolutionary, because it points to a position of opposition. (Öğüt, 2013:47)

As Baş asserts; the disturbance and obscenity of trans identities are not only due to their strong emphasis on sexuality which is against traditional moral values; but also because they reveal the permeability of the boundaries. Formless bodies who do not produce nor reproduce but feel pleasure associate with obscenity and morality. And that obscenity does not only mean immoral, indecency but also unidentifiable, fluid, boundless, that cannot be classified just as the terms queer and trans. (Baş, 2013:15)

Halberstam (1998) argues in her study ‘Female Masculinity’ that the categories need to be increased. Creating new categories, such as women with masculine gender expressions, or vice versa, not only challenges existing gender identities, but also broadens the boundaries of the culture. As Halberstam puts it, the culture would validate new identity categories and this would trigger social change. In other words, as for Halberstam, trans masculinity or femininity are not simply imitations but rather performances of hybrid sexual identities. (Halberstam, 1998)

Another example comes from the autobiographical novel of Leslie Feinberg (1993), in which, a manly woman who has grown up in economic hardship among the working class of Buffalo, leaves her home and starts working at factories, undergoes surgery, and starts taking hormones to live her life like a man. Tough in the eyes of the homophobic public, he could not become a real man. Eventually he stops taking hormones and goes after finding new words, words of his own. (cited in Öğüt, 2013: 51)

In case of Turkey, for instance, words such as “five, fiver, five star, taber, craftsman, nesting box, fag, cow, asshole, goat are transformed into heteronormativity, transgender, gay, queer”. (Develioğlu, cited in Biricik, 2013:199) In fact, this proves Crenshaw’s claim. Referring to different social problems overlapping and patterns of recognition, Crenshaw (2016) asserts that frames that allow us to see the impacts of

social problems are needed, without which, some problems might fall through the cracks of the movements. She is after establishing frames that let us to catch cracks in the law and reach

Those socially marginalized facing all kinds of dilemmas and challenges as a coincidence of intersectionality, intersections of xenophobia, racism, heterosexism, ableism, sexism, classism, all of these social dynamics come together and create challenges that are sometimes quite unique. Intersectionality expose tragic circumstances. (Crenshaw, 2016)

But on the other side, as discussed above, there is oppression even within the LGBTQ community as well. One of my middle class well educated crossdressing sex worker respondent<sup>53</sup> defines himself with neither of the two categories; he does not want to be under any definition under the umbrella of LGBTQ. He puts emphasis on experience. He could experience anything. If he becomes gay, he needs to close himself off to women; but yet he is also interested in women. Likewise, one of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>54</sup> feels herself as a woman and likes making love with men, but yet this does not mean that she must definitely have vagina and breasts. Also she could make love with women as well. Again, my working class trans man respondent<sup>55</sup> finds it absurd that as a transsexual man he is expected to misbehave women by being a macho and transsexual women are expected to be flamboyant and do lots of make-up, get drunk and use drugs. But in order not to be discriminated in LGBTQ community, one is expected to conform to these norms.

In fact, while being a LGBTQ is an identity, it is recommended that you should act according to this identity. If you are gay, or transsexual man you are expected to build muscles, and if you are a transsexual woman, you are forced to undergo aesthetic surgery. On the other hand, no one understands what queer is and means. When my

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<sup>53</sup> P20

<sup>54</sup> P24

<sup>55</sup> P19



cross dresser respondent<sup>56</sup> presents himself as queer, people he makes love with ask him if he is gay. When he gives a negative reply saying that he also has intercourse with women, they ask him if he is bisexual. Again when he says he is cross, they ask him if he is transsexual, and that where his vagina and breasts are. That is to say, queer concept remains utopic. As Gürsoy narrates his transition process;

Likewise the society, gender binary was preserved here as well. Social roles were the same; the only difference was sex organs and hormones. While a woman was uncomfortable about having an erection while kissing her lover, or from her body hair, and being perceived as gay; men were uncomfortable about being menstruated, not growing beard, and being thought of a lesbian. The only way to get rid of all of this was to use hormones and genital reassignment ... I went to therapy for two years in order to get 'gender identity disorder' report as the first step of gender reassignment. And as far as I witnessed, the only purpose was to teach transgenders how to fit in the body standards society is requiring. Normative femininity and masculinity were being imposed upon us... We were expected to reassign our gender but not stay in between. Using hormones, wearing men' shoes, heading towards penis surgery consistently were expected from us if we want to get our new identity. (Gürsoy, 2013:141)

On the other hand, in order to be recognized as normal and respectable, they feel obliged to resemble ideal middle class women, believing that the more they fit in with the ideal the less they will be excluded.

Regarding queer theory, it could also be asserted that one needs to own different identities in order to do queer politics. In other words, intersectionality is a presupposition for doing queer politics; in order to move from queer in itself to queer for itself. The emergence of political consciousness and critical agency depend on how many intersecting other identities you own or relate to. For this reason, it could be asserted that being Alevi and Kurdish is significant in creating awareness. Some of my respondents were not Kurdish themselves. But as a result of growing up in a suburb

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<sup>56</sup> P20

close to Gazi district<sup>57</sup>, one of my respondent<sup>58</sup> had Kurdish lovers and they created awareness in him. Ultimately, he has been supporting Kurdish movement. But even though they support Kurdish movement, since they are not Kurdish themselves, their stance seems uppish against the language and codes of the movement. On the other hand, this is not true for queer movement, as it is more inclusive and unstructured. One of my respondent<sup>59</sup>, for instance, was raised in a very nationalist and conservative family in Adana, in her terms, “at the center of fascism”. But she made many Kurdish friends within the queer movement, and she began supporting the Kurdish movement. And she explains how her Kurdish friends from whom she learned to advocate the Kurdish movement brought queer struggle into the forefront, because they thought that any achievement in this front would also affect the Kurdish movement.

But as for most of the working class interviewees, economic problems come before their queerness. This is the case for most of my working class respondents<sup>60</sup>. One of my working class cross respondents<sup>61</sup>, for instance, primary concern is climbing the social ladder and making more money. He believes that being a victim of sexual abuse is also a result of coming from a working class family. He holds a grudge against his family for being a child labor and being sexually abused; but he still has to live with them and on top of it, he has to take care of them as he is the only one in the family who makes money. Nonetheless, he emphasizes the fact that his Kurdish fellows are under worse conditions. He mentions of one of his ex-partner who had to escape to Kobane after his family found out about him and threatened him to death. He worked as a hired soldier and somehow managed to sell the provided weapons and has found asylum in Germany. Likewise, my another working class transsexual woman

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<sup>57</sup> A district in Istanbul where mostly Alevis live and known for the attack of right wing groups in 1995.

<sup>58</sup> P20

<sup>59</sup> P35

<sup>60</sup> Such as P29, P1, P4, P13, P20

<sup>61</sup> P20

interviewee was also a child worker. And she has been working since she was seven years old. She was also abused in her family and she has survived by fleeing from home and working in associations. However, the money she earns has not been sufficient. At the end, upon her family's death threats, she was forced to take refuge.

As Bohrer states, class has been ignored within intersectional analysis as a result of the fear of class reductionism. (Bohrer, 2018) Such that, Hooks mentions of how even those social liberals recognizing sexual, racial, cultural diversity ignore social class in order not to lose their class position. As she puts it;

Social liberals and fiscal conservatives. They may believe in recognizing multiculturalism and celebrating diversity (our neighborhood is full of white gay men and straight white people who have at least one black, Asian, or Hispanic friend), but when it comes to money and class they want to protect what they have, to perpetuate and reproduce it – they want more. The fact that they have so much while others have so little does not cause moral anguish, for they see their good fortune as a sign they are chosen, special, deserving. (hooks, 2000, p. 3)

But even the existence of classes depend on the struggle between classes. (Bourdieu, 1993) For this reason, the next chapter will examine queer subject's subversiveness in relation to class relations.

### **4.3 Queer subjectivity and class relations**

‘Falling from the top to the bottom’ (Farnaz)  
‘Starting from point zero’ (Monir)  
‘It was like an earthquake in my life’ (Maryam)  
‘They never accepted my qualifications’ (Khorshid)  
‘They put you down at the bottom of the list’(Setareh and Khorshid)  
(Fathi,2017:152)  
‘I am the underground’ (P26)  
‘The shit-stink in my house’ (P24)  
‘A middle-class walking on a tightrope’ (P31)

As asserted above, social class has been ignored “by those with the privilege to ignore it” (Skeggs, 2002:6) as a result of its relationship with class reductionist old socialist labor movements. With the emergence of new social movements, the focus on inequalities have been replaced by difference. But as Hennessy indicates, without

understanding the significance of class positioning, the demands and scope of the identity movements and the subjectivities they construct can not be understood. (Hennessy, 2018)

Unfortunately, as Skeggs (2002) emphasizes, abandoning class as a theoretical tool makes it harder for subjects to define the inequalities they are exposed to. This was the case with my study as well. Even though they did not mention about class as a known category or phenomenon, they were aware of it and expressed it through feelings. A transsexual activist (Kaos GL, 2019b), coming from a middle class family, for instance, mentions of how she worked as a sex worker with relish but quitted sex work when she stopped having fun. This indicates that she had a choice, while transsexual sex workers coming from working class do not have the option. They are forced to sex work even when they get old. My transsexual sex worker respondents coming from working class families couldn't even mention sex work when asked about what they do for living. Instead one of them<sup>62</sup> answered as “that thing”. That is to say, class is there even though they do not identify with it.

In this chapter, the intersections of class and sexuality will be discussed. Unlike materialist approaches that focus on structural conditions of capitalism, according to Bourdieu, power relations, structural inequalities, in other words classes do exist within everyday life. Bourdieu (1984) focuses on the significance of culture and cultural capital, referring to life chances, inclusions, exclusions and intersections. He defines social class “in relation to capital, power relations and recognition.” (Bourdieu, 1984 cited in Fathi, 2017:175). According to him, symbolic relations are more important than economic ones. And that the position of oneself is defined in relation to others. He focuses on everyday life practices, as the symbolic capital includes both economic, cultural and social capital, evaluating if they are valid within the field or not. “Symbolic capital is a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience, or the services of others.” (Swartz, 1997: 90) As Skeggs puts it; “Bourdieu’s approach is useful for studying

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<sup>62</sup> P39

everyday life practices as forms of habitus and how these bodily dispositions can produce symbolic inequalities and new understandings of class positions such as bodily affect.” (Skeggs cited in Fathi, 2017: 27) In other words, class reveals itself in daily life, so as the reproduction of inequalities. And different classes negotiate it in different ways. As a result, the main aim is not to define the social class, or other identities, but to reveal how they are experienced and the responses of the subjects against them. In other words, the aim is to discuss the fact that even though the respondents do not mention, nor identify, class is a major feature of their subjectivity, defining how they access resources, manage relationships, occupy spaces, and create political consciousness. As Skeggs asserts, even though they do not prefer to recognise themselves with class for certain reasons, class is central in their subjectivity. (Skeggs, 2002)

In other words, class is not discussed in terms of just economic-material relations but in terms of how it is revealed in everyday interactions, relationships, judgements, necessities. It is discussed in terms of how subjects experience it, how it is perceived, and what class does, instead of what it is, as the concept of class has dissolved and there are multiple and fluid class positions based on different fields and capitals.

Therefore, in this work, class is not defined based on incomes but discussed as relational, in a dialogic manner with the other; e.g., working class experience in relation to the ideal respectable middle class. Still, even working class is fragmented; divided into groups such as precarious, white-collar, blue-collar, on contract, or those with a permanent job and income. There are those who are educated but work for low wages and those who are uneducated yet make good money; those who consider themselves as working class in spite of owning a car and a house. So there are intermediate, contradictory positions within social classes. Middle class is also fragmented. There are those graduated from a better university and those from unrecognized ones. As a result, the social locations have to be considered, in relation to economic, cultural, symbolic, emotional aspects. Moreover, not only class positions are complex and fragmented, but also class identifications are uncertain. Above all, as Taylor asserts, categorization of class positions are “not an easy or innocent process,

but class schemes are easy to find, much debated and, I would argue, still inadequate; they cannot, nor do they attempt to, describe the experience of occupying these categories.” (Taylor, 2014:10)

On the other hand, it could be asserted that one of the reasons of the disappearance of class could be the fact that it is very hard to define it; as class structure, class identity, class consciousness denotes different connotations. In the first part of this chapter, the way class reveals itself in the intersection of class and sexuality will be discussed, while in second part the transformation of class in itself to class for itself, that is to say how the respondents position themselves and their class consciousness will be discussed, even though as a result of the difficulties subjects from the same class face in terms of their gender, ethnicity and sexual differentiations, it is hard to identify with social class. As Nash puts it; “it is an extraordinary will to turn being identified as ‘poor’ from a source of shame into a mark of political activism.” (Nash, 2010:148) Because as Skeggs (2002) expresses, subjects are not willing to be located into a negatively valorized category.

Most of my interviewees were working at temporary precarious jobs, while some of them were unemployed, some were sex workers, some of them were working in kitchens, and some of them were working at the entertainment business either as dancing, or as singing at the night clubs.

Some of them couldn't identify themselves with a social class. Some of them identified themselves as de-classe. Some of them have been unemployed for a long time. As a result, they define themselves as urban poor as they cannot belong to working class as a result of not even working. Likewise, some define themselves as 'lower class' as their family is not even working class and also because they haven't worked throughout their life. Some, for instance, gain a lot of money from sex work but if uneducated, money does not change their social position. They spend it on drugs. They also spend it on animals, as a result of feeling so lonely on the ground of lacking both families and real friends. And as a result of lacking the cultural capital, being

unable to enter the language, they find sex work unacceptable and indecent, something they have to stand in order to survive. But as for educated transsexual sex workers, they are service sector workers. To be more precise, those uneducated ones lacking the cultural capital define two types of class, woman and man. They associate class with gender. In a similar manner, religious ones associate class with religion and mentions of Justice and Development Party when asked about different classes that constitutes the society. Those with political consciousness assert that they belong to the oppressed class while those apolitical ones with less cultural capital assert that they are underclass, meaning they are not even working class<sup>63</sup>. Those with less cultural capital do not prefer to identify with working class. To put it another way, most of the interviewees come from a similar working class background but their cultural capital does make the difference in terms of having an awareness of their social condition. Such that, those that belong to working class but had a chance to receive education feel confused about their social class position. They assert that they belong to working class economically while they are aware of the fact that they are not factory laborers which cause confusion and as a result they reject identifying with social class.

Just as Skeggs indicates, class in my interviewees as well displayed itself in efforts not to be recognised as lower class. As she puts it; “theirs was a refusal of recognition rather than a claim for the right to be recognized.” (Skeggs, 2002:74) It was a denial of the representations of their positioning. The reason for this is the fact that from past to present working classes have been degraded and pathologised. Still, some of them choose their sexual identity rather than social class; while some suppress and hide their sexual identity in order not to be recognised as classed.

In addition, class is not a part of their identities because as a result of being unemployed and in poverty for a long time, they are isolated from the rest of the society. My working class interviewees were lonely and withdrawn. As a result of being unable to come out, they mentioned of isolation and feeling of lonesome and

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<sup>63</sup> Such as P20 and P29

vulnerable. Some of them<sup>64</sup> were so afraid of being recognized as unrespectable that in addition to staying at the closet, they were homophobic towards effeminate gays. The role of the political organisations and associations are also critical here in terms of developing political consciousness, which was the case for some of my working class respondents.<sup>65</sup>

In spite of their effort to disidentify, class was apparent, but unnamed, was even the “structuring absence” as Skeggs states. (Skeggs, 2002:74) Even though most of the working class interviewees did not mention of class difference; however, it was explicit in their narratives and displayed through feelings. This reveals the difference between class positions and class identity. For this reason, this chapter is divided into two; as the way they experience class and the way they interpret it.

Some of my working class respondents<sup>66</sup>, tried so hard to prove how valued and respectable they are, in addition to the narrations of poverty. Even though they had difficulty describing themselves as working class, they were aware of their class positions through identifying themselves by what they are not; in other words middle class. Still, they devalue middle class by emphasizing their immorality and unjustness, as a result of being excluded and marginalised by middle classes. As for one of my working class transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>67</sup>, for instance, middle classes are wealthy but unjust heartless drug users. In the end, “the dialogic judgemental other” (Skeggs, 2002:13) is significant in the process of identifications.

Most of them conceptualized and articulated their identity in accordance with middle class mores. In fact, in a conflicting way, most of my working class interviewees defined themselves as middle class. Most of them referred to those under worse conditions despite defining themselves as the undermost. Despite claiming to be at the

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<sup>64</sup> Such as P33

<sup>65</sup> Such as P4 and P24

<sup>66</sup> Such as P5 and P39

<sup>67</sup> P39



bottom of the heap, the undermost, they mention those who are in a worse condition. They always consider themselves as superior to some others. Some of my sex worker interviewees introduced themselves as the queen in order to be recognized as classed, in response to judgements of middle classes.

Additionally, my middle class interviewees kept telling they do believe in the potentials of individuals instead of social class, politics and organizations. But for working class ones, it is the fate of them; it is inequity as nothing would change even if they start making a lot of money at some point because what they have seen from their family would never change. Thereupon, most of my working class interviewees have the will to move up the social ladder instead of bearing anger towards middle class standards. There are only a few exceptions within my respondents<sup>68</sup> who reject every type of classification by identifying with the underground as underground doesn't have any gender, language or color. As one of them<sup>69</sup> describes;

I am the underground. The most rancid place to be. The academy is also a class, for instance. Capitalist, intellectual. Kurds, Alevis also form a social class. But I am not involved in any of them. There is no color, language, or gender in the underground. It comes from the streets. Even the street is above you there. (P26)

Or as another respondent<sup>70</sup> who reject every type of classification; my transsexual sex worker interviewee narrates how she had to learn masculinity in order to become a woman. Because she had to survive on the streets while working as a sex worker. As she puts it;

Then I realized that I gave a lot of myself to become a woman, I exaggerated and turn into a man. And this pushed me away from identities. I have liberated myself. I have learned the language of the bodies, body politics. (P24)

On top of that, coming out and displaying critical subjectivity are classed acts, yet this is the case for those who display critical habitus. To put it another way, in order to

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<sup>68</sup> Such as P21 and P24

<sup>69</sup> P26

<sup>70</sup> P24

exhibit the critical subjectivity as defined by Butler, one needs to be socialized in a critical habitus. Some of my working class respondents reject coming out of the closet in order not to lose the support of their family. Because if they come out, or anyone finds out about them, they might lose the support of their family and fall down the social ladder. One of my respondent<sup>71</sup> coming from a working class family with a conservative habitus, for instance, stays in the closet in order to be respected. He chooses social class rather than his sexual identity. And for the case of another respondent<sup>72</sup> who is both coming from a working class and Kurdish Alevi family with a critical habitus, even though she wants to fight for her sexual identity, she is forced to stay in the closet in order not to lose her job. This time she is forced to stay in the closet in order to survive. In other words, coming out of the closet is also a classed act.

After all, they associate diversity, instability, conflict with the class. Kurdish Alevi ones, positively identify with their working class identity but at the same time assert that the class they belong to commit the most intense violence and abuse towards their sexual identity. On the other hand, Turkish Sunni Muslim interviewees dis-identify with their working class identity. As a matter of fact, they introduce themselves as of high quality, respectable people with manners. Some of the respondents made sense of their class based on their families<sup>73</sup>; while some mentioned of what they own<sup>74</sup>. Some of them defined class based on their differences, such as not being able to speak English<sup>75</sup>, or dye their hair<sup>76</sup>. And both the middle class and the lower class interviewees refrain from talking about social class. Those from middle class even finds it irrelevant. Savage (2000) argues that “middle-classes do not discuss but perform class.” (cited in Fathi,2017: 76) I think lower class acts in the same manner

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<sup>71</sup> P33

<sup>72</sup> P4

<sup>73</sup> Such as P20

<sup>74</sup> Such as P5

<sup>75</sup> Such as P13

<sup>76</sup> Such as P37

as well. They either try to normalize themselves by referring to morality, or avoid identifying themselves with working class.

Just as Taylor asserts, there are theoretical studies bringing together class with sexuality, Marxism with queer theory; but not focusing on individual experiences and narrations. Hennessy (2018), for instance, discusses commodification and aestheticisation of sexuality; while *Queerly Classed* (1997) rejects the concept of classlessness. Skeggs and Adkins (2004) criticise Charlesworth (2000), whose work is based on the habitus of class, as ignoring the fact that habitus is gendered as well, but ignoring sexuality and ethnicity themselves. My study is in similarity with Taylor's work in using capitals of Bourdieu in order to analyse how the intersectionality of sexuality and class reveal itself both materially and emotionally. Within the literature, both the works of Davis & Kennedy (1993), Valentine(1993), Dunne and John & Patrick (1999) focus on poverty and lesbians but my study discusses the intersections of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and religion instead of just focusing on lower class lesbians, but analysing the power relations within the LGBTQ movement itself as well, considering the rural and urban difference, again not focusing on one of them but discussing them from a relational perspective.

Dunne (1997) finds a positive correlation between living a lesbian life and achieving economically, based on her privileged sampling. As for my study, there is a correlation between queerness in the meaning of being subversive, and financial independence, but financial independence is the precondition for being subversive, unlike Dunne's assertion. As for my data, on the one side social class is experienced as a source of 'group identity, solidarity and resistance', likewise Brown's (1997) work based on working class subjects from rural. My respondents with critical habitus do identify with their social class. On the other hand, my interviewees with conservative habitus deny their social class just as the findings of Skeggs. (2002) Likewise, some of my interviewees oppose femininity in other words traditional gender norms, just as Brown's respondents, while some of them replicate traditional gender norms just as Skeggs' interviewees do. Besides, unlike Moran's (2000) attribution of homophobia to

working class, my data could go either way. And similar with Skeggs' study (2002), respectability and morality was a sign revealing social class.

In conclusion, unlike Taylor's (2014) respondents with multiple varied types of agencies, my respondents revealed two types of habitus; critical and conservative. My working class interviewees with critical habitus appropriated being positioned as members of an underclass, without romanticizing it. On the other hand, the working class respondents with conservative habitus chose to disidentify with their social classes, just as the respondents of Skeggs (2002) and Taylor (2014).

Ultimately, as Kuhn puts it, class "is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being." (Kuhn, 1995:98) It attaches itself to classed subjects, (Taylor, 2014) as a result reveals itself in everyday judgements, relationships. Most of my respondents referred to culture and manners instead of material and financial deficiencies. They mentioned of speaking foreign languages, hair dyeing, wearing tights, or being able to dine at a restaurant at Gaziosmanpaşa district of Ankara when asked about upper classes. They related it with lifestyles, or places. They related it with culture. As Lewis (1966) argues; "sustained poverty generated a set of cultural attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices, and that this culture of poverty would tend to perpetuate itself over time, even if the structural conditions that originally gave rise to it were to change." (cited in Lamont et al. 2010:7) In other words, my respondents were also culturally segregated based on their social classes.

Class includes "the appearance of new inequalities, including the knowledge gap; the formation of genderized and racialized market segments; and the formation of urban 'underclasses' of marginalized and unemployed." (Tittenbrun, 2015:20) It refers to cultural distinction. When asked about poverty and wealth, cultural capital was very significant as most of my working class respondents mentioned of white collars as upper classes. Because they were excluded as a result of lacking cultural capital. Some

of them were excluded from the football team by the founders<sup>77</sup>, some were excluded from organizations<sup>78</sup> or political parties<sup>79</sup> by the founders, while some of them were excluded from conversations as a result of lacking the language.<sup>80</sup>

Class refers to manners. My respondents segregated themselves in terms of respectability and morality. Within the literature, Lamont's (2000) study indicates how working class men in United States draw moral distinctions between themselves and the poor; while Newman's (1999) study shows how fast-food workers of Harlem define themselves morally superior in contrast to the unemployed poor. Or Lewis discuss how "the civil rights movement among American Negroes has of itself done more to improve their self-image and self-respect than such economic gains as it has won although, without doubt, the two kinds of progress are mutually reinforcing." (Lewis, 1966:24) But within my study, some of my working class respondents identified themselves as morally superior to corrupt middle-classes. This is also an indicator of how they perceive class in terms of culture. And as they lack economic capital, they try to prove that they still belong to class as a result of being morally superior. In other words, it could be asserted that they challenge, subvert or deform the normative-intelligible order by exploring new subjectivity which represents itself as morally superior, respectable and dignified inspite of lacking the economic capital needed to belong to that class.

Class is the institutionalisation of capitals which give access to positions, as Taylor (2014) asserts. We can either contribute to the reproduction of this structure, or challenge and subvert it. The first part of this chapter focuses on how subjects experience, feel and reveal the intersection of class and sexuality within daily basis. As their experience of social class is related to their parents; their relationships with their family, the environment they grew up, the geographical location they have spent

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<sup>77</sup> Such as P37

<sup>78</sup> Such as P4

<sup>79</sup> Such as P21

<sup>80</sup> Such as the respondent I couldn't conduct an interview but instead applied nail varnish to.

their life which is also bound up with educational background, what they do for a living, their intimate relationships, emotions and their political leanings are discussed in order to reveal the lived and emotional aspects of the intersectionality of class and sexuality. And in the second part, how subjects interpret social class and reveal critical subjectivity against it will be discussed, even though as Southern (2002) asserts, “freedom from structural constraints and the autonomous moulding of personal identities are at best premature in their diagnoses of social change.” (Southern, 2002:190) Because class is also a form of performativity in which you can either repeat the norms or challenge them.

In the next part, the discussion is on how subjects experience the intersection of class and sexuality; how their subjectivities are shaped by this intersectionality on a daily basis.

#### **4.3.1 How their lives are shaped by class**

As for Bourdieu, power is created culturally and symbolically, and constantly re-legitimized through an interplay of agency and structure. The main way this happens is through what he calls ‘habitus’ or socialized norms or tendencies that guide behavior and thinking. (Wacquant, 2005) Social practices and actions of the individuals are a result of structures internalized by subjects unconsciously. My respondents<sup>81</sup> coming from a similar political Kurdish Alevi families act in a similar manner. On the other hand, my respondents<sup>82</sup> who also come from a working class Kurdish but assimilated family, display conservative habitus. Neither them nor their family put their Kurdish identity forward. And one of them<sup>83</sup> mentions of his mother’s supportiveness of Justice and Development Party. As a matter of fact, he shares one of his memories from Gezi uprising. When the then prime minister warns the activists about letting go supporters against them, he calls her mother in order to find out if she is aware of what is going

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<sup>81</sup> Such as P4, P10, P21, and P26

<sup>82</sup> Such as P5 and P13

<sup>83</sup> P5

on and learns out that her mother was shelling beans, unaware of what is going on. Likewise, following his family's track, he acts in a conservative manner and criticizes the activists for being too degenerate. On the other side, my another respondent<sup>84</sup> is very intelligent and knows what queer theory is even though she is an uneducated drug addict sex worker. She comes from a middle class Kemalist family. So to speak, the interviewee's critical subjectivity is varied. Some adopts his Kurdish identity, some his class, while some puts his sexual identity ahead. But at the end, the interviewees exhibit two habituses; the critical and the conservative one.

As Lawler puts it; the concept of habitus refers to the emotional aspects of class as well, in addition to the material ones. (Lawler, 2004). And interconnection of sexuality and class are experienced by queer subjects differently. How they get class, how they feel about it, and the effects of class are all varied. And certainly the way they resist, respond and struggle do change as well. Those coming from different backgrounds have different positions within the social space.

The ways they feel, experience and identify with class are all varied. As Taylor, whose work also focus on the intersectionality of class and sexuality, puts it: "the intersection between class and sexuality meant that decency was sometimes rejected, sometimes accepted and always precariously negotiated." (Taylor, 2014:56) Likewise, my interviewees either reject the norms or accept to be labeled as indecent; or they act moralist and conservative by rejecting sexuality, and look up themselves by marginalizing others. Most of my working class interviewees with a conservative habitus emphasized respectability when asked. They<sup>85</sup> represented themselves as someone who have manners, knowing how to act. Skeggs assert; "respectability is one of the most ubiquitous signifier of class." (Skeggs, 2002:1) And she adds the fact that it is not recognized as an issue by those who "are positioned with it, who are normalized by it, and who do not have to prove it" but for those stigmatized as dangerous and pathological, it is a big concern. (Skeggs, 2002:1) One of my

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<sup>84</sup> P24

<sup>85</sup> Such as P5 and P11

transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>86</sup> represented herself as the queen when asked about queer. She described herself as a noble, high quality woman; as a queen. In other words, my working class interviewees also used respectability and morality in order to create themselves as classed subjects. As Fathi explains, the way subjects imagine themselves in terms of what they wear, how they behave and socialize is important in the construction of classed performance. "...it also serves the purpose of helping one to decide to which social class one aspires to be a part of. One of the possible ways to understand the role of imagination in constructing class is through narrative." (Fathi, 2017: 117) One of my interviewees exhibit this point very clearly; as she<sup>87</sup> puts it;

If you ask about my class, I am extremely high class. In spirit. I may not be classy financially but I am classy in terms of quality. And I find myself more modern than 70 percent of the people in Turkey. In terms of brain I mean.(P39)

She mentioned of how clean and white, in other words respectable she is, in spite of the poverty she is going through and sex work she is forced to. As Sennett emphasizes, class is also a problem of freedom and dignity. (Sennett, 1972) Respectability is thus an amalgam of signs, economics and practices, assessed from different positions within and outside of respectability. (Skeggs, 2002) As a transsexual sex worker expresses;

Unless we change the stinking corruption inside ourselves, we cannot change anything in Turkey. First, we have to cleanse ourselves by applying an enema. Not just to our anuses but our whole bodies. And then we will stand up and fight for our rights. I want transgender people to be respected. I want them to be welcomed with 'Good day, Ma'am!' when they enter a place, even though they own a blue ID. That will make me happy to see. I need someone to make it reality. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:106)

In other words, they put themselves forward with the "active, performing self seeking recognition from others" just as Sennett describes in 'The Hidden Injuries of Class'. (Sennett, 1977:194) My respondent<sup>88</sup> kept introducing herself as the queen. In stead of

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<sup>86</sup> P39

<sup>87</sup> P39

<sup>88</sup> P39



queer movement, she used the word queen and presented herself as the queen of the queens. But once again just as Sennett argues, their self is divided. Because my working class respondents<sup>89</sup> who portrayed rich as heartless and corrupt and defined themselves as morally superior to them, were also the ones who were the most capitalist rejecting the idea of equality and fantasizing about getting rich. They exhibit divided self and contradictory consciousness. Likewise, in a contradictory way, they talked about their own sexual life comfortably but despised activists for coming out in public. In a way they both suffer and insult others.

But after all, they nobilitate themselves by referring to their morality. They use respectability and morality in order to be recognised as classed. This is the way they challenge, subvert or deform class relations; by representing themselves as morally superior and respectable in spite of lacking the economic capital they need in order to belong to class. In a way they queerify class relations in this way. Lamont describes this as;

Many of the men I talked to find meaning, value, and worth in their own lives, and they achieve this in part by stressing moral criteria of success that are available to all (such as personal integrity and good interpersonal relationships) and by downplaying the status criteria that are the dominant currency of the upper middle class world... Moreover, by stressing morality over socioeconomic success, workers affirm their own value and dignity and reject the notion that one's station in life defines one's worth. (Lamont, 2000:32)

In the end, it could be asserted that, either this or that way my respondents are living, feeling and interpreting class boundaries in terms of morality and respectability.

Within representations, wealthy are portrayed like another species, who belong to another world. They are merciless, unjust, unreliable and corrupt. One of my respondent<sup>90</sup> defined them as heartless drug addicts, while some others<sup>91</sup> defined them as pitiless and judgemental. In other words, they complained about behaviors of

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<sup>89</sup> Such as P1, P39 and P11

<sup>90</sup> P39

<sup>91</sup> P37

the wealthy; such as lavishness, pretentiousness or extreme self-confidence. They are not against the social position, on the contrary they also wish to reach that position. But they are against the attitudes associated with that position and in reply they defined themselves as compassionate, fair, trustable and above all morally superior. Yet, as asserted above, their self and consciousness was divided and contradictory, because my respondents who despised wealthy people and represented themselves with morality and dignity were after climbing the social ladder themselves, claiming that those who work hard will deserve to win.

Besides, it could also be asserted that their rejection of working in the informal sector could also be in a way a vision of agency based on honour and dignity. My working class uneducated transsexual respondents with conservative habitus were rejecting sex work in the name of honor and pride, in contrast to middle class ones and those with critical habitus who normalise, even praise it. In this way, they were trying to be recognised as classed. Eventually my working class respondents with a conservative habitus displayed two types of behavior; they either isolated themselves and directed their pain to their own body and felt suicidal<sup>92</sup>, or they referred to morality in order to be recognised as classed and respectable<sup>93</sup>.

In response to the hypocrisy in society, they reveal their spiritual richness. They are broke, but they do not need the money, as they have their spiritual richness. As Berghan mentions as well;

They're financially dependent on their customers... They define the society that defines transsexuals perverted as 'hypocritical' and themselves as the most honest people as they are at peace with themselves and know who they are. (Berghan, 2007:38)

There is this tendency to reject their class and think themselves as superior. As Taylor puts it:

What is interesting here is that the 'accusers' are also working-class, a fact realized on reflection. Their distinctions are generated through fear

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<sup>92</sup> Such as P37 and P45

<sup>93</sup> Such as P11 and P39

and wanting to be ‘something different’ (other than working-class?), wanting to prove that they are ‘not one of those. (Taylor, 2014:131)

That is to say, class is not just a phenomenon but an attitude. For one of my working class respondent<sup>94</sup>, her ex-boss is upper class because she dyes her hair orange and wears tights which makes her open minded according to her. Or, for another working class respondent<sup>95</sup>, those who speak English are upper class. As she puts it;

I don't speak English but when someone speaks English I don't do anything of it. After all, we get along with each other.(P13)

This in fact corresponds to Skegg's claim that cultural practices are also used as economic resources. (Skeggs 2002) As a transsexual sex worker states in the documentary *Paris Is Burning*;

I think if I could just be on TV or film or anything, I'd do that instead of the money. Of course I do want the money cuz I want the luxury that goes with it. But I want to be wealthy. If not wealthy, content, comfortable. I want to be somebody. I mean I am somebody. I just want to be a rich somebody. (Livingstone, 1990)

As for Bora, class practices never merely reflect their own conditions of existence but also show individual's or group's relative position within the hierarchy. That is, individuals always position themselves by comparing themselves with those above and below. And that class differences are symbolically represented through this comparison process. (Bora, 2018) My interviewees are also positioning themselves by comparing themselves with others, both those above and below themselves; but most of the time, by comparing with those below themselves. Eventually most of them mentioned of those in worse condition than themselves. They are aware of the fact that they belong to lower class, and yet, talk about those in worse conditions. For some of my respondents<sup>96</sup> it was their transsexual friends, or for others<sup>97</sup> it was those who migrate from the East. One of my working class respondent<sup>98</sup> mentioned of those that

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<sup>94</sup> P37

<sup>95</sup> P13

<sup>96</sup> Such as P37

<sup>97</sup> Such as P11 and P25

<sup>98</sup> P13

are undermost in EskiYeni<sup>99</sup> even though she sees herself at the bottom. Or some other respondent<sup>100</sup> who is a working class Kurdish gay and a victim of the state of emergency decrees himself, mentioned of his Alevi friend as someone who is in a worse situation, emphasizing the fact that he is somehow regarded as a Muslim unlike his friend. Likewise, another working class respondent<sup>101</sup> stated that she can attend weddings and municipal meetings, as a result of having a good voice and a supportive family. As for her, those whose family does not accept, and those who can not sing are forced to either prostitute or steal. Though they compare themselves with those who are above themselves as well. Those who are upper class were other players of the football team for one my respondent<sup>102</sup>, the costumers of the café she works at for another respondent<sup>103</sup>, and finally those respectable gay of Istanbul for my other working class respondent<sup>104</sup>.

Besides, even though my working class respondents appear not to know which social class they belong to; what they state tells us that there is an awareness formed through exclusions and painful emotional costs. Some of them mentioned of class experiences as exclusion. One of them<sup>105</sup>, for instance, mentioned of how other group members, those who found the football team she is a player of, excluded her. Taylor states; “Just as sexuality is ‘felt’ class can also produce feelings of being ‘out of place’, informing experiences and perceptions.” (Taylor, 2014:122). In addition to feeling excluded from the football team as a result of lacking cultural capital those who found the football team possess, my working class respondent<sup>106</sup> also feels uncomfortable at the metro

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<sup>99</sup> Gay pub located in the center of Ankara

<sup>100</sup> P30

<sup>101</sup> P1

<sup>102</sup> P37

<sup>103</sup> P13

<sup>104</sup> P11

<sup>105</sup> P37

<sup>106</sup> P37

because of being gazed upon as a result of her appearance and she always sits staring downwards in order not to catch someone's eye. Because as Skeggs asserts, othering in leisure spaces occur as a result of the fact that those with less economic and cultural capital are unable to feel relaxed and act flexible. (Skeggs, 2002) And the founders and other members of the football team exclude her for not being as white-collar as them. In fact, most of my working class respondents devaluated, marginalised themselves as a result of lacking the language and the cultural capital. And their narratives also reveals the fact that social relations have turned into a gaze relationship. (Jay, 1992) Such as the discomfort my respondent<sup>107</sup> feels in the subway train as a result of the people gazing at her. This is a kind of symbolic violence. Because as Bakhtin states, "the bourgeois body with its closed surface and the modern city with its massive and monumental structures and impenetrable façades was the great labour of the bourgeois public sphere." (Gibblett, 2008:62) In other words, the spaces, bodies, glances and social class are interlocked mechanisms of oppression.

As a result of lacking both economic and cultural capital, my working class respondents<sup>108</sup> feel insufficient, incomplete and wrong. And this constitutes an obstacle for them in trying to increase their social capital. As a respondent of Skeggs assert;

I understand the desire to belong, to be normalized, to go unnoticed, not to be judged, but I am also aware of its impossibility. Proximity to the 'right' knowledge and standards does not guarantee acceptance. They just generate more awareness of how 'wrong' your practices. (Skeggs, 2002:15)

They are aware of being categorized as inadequate. (Skeggs, 2002) Because, as Bora states, experiences of middle class are seen as the norm. (Bora, 2018) As a result, experiences of working class interviewees can be summed up as inadequacy, deficiency and inaccuracy. As the upper classes are decisive in the formation of symbolic structures, those from the lower class evaluate their experiences with these structures and feel themselves inadequate and poor. This was the case for most of my

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<sup>107</sup> P37

<sup>108</sup> Such as P37 and P39

working class respondents<sup>109</sup>. Skeggs (2002) argues that the feelings of inadequacy of working-class women are linked to the emotional politics of their classes. They never feel like doing the right thing because “the right thing... means fitting into different class standards which are based on different financial and moral economies.” (Skeggs, 2002:88) Here she refers to middle class standards.

And these emotional politics of class are inscribed in and on their bodies, as Bourdieu indicates. (Bourdieu, 1984) One of my working class respondent<sup>110</sup>, for instance, mentioned of how she becomes suicidal, and that at least when she commits suicide she will feel herself as the agent of her own life. Or some of my respondents feel ashamed of doing sex work, considering themselves as indecent. After all, their relationship with their bodies are the embodiment of class as Bourdieu states. (Bourdieu, 1984) Because, the “way of treating it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, which reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus.” (Bourdieu, 1984:190)

Emotions are social entities. They are weapons that include other bodies. As Ahmed indicates, they create the effect of an inside and outside. (Ahmed, 2004) There are two types of reaction against inequality; acceptance such as despair, self devaluation, resentment, offense; and denial such as hate, anger. Emotions shape bodies; how we react others and our contact with others shape the surfaces of our bodies.(Ahmed, 2004)

On the other hand, the wish of my working class respondent<sup>111</sup> to die is not an indicator of salvation but an indication of agency. As a subject who can not act in other fields of life, she is planning her own death by emphasizing that it will be herself who will kill her, which is in a way an effort to act. She is struggling with both unemployment; loneliness because of being away from her family both materially and emotionally; and the exclusion of her own community as a result of lacking cultural capital. Because

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<sup>109</sup> Such as P13, P37 and P39

<sup>110</sup> P37

<sup>111</sup> P37

as Skeggs asserts, “the anxieties of working-class women are always made through reference to something to which they do not have access, be it money, knowledge or space. They know that nearly everything they do will be recognized as classed.” (Skeggs, 2002:91) This was the case for most of my working class respondents<sup>112</sup>, including the one who I couldn’t conduct the interview but applied nail varnish to; as a result of the fact that he was lacking the language.

After all, my working class respondents care about these emotional and symbolic effects as much as the material and economic ones. Because as Gist & Lucas assert, their self esteem and the way they are treated by others are also important as they “face a unique set of challenges as they strive to achieve dignity because they are disadvantaged by a range of inequalities, from the material to the symbolic.” (Gist & Lucas, 2015:3) For this reason, poverty refers to the lack of emotional and symbolic capital in addition to economic one. Being respectable, having dignity and self-esteem are as essential as the material things. In fact, Lucas mentions of three types of dignity in this respects; god-given inherent dignity, self-generated earned dignity and the dignity that depends upon the affirmation of others. (Gist & Lucas, 2015:4)

People’s concerns regarding their class position are not just about what is just in terms of material inequalities but also what is just regarding manners, behaviors, morality expecting of recognition and respect, which arouse emotions such as shame, envy, deficiency, anger, hate, resentment, fear, pain... etc. As Sayer asserts, the feeling of shame reflects awareness of lacking something; while compassion, for instance is towards undeserved suffering. (Sayer, 2005) That is to say, sentiments towards inequalities differ among different classes. As Sayer puts it; “in so far as moral sentiments are a response to people’s circumstances and how they are treated, we can expect them to vary in their distribution roughly according to individuals’ position in the social field.” (Sayer, 2005:3) And as Bourdieu indicates, resisting some inequalities could be very painful (Bourdieu, 1984); or as Sayer puts it exposure to inequality could result in refusal of the advantages of the dominant position. (Sayer,

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<sup>112</sup> Such as P4 and P37

2005) In the end, the injuries caused by class inequalities reveal itself as resentment and shame against the privileged, (Sayer, 2005) because refusal of recognition can and do damage people. (Taylor, 2014) As a result, the systems of oppression “involve systematic misrecognition – part refusal of recognition and part stigmatised recognition.” (Sayer, 2005:3) Shame, fear, deficiency, pain were common emotions my interviewees revealed as well.

As a result, class operates as a structure of feelings as well, such as a fear of not having got it right, for instance. (Kuhn, 1995) And my working class respondents were either ashamed of their social class and chose to turn in on themselves<sup>113</sup>, or expressed their social class with hate and anger<sup>114</sup>. These correspond to their habitus as well. Those who display conservative habitus felt shame and this prevented them from acting, resisting<sup>115</sup>; while those with critical habitus attributed positive meaning to their class and raised political consciousness<sup>116</sup>. In other words, they either felt shame and isolated themselves, or felt hate and expressed that pain through critical subjectivity and political activism. Hate and pain put them in action. For instance one of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>117</sup> kept telling “that thing” when referring to what she does for living. On the other side, a prominent Kurdish trans activist<sup>118</sup> was hiding it in the beginning before she raised her political consciousness. Here, having more than one minority identities and being subject to multiple forms of oppression are effective. In conclusion, the respondents could be discussed in two groups; those who externalise their hatred and become political activists; and those who are ashamed of their classed positions and try to prove their respectability. This does not mean that all working class respondents who lack the cultural capital prefer not to challenge the

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<sup>113</sup> Such as P37, P13, P11 and P45

<sup>114</sup> Such as P4, P10, P19, P21, and P26

<sup>115</sup> Such as P37 and P45

<sup>116</sup> Such as P4

<sup>117</sup> P39

<sup>118</sup> Kaos GL (2018)



class relations; on the contrary, some of them<sup>119</sup> do by retreating into a conservative habitus in order to prove their respectability and value.

As a result of lacking confidence, doubting their judgements, caring about how others see them, and continually trying to prove themselves; my working class respondents cannot access to resources and spaces. Because as Skeggs asserts; they lack the certainty that “they are doing it right, which is one of the main signifiers of middle class dispositions.” (Skeggs, 2002:90) And this is the most powerful way of committing symbolic violence. While some of my working class respondents<sup>120</sup> were ashamed of themselves and even feeling suicidal; some of them were attributing a positive meaning to their classed position. One of them<sup>121</sup> was proud of being from slums; while other<sup>122</sup> was mentioning of the shitty smell of her house with proud. So working classes continually care about the judgements of those middle classes, imaginary others, who position them as inadequate. (Skeggs, 2002) But as asserted above, as a result of other factors, some display a critical habitus while some conservative one. The possibility of critical agency that may emerge from practices of subversion of the normative intelligibility seem to depend upon this filter of habitus, or rather its form.

Most of my working class respondents were aware of how they were judged by others in other words middle classes or white-collars. They were aware of the fact that they were positioned in a different location than theirs. Because after all, practice of identification is based on recognition from the others. As Skeggs asserts, “the discourse of shame is one of the most insidious means by which women come to recognize, regulate and control themselves through their bodies” as a result of recognition of judgements of others. (Skeggs, 2002:123) With my respondents, morality was also a very significant signifier of class; as one of my working class

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<sup>119</sup> Such as P5 and P33

<sup>120</sup> Such as P37

<sup>121</sup> P4

<sup>122</sup> P24

respondent<sup>123</sup> was ashamed of doing sex work while my middle class respondent<sup>124</sup> was referring to it as service sector.

At the end, it could be asserted that structures of feelings consist of insecurity, self-doubt, resentment, shame, fear and pain, as a result of being excluded from every field of life; family, education, labor market...etc. One of my working class respondent<sup>125</sup>, for instance, got suspicious in the middle of the interview and asked for how long was I analyzing her. And their resistance against being recognized as unrespectable oblige them to self-monitoring and regulation. (Skeggs,2002)

As has been emphasized, class positions are complex, fluid and varied. There also exist intermediate classes such as lower middle classes. Still, those<sup>126</sup> who perform critical queer subjectivity reject every type of classification and prefer to be at the bottom. They speak in praise of underground.

Most of the interviewees come from a working class family. Levels of education position them differently within the social space. So it is not money but the education and cultural capital that transform them into critical agents. Some, for instance, gain a lot of money from sex work but if uneducated, they do not possess language nor have awareness. Solely money does not change their position. Besides, they spend it on drugs.

Most of the interviewees answered as woman or man when asked about their class. Class is not a part of their identity. When class is questioned, those who were born and raised particularly in nationalist and conservative families understand the question as Kurdishness or Turkishness. For example, one of my respondent<sup>127</sup> told that she did

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<sup>123</sup> P39

<sup>124</sup> P7

<sup>125</sup> P37

<sup>126</sup> Such as P24 and P26

<sup>127</sup> P35

not believe in class discrimination since she understands class as Kurdishness. And later on she cried stating that the biggest problem in life is financial inequality and the fact that she does not have money. Or, else, this question was understood as conservatism by some<sup>128</sup> of the respondents. And most of the middle class interviewees mentioned of culture instead of money when asked about class. My middle class respondents understood culture when asked about social class, while my working class respondents mentioned of structural and material deficiencies.

Dunne asserts that “there is an inter-relationship between the lesbian lifestyle and financial independence” (Dunne, 1997:125) as “the pursuit of a lesbian lifestyle both necessitates and facilitates financial independence.” (Dunne, 1997:2)

This applies to some of my interviewees, those who chose class instead of sexual identity<sup>129</sup>. Some of them<sup>130</sup> also mentioned about their lesbian friends who got married in order to secure themselves economically. But for those who chose their identity over class are excluded from career options, work in low-paid insecure works. They experience neither comfort nor financial satisfaction. Most of them start working voluntarily in NGO’s and some of them end up getting somewhere while most of them getting nowhere. Even if they weren’t classed, as a result of choosing their sexual identity over their social class they became classed.

As for my working class transsexual respondents, their sexual identity and class are interconnected, as their sexual identity depends on their economic situation. As one of them<sup>131</sup> who sings on stage at clubs puts it;

Because I will not be able to live when the economy is no more. Because until the age of 35, I had to save money for my surgery, and for other things, so it has always been about money. I have clawed my way to

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<sup>128</sup> P40 and P16

<sup>129</sup> Such as P5 and P33

<sup>130</sup> P4

<sup>131</sup> P1

come to these days. And I continue working in order to live an easy and pleasant life from now on. Others don't care about me much. (P1)

For her even social problems are economic problems; the age of retirement and white-collar unemployment. She even reads politics from an economic perspective. The reason why she hates Justice and Development Party is the prohibition of alcoholic beverages. Because she has the fear of not being able to take the stage and earn money. Otherwise, she does not want to be involved in politics because she indicates that she has customers from every political leaning and she is afraid of losing her livelihood. And since she works too hard, she does not have that time as well. She is on stage until very early in the morning. As we have seen in this study, as most of my working class respondents mentioned, one should need spare time to get involved in politics. Working class does not have that time. In other words, bread and butter are beyond everything. This is the case for most of my working class respondents. Above all things, money comes first and foremost. Then comes their sexual identity, especially for my transsexual respondents. And for those who display conservative habitus, religion comes after their finance and gender.

For instance, although one of my working class respondent<sup>132</sup> states that from now on she will prefer jobs that will allow her to live her identity openly; she keeps emphasizing the need for money. The biggest problem in her life is lack of money. She keeps complaining about over working. As a vegan, she states that she had to do things she wouldn't want to do in order to make money and keep living, such as working in an animal shelter and tasting a non-vegan sauce while working in a kitchen. Because she has to work in order to stay alive. She doesn't have the luxury to work less. As a result of being underqualified, the jobs she can find are limited. And if she decides to come out at the workplace, options will decrease. In other words, she is incapable of hiding her working class identity. As a result, she decides to hide her sexual identity in order to keep working and staying alive. This fake heterosexual performance is a defense against other's judgements, oppression, and stigmatization

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<sup>132</sup> P4

of her as unrespectable and valueless, in addition to losing her job. As a result, it could be asserted that the intersectionality of class and sexuality do exclude individuals from social spaces.

Likewise, another working class respondent<sup>133</sup> at first stated that she identifies herself with her sexual identity. But afterwards, she indicated that her sexual identity is none of anyone's business and that it has to stay within the boundaries of the private sphere. She claimed that carrying it to the public sphere would create exclusions. She complains that in the night club she works at, they immediately label people as homophobic when a problem emerges and that they socialise the problem. On the other hand, she supports Lambda for helping job seekers. Once again, although she does not know which social class she belongs to; class becomes prominent based upon her discourse. She gives materiality prominence. The way she interprets social gender and queer theory focuses on power relations. For her, masculinized and strengthened lesbians are subject to discrimination less than feminized and weakened gay. Because being a tomboy means being moral and strong standing on your own legs. She goes a step further and concludes the topic with Turkishness.

It may be like, you know, every Turk is born a soldier but only men join the army. Then the understanding in our society may be that all Turks are men, that women are not quite Turks. (P8)

Another example comes from one of my working class transsexual man respondent<sup>134</sup> who chose social class over his gender and kept emphasizing significance of social class through referring to respectability and morality. He is the son of a conservative jeweler, and is studying at sports sciences. He doesn't know the meaning of the term queer. Even though he claims not to identify himself with any definition; he had to sacrifice a lot for his gender reassignment. He had to start working in order to save money when his transition process started at the age of eighteen, and he had to continue working throughout his life. Becoming a cultured, reputable individual with a profession is the most important goal of his life. He even refers to having a profession

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<sup>133</sup> P8

<sup>134</sup> P16

when asked about gender. His father's impact is significant here. As a man who didn't have a chance to study, his father's biggest dream is to have his children study and become reputable individuals with a profession. As my respondent<sup>135</sup> puts it;

I mean your appearance should be like that of normal people. You know because they grew up in the village, and my father works in the jewelry manufacturing industry, and the manufacturing process is dirty work. And back in those times, the people they admired and idolized were men in suits, like state officials you know, in those suits and ties, for that reason he always wanted us to be like that. (P16)

He keeps referring to respectability and morality. He asserts that he resorted to God a lot through the transition period. In fact, religion was the only thing that kept him alive and sane. And even though he claims to be enlightened politically, still he talks in a conservative manner; and underlines the fact that homosexuals should not sit in each other's arms and make love in public like heterosexual couples. He complains about effeminate gays talking with excessive manners and asserts that they should not try to attract attention and live in a decent manner. He complains about being labelled immoral himself because of them. Furthermore, he insults those participating in the Pride;

Well, I don't know if you saw it, I don't know if you witnessed it or not but people, I don't want to call them people though, you know they make love in public, naked as jaybirds. (P16)

Even when asked about social classes, he mentions of religious people and indicates that religious people have to fit in the order as well. As for him, social class does not have an impact upon the discrimination in society. As a matter of fact, for him what creates discrimination in society is the religion of people, their family of origin, and their hometowns. In other words, he mentions of Alevism and Kurdishness. Yet, later on while explaining why he had stopped attending trans solidarity groups; he said that his existence had bad influence on other trans man as he doesn't have money issues as a result of having a supportive family. In addition, he kept emphasizing the importance of education and culture, which are the indicators of social class as well.

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<sup>135</sup> P16

In Bourdieu's theory of habitus, culture is the battleground upon which social inequalities are reproduced. For this reason, social class is discussed in relation to habitus within this study. As for Bourdieu, habitus refers to a set of embodied norms, dispositions and behaviors. According to the theory of habitus, "individuals internalize their class status and social position which then reinforce that very same social position and unconsciously reproduce one's status." (Lee & Kramer, 2013:18) Most of my respondents imitate their parents. For instance, the one<sup>136</sup> with a conservative habitus discussed above keeps highlighting the significance of culture when asked about social class. He imitates his father whose biggest wish was to send his children to school and see them wearing a suit to work; and states that it does not matter if one is Syrian or Kurd, or if one earns 100,000 TL or 1 TL per month. Instead, as for him, being well educated, well mannered and logical determines one's chances. In a similar vein, another working class respondent<sup>137</sup> mentions how his family has been imposing the necessity of climbing up the social ladder. His family came with labor migration and they have worked in daily tasks. However, among his relatives, there are those who climb the social ladder; such as his cousins who have become factory owners. They have begun buying houses and this has become a worry for him. He imitates his family and states that his biggest concern in his life is to climb the social ladder. Also, as Taylor puts it, within families and communities, attempts to claim dignity through making distinctions within the community are common. (Taylor, 2014) As my respondent asserts;

Because I mean, saving money is for rich people. I can't save money by selling my body, by cat sitting or through associations. And you know there are those codes about climbing the social ladder everywhere, like you have to buy a house or a car, you have to save money or put some money aside... All this is really limiting to me. I cannot find a way out of it. Because I'm thinking about money all the time. I am obsessed with money. (P20)

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<sup>136</sup> P16

<sup>137</sup> P20

And for him, the reasons behind his elder sisters' inability to get divorced from their husbands who have been committing domestic violence are both economic and cultural. Because there is not such a thing as divorce within their class he claims. In other words, he refers to culture as well when talking about social class.

After all, as Özbay indicates, it is problematic to consider the intellectual gay who buys sex service and the transsexual sex worker who works at Tarlabası under the same LGBTQ identity. (Özbay, 2012)

Here below, how individuals experience intersectionality of class and gender within different fields will be examined in detail.

#### **4.3.1.1 Family and community:**

As Jo puts it, “habitus contributes to the perpetuation of social inequality because habitus is formed in early childhoods through family interaction and it lasts for the rest of life stages.” (Jo, 2013: 1) The formation of habitus takes place in the early stage of one's life, including family history, childhood, and schooling experiences and it lasts for a long time. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) Intimacy and personal life are formed and all hegemonic norms and values are reproduced within family. One of my respondents<sup>138</sup>, for instance, is obsessed with climbing the social ladder because he was a child worker. Or my another interviewee<sup>139</sup> is very intelligent and knows what queer theory is about, unlike her other uneducated drug addict sex worker friends, because she comes from a middle class Kemalist family. Because, habitus being formed through early socialization is not only inscribed in the bodily dispositions but

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<sup>138</sup> P20

<sup>139</sup> P24



also in the unconsciousness of the individuals. “Individuals internalize their class status and social position into their tastes and worldview, which then reinforce that very same social position and unconsciously reproduce one’s status.” (Lee & Kramer, 2013:19). Hence, habitus becomes the second nature of individuals, acquired in the early childhood, producing different patterns of social practices and outcomes, and ultimately is the tool through which the social relations, in other words social inequalities are reproduced. (Bourdieu, 1990) And the habitus of my respondents were constituted in their families, through their early childhood.

My working class Kurdish Alevi respondents<sup>140</sup> coming from assimilated and conservative families who support Justice and Development Party, live their sexuality openly and subvert the normative intelligible order in their private life; but they do not carry this to public life and act in a conservative manner criticizing those visible in public life as immoral and indecent. In order to live high, they abandon their Kurdish identity. They chose to transcend their social background and move up the social ladder in order to live their sexuality openly. But my working class Kurdish Alevi respondents with a critical habitus struggle for their Kurdish and Alevi identity as well. In fact, as for one of my respondent<sup>141</sup>, who is a Kurdish Alevi migrated from Sivas, her Kurdish and Alevi identities come before her social class. Because this is the way her family raised her. Her family is illiterate but politically conscious as a result of being left oriented and she is also after being publicly more visible, while my assimilated Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>142</sup> with a conservative habitus reacts in a conservative manner towards activists; imitating his family, and wishes to become a part of the order;

As a matter of fact, I actually prefer to create a right place for myself within the current system and live there, instead of changing and losing all my hope within the current system. (P13)

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<sup>140</sup> Such as P5 and P13

<sup>141</sup> P10

<sup>142</sup> P13

The role of family is crucial, not only because my respondents imitate them, but also lacking their support results in lacking education. For instance, one of my respondents<sup>143</sup> coming from a Kurdish Alevi working class but again conservative family had to leave home as her religious parents were excluding her. She didn't have chance to study as a result of working sixteen hours per day. The financial support of the family, apart from their support in terms of political awareness, leads individuals to pursue their education and become a politically aware individual. But my respondent who lacks the support of her family, was alone and could not continue her education. As a result, in terms of Kurdishness, Alevism or gender identity, she does not have a political consciousness either. She works at a kitchen and maintains the conservative habitus of her family. However, my another respondent<sup>144</sup> who also comes from a Kurdish Alevi working class but this time political family had a chance to study and become a white collar.

Most of my respondents<sup>145</sup> had to leave their hometown and break their connection with their real families, cut their ties with their relatives in order to live their sexuality openly. Being away from relatives while growing up means being devoid of the opportunities as well. In other words, their sexual identity and social class are interconnected.<sup>146</sup> In order to live their sexuality, they need money, as they also have to leave their family and their support behind. One of them<sup>147</sup>, for instance, went broke but she does not want to return to her family because she now openly lives her sexual identity and she does not want to go back to Antakya and hide herself. Therefore, she needs to find money.

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<sup>143</sup> P13

<sup>144</sup> P10

<sup>145</sup> Such as P37 and P4

<sup>146</sup> Such as P37, P4 and P13

<sup>147</sup> P37

On the other side, as a solution, most of them form their own alternative families. Younger ones choose to isolate themselves if they are not organized. One of my young working class respondent<sup>148</sup>, for instance, changed his name and gave himself a nickname; and yet his family told him that his real name was important and that he could not change his family, which shows how his identity and his family are very closely interrelated. The reason why he can not leave his family is the fact that he has no access to any organization as a result of financial difficulties. From this perspective; organizations are like a place where middle class socializes rather than a place which provides support. However, my another young working class respondent<sup>149</sup> has reached an organization in Mersin. He left his family and took shelter in his organization. He was lucky to find an organization to replace his family. Because as Taylor (2014) asserts, most of them go through a problematic, tough transition. Prendergast et al. (2001) even mentions of the wide gap between “those getting somewhere and those getting nowhere” as a result of breaking their connections with their families. (cited in Taylor, 2014:89)

Another reason why family is so important is that discrimination starts there. You can find a better job and move up the social ladder. You can get your ethnic identity accepted by being assimilated or else you can be close to government and you can get yourself approved. However, LGBTQ identity is an identity even against family, as in the case of most of my transsexual respondents<sup>150</sup>. Even the solidarity of transsexuals is also related with family. As Selin Berghan puts it;

Exclusion and loneliness, which begin in the family and deepen throughout life, teaches them that those like them are the only one who can help them in difficult times... Surprisingly, on an ordinary day, many don't even want to stand side by side, but they bunch up in case something bad happens. For example, for a transgender who has to undergo emergency surgery but has no money, the necessary money can be collected in one hour and it is not necessary to know the person who needs it in person. (Berghan, 2007:43)

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<sup>148</sup> Such as P41

<sup>149</sup> P32

<sup>150</sup> Such as P24 and P26

Therefore, although they may not get along very well among themselves, they act together when a factor such as death or illness occurs. In fact, there is mothering alongside each other. As Berghan explains;

They begin prostitution through the agency of a friend who has entered the environment before them. They are trained by a more experienced and often older transsexual, where, what and how to do it. These people who lead them are called mothers. Everyone has a mother, and in time they can become mothers themselves. (Berghan, 2007:36)

Kandiyoti makes a similar point;

Introduction to 'the life' usually takes place under the guidance of a more experienced friend who knows the ropes. An intense communal life of mutual visiting, nursing after surgery, cooking and sharing meals, telephone calls, visits to the hairdresser and swapping anecdotes creates the impression of a self-contained world. (Kandiyoti, 2002:285)

Finally as a transsexual activist puts it;

Demet did not let me work for about a year. Because I had to learn the rules of the streets, I had to learn the business, I had to get to know the men of the street, the customers, even the neighbors. For about a year. Demet looked after me for a year the way a mother'd take care of her daughter. She fed me, dressed me up, washed me, wined and dined me and taught me how to work. This is a customer of the street, this is not a customer, this is a man of the street, this is our neighbor, this is the girl who brings customers from the club, so don't show yourself by the window, because she barely found a customer, he is an expensive customer. I remember her yanking me inside so the customer wouldn't get the wrong idea about the street. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:56)

They even have their own language; "lubunca". Kontovas indicates that it is based on the Gypsy dialect, with traces from Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, Armenian, Greek, Bulgarian, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian. Kontovas mentions of 153 words and 85 roots. (Kontovas, 2012). "It conveys crucial information about the ages of men (...), money units, appearance and a range of activities." (Kandiyoti, 2002:286)

As I have said, those who can achieve it build their own families over time. They create their own habitus. Most of my respondents<sup>151</sup> state that since they could not establish

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<sup>151</sup> Such as P6 and P20

a spiritual bond, they are isolated from family and have their own chosen families. Also, some of them are wrathful towards their families as a result of being a child labor<sup>152</sup> or being sexually abused<sup>153</sup> by their families. In fact, one of my respondents<sup>154</sup> has to continue living with his family and take care of them as they are unemployed. Following sexual abuse, he got narcolepsy, but although he does not see them as his family, he compulsorily maintains his life by taking pills as if nothing has happened. But he has a class rage. As a kid, he worked at a hairdresser; at a shoe factory; he sold water and shined shoes. But later on, he managed to study at university and even worked at an association for some time. The most important thing for him is to become richer. He even prostitutes in order to save money and travel overseas. Because as he states, his family have not worked during their lifetimes, and therefore they are not even working class but lower-class, which makes him also lower-class.

I am still lower class. I haven't even been able to climb to the next level of the social ladder. (P20)

In fact, most of my working class respondents with a conservative habitus have a class rage. They chose to climb the social ladder instead of bringing their sexual identity up. And much the same with my other working class respondents with a critical habitus, sexual identity and class of my working class respondents with a conservative habitus are also interconnected. But they prefer to challenge class relations instead of being involved in identity politics. For them, individuals should come to the forefront with their intelligence, and quality of their jobs instead of their sexual identities. They do not believe in equality either. For them, what really matters are the social status and social class of people. One of my working class Kurdish Alevi but assimilated respondent<sup>155</sup>, for instance, stated that he was born in a slum in Keçiören. He didn't have the chance to study at university. But he somehow managed to move up the social ladder, set up his own business and became respected by everyone. He states that he

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<sup>152</sup> P20 and P26

<sup>153</sup> P20

<sup>154</sup> P20

<sup>155</sup> P5

has worked a lot to achieve his goals and deserved what he has achieved. But another reason is his being animal rights activist and consorting with mostly middle class people who act as cultural mentors for him. He always refers to success and respect and even mentions of homosexual CEOs working in very good positions when asked about his sexual identity. Even his activism through Gezi uprising is a part of his social status. He brags about himself for resisting at the most dangerous region of the uprising. He explains how he never mentions of his neither Kurdish nor Alevi identity with proud. And as for him, the reason of not being exposed to discrimination is the fact that he never refers to his hometown and never get involves in politics. He indicates clearly that he does not have to impose his own belief and values to anyone and prove himself. In other words, he refers to individual's own capacity, the own trajectory of the agent like most of my working class respondents with a conservative habitus do.

In a similar vein, my another respondent<sup>156</sup> coming from a working class but this time Turkish and Sunni family is also in pursuit of living a better life. His father is a police and mother is a housewife. He comes from an uneducated and low-income family. However, like my Kurdish Alevi but assimilated respondent<sup>157</sup> discussed above, his ambition is to climb social ladders. Therefore, he pushes his gender identity to the background. He is hidden not only from his family but society. He talks about finance whatever you ask. When I say family, he tells that his family has not supported him financially. He also brings his profession in the forefront. Whether I ask him about organization or event, he tells profession. Although he seems to go beyond his family by being educated, his language is conservative and he is angry with activists. He even connects gender question to financial situation, and replies that since he is not married, he does not have sufficient furniture at his house. He does not have money and cannot afford all furniture he wants. His dream is to go abroad because in his point of view,

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<sup>156</sup> P33

<sup>157</sup> P5

upper class is people who are living abroad. This is also true for my other respondents with a conservative habitus, both Sunni Turk or assimilated Kurdish Alevi ones.

On the other side, my working class Kurdish Alevi interviewees<sup>158</sup> with a critical habitus are also in a similar position, but they describe themselves as “the other of other” and struggle for every identity they own. Instead of saving up money and owning more property, they work in order to save up money and go to school in order to get education. Once again, the role of family is crucial here as they imitate the track of their families.

In addition, the financial support of their families through these transitions are very crucial which most of them lack. For instance, one of my transsexual woman respondent<sup>159</sup> who takes the stage and sings at clubs was lucky that she was born gifted. Because she saved up the money needed for surgery by virtue of her voice. Thereby, economy, in fact, precedes her gender identity and what matters most to her is money. But my other transsexual respondent<sup>160</sup> is not as lucky as she is. He can't afford the surgery. Even if he somehow finds money, he calculates how he will work and survive after the surgery. Therefore, he does not follow this path. He earns his living by telling fortune and dancing. He even thinks of post-surgery recovery period. As he is not capable of doing more on his own, he expects the state to support people like him. Indeed, we can talk about two groups: those who make progress in their professional lives and in some way earn money and always emphasize individuality; and those who expect support from the state, that is to say, those who are statist. This, of course, excludes political ones. This is conservative section. As one of my conservative transsexual respondent<sup>161</sup> puts it;

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<sup>158</sup> Such as P10

<sup>159</sup> P1

<sup>160</sup> P11

<sup>161</sup> P11

God willing! I mean, statesmen, but of course our people I mean, if they somehow represent themselves positively, if they state so yes I do not want to prostitute, here's what I want to do, I want to be here, I want to work there, and ask for the opportunity to promote themselves positively, that is if they represent themselves to the state and the public in a positive way, but without being degenerate, this will happen anyway. (P11)

After all, LGBTQ people are subject to oppression everywhere; at the school, in the vicinity or in the country. LGBTQ individuals are more vulnerable in every area; such as accommodation, finding food or finding a workplace they can come out. They are mostly forced to precarious work. So to speak, even homes are a display of distinction. The encouraging of staying at home during the pandemic has showed how vulnerable LGBTQs are, as most of them do not have a comfortable environment even at their homes. Let alone, transsexuals have been exposed to symbolic violence by their neighbors.<sup>162</sup> Even being able to stay at home is a classed act. Not everyone has homes with happy families. For LGBTQs who can only come out and be themselves with their friends, home is a place like prison.

Nevertheless, the family is the determinant factor. If family supports you, you can survive. One of my respondent<sup>163</sup> finds even the psychologists phobic as they tried to stereotype him. But he has not had major problems since his family has always supported him. Or likewise, teachers of my another respondent<sup>164</sup> called her elder sisters to school and complained about her. The whole village was gossiping about them and she was hospitalized. But, in her own words, thank goodness, her family has supported her. She was supported by her family emotionally but not economically though. She had the surgery without any support from her family because of her

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<sup>162</sup> <https://gazetekarınca.com/2020/04/nefret-saldirilari-nedeniyle-evine-giremeyen-trans-kadin-ajda-ender/>

<sup>163</sup> P25

<sup>164</sup> P1



despotic father. She experienced what most of my working class transsexual respondents were afraid of;

There is also this, I even had to work even during the process of surgery my dear. Normally I should have rested for a month or two, but I got up on the fifteenth day and took the stage in that injured state. Because the end of the month comes faster than you say the word. (P1)

Coming out is also a classed act as a result of the significance of family support. One of my respondent<sup>165</sup> explains the instability of his social class as he pursues his education by receiving financial support from his family to whom he has not come out yet. But if he comes out, they might no longer support him financially and he might have to leave his education. In other words, although he sees himself as middle class now, he is on a tightrope, and if he decides to switch and come out to his family; they might no longer support him and he may fall any time from the class he belongs to at the moment. On the other side, even though the support of the family, owning social capital, knowing the right person at the right time, the support of one's network is very crucial; at the last stance economy determines everything. For instance, Bülent Ersoy was normalized and accepted by her family after she earned money thanks to her voice. Later she was approved by the society after having surgery.

Valentine et al. explore how coming out to families contribute to the reproduction of existing social and economic inequalities. They argue that while “in the middle-class household's people are motivated to fulfill the expectations of their parents” such as educational and career success (*Valentine et al. 2003: 493*), working class families are “most likely to respond in terms of violence and rejection.” (Valentine et al., 2003:490) However, this perception fails to notice the homophobia silenced in some familial contexts. For instance one of my educated sex worker respondent<sup>166</sup>, who speaks two languages, still keeps in touch with her family. On the other hand, my working class

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<sup>165</sup> P31

<sup>166</sup> P7

conservative respondent<sup>167</sup> had to leave her house after her mother accused her of suffering from demonic possession. As she puts it:

I have nothing to lose, you feel me? Either I will live my own life or choose not to live theirs. They have always stood, and will always stand in my way, my family... I mean as I said before, when I first came out, for a year my mother accused me of being possessed by the Devil. The Devil, like, the actual Devil. Not a metaphorical demon. (P13)

While most of my working class respondents<sup>168</sup> had to leave their hometown and family in order to live their sexuality, the biggest problem of my middle class respondent<sup>169</sup> and her girlfriend is not being able to kiss in front of their families. So familial outcomes do differ based on class differences and reproduce existing inequalities. On the other hand, there are those who had to leave their homes even though they belong to middle class families. One of my respondents<sup>170</sup> coming from a middle class family had to leave home as well, and now he earns his livelihood by telling fortunes. He explains that by giving up what family promises, he was freed from violence and yet his living conditions significantly worsened. On the other side, some of my working class respondents<sup>171</sup> do not have the luxury of giving up family support since they are uneducated. Because they cannot survive without family support. That's why they have not come out to their families yet. The difference between two of my respondents, who are both kitchen workers staying at their families' houses is that one of them complains about not having time for activism. She<sup>172</sup> is a working class Kurd living in Ankara. On the other side, my other respondent is very active in terms of participating in organizations. He<sup>173</sup> is a working class Alevi living in Diyarbakır, who is also victim of state of emergency decree and he served his time in prison in the past. The fact that he is more politically active may be because he

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<sup>167</sup> P13

<sup>168</sup> Such as P13 and P37

<sup>169</sup> P42

<sup>170</sup> P14

<sup>171</sup> Such as P4, P22 and P30

<sup>172</sup> P4

<sup>173</sup> P30

lives in Diyarbakır. In other words, as will be discussed in further detail in the following sections, this is due to the geography.

Yet some prefer the opportunities and comfort; prefer not to come out of closet in order to live a better life and benefit from the opportunities of family. One of my respondents<sup>174</sup>, for instance, was born to a conservative family in Keçiören and has never come out to his family. In return, he had a happy childhood and his family cared for his education and eventually he has a profession. He is a veterinary physician. And he acts in the same conservative manner as his family, criticizing the activists for carrying their sexuality (their privacy) to public space.

Needless to say, the situation is different for transsexuals as they cannot hide their sexual identities; it is visible. As a result, most of them are thrown out of their houses. They are unable to benefit from the opportunities of family. Yet, family support is crucial for better living conditions. For instance, one of the transsexual respondent in Berghan's study states that the reason of having good relations with her neighbors is the fact that she is still living with her family. (Berghan, 2007) This example is important in terms of demonstrating society's approach towards those who are under family protection, even if they are transsexuals. This example shows the opportunities provided by the family institution. But if you lack family support, it means you are going to lack education, and later on a well-paid job.

In addition, as Jamieson associates the emotional intimacy within the family with middle class families (Jamieson, 1998), which in turn pathologize working class ones. While the families of my working class respondents<sup>175</sup> were ignoring their girlfriends, my middle class respondents<sup>176</sup> mentioned of introducing their partners to their families. Likewise affecting intimate relationships, class differences affect the

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<sup>174</sup> P15

<sup>175</sup> Such as P4 and P10

<sup>176</sup> Such as P12 and P14

reactions against partners within the family as well. (Taylor, 2014) This is based on the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the families. Moreover, families without father and extreme gender divisions within the family are associated with working class families and are pathologized. (Taylor, 2014) And the roles of mothering and fathering within working class family does not fit those of middle class family. (Taylor, 2014 & Jamieson, 1998) Some of my working class respondents mentioned of being forced to work as a child, either as a result of having an unemployed family<sup>177</sup>, or as a result of having crowded family<sup>178</sup>. In other words, they have had to play both mothering and fathering roles themselves.

On the other hand, as for some of my respondents<sup>179</sup>, violence has no direct link with social class. As for one of my respondents<sup>180</sup>, for instance, the general opinion that lower classes are more homophobic while higher classes are more tolerant can not be accepted. He comments over class culture and says that families of illiterate tribe children from the East take good care of their children in comparison to modern families. This is an interesting comment. He also gives examples from his own family;

My older brother is someone who speaks English and socializes in mixed-sex circles. But my little brother is more conservative and serious-minded. From an external perspective you would assume my little brother would oppose my sexual identity while my older brother would embrace me. But the opposite has happened. When we explained the situation to them, my older brother pushed against it a lot. In fact, I was still saved in his phone under my old name until the beginning of this summer. On the other hand, when my sister told him about the situation my little brother apparently said OK these things could happen, we will investigate, I will sell my car if necessary and we will go abroad, we will do whatever it takes. (P16)

Oktay İnce asserts a similar point in his documentary called “Devrim Beni Aramadı”. As for him, oppressed shows sympathy for other oppresseds. His educated

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<sup>177</sup> Such as P20

<sup>178</sup> Such as P26

<sup>179</sup> Such as P16

<sup>180</sup> P16

interviewees react more as a result of the power given by knowledge. On the other hand, those uneducated ones are more empathetic. A worker at May 1 demonstrations, for instance, states that he is against separating people. Or other labourers argue against marginalisation of homosexuals referring to religion, claiming that homosexuals are also creatures of God. (İnce, 2003)

Taylor as well challenges this view of considering working classes as more sexist, homophobic and racist, asserting that sexuality and social class are affected by each other in various ways. Unlike Moran's data attributing violence to working classes; likewise Taylor's, my working class respondents as well revealed multiple and contradictory positions. While families of some of my working class respondents<sup>181</sup> were extremely religious, conservative and homophobic, some others<sup>182</sup> were not. One of my respondent's<sup>183</sup> experiences as a transsexual woman within a Kurdish Alevi working class community, for instance, are way different. She is proud of her working class roots but also emphasizes the fact that there is no space for a transsexual woman there. Although she owns her class and is proud of it, the same class stands at a position which, at the same time, kills her. That is to say, her class both creates and kills her. But after all, while some of the working class families of my respondents were more homophobic than middle class ones; similar to Kadi's claim, homophobia of middle classes were silent and latent but still evident as well. (Kadi, 1997) To sum up, it could be asserted that not necessarily working class but those with conservative habitus are more homophobic than those with critical habitus.

On the other hand, as Robinson (2004) indicates, space is also both a resource and a constraint in terms of the inequalities. Just as Taylor's (2014) respondents, my interviewees also referred to places. One of my respondent<sup>184</sup>, for instance, linked

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<sup>181</sup> P13, P32

<sup>182</sup> P10, P21

<sup>183</sup> P21

<sup>184</sup> P45

stereotypes, inequalities and oppression to her locality, Sincan. As a matter of fact, most of my working class respondents<sup>185</sup> had to leave small towns in order to escape homophobia; in addition to some Kurdish transsexual activists.<sup>186</sup> Because as Binnie indicates, queer cosmopolitanism in big cities and working class sexuality in the rural differs. (Binnie, 2000) A transsexual activist<sup>187</sup> living in Istanbul, for instance, indicates the importance of Istanbul in the lives of LGBTQs. Being one of the most cosmopolitan cities, hosting all those marginalised and oppressed, Istanbul allows LGBTQ immigrants. Those LGBTQ subjects who need to abandon their homes and families generally find themselves in Istanbul as a result of feeling secure among other marginalised people they feel intimate with.

Another significant factor is home space, as inequalities start within the family together with the society. Marriage and family constitute an arena of intimacy which often turn into a sphere of oppression for women. Yet, it also provides a certain economic and social status support, especially for the ones from the working class. As Skeggs (2002) underlines, while working class women are capable of resisting class based inequalities; they “are unlikely to challenge the institution of marriage for financial reasons and sometimes status.” (Skeggs, 2002:126) Because they believe that marriage could offer economic security. My interviewees also mentioned of their lesbian friends getting married for financial support. Then again, being married was also perceived as a signifier of respectability, social status, as the other way around is perceived as a failure. One of my working class respondents<sup>188</sup>, for instance, complained about how his engagement ring was tightening his finger but also making him feel good and secure. Even though he was aware of the fact that his fiancée was cheating on him; he was very excited about getting married because he was going to move to Holland by means of this. After all, marriage not only naturalizes heterosexuality but also the relations between gender and class, Hennessy claims.

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<sup>185</sup> Such as P37, P39, P26, P8

<sup>186</sup> Such as a well known theatre actress, and the owner of a well known queer venue in Istanbul.

<sup>187</sup> Also the owner of a well known queer venue in Istanbul.

<sup>188</sup> P5

(Hennessy, 2018) In other words, individuals do get married both in order to conform to norms, but also in order to survive financially.

Then again, as for Skeggs, being respectable is also related with family life. Female respectability is used for the propoganda of family values. It is associated with domesticity and marital sexuality. (Skeggs, 2002) Here, sexuality is also critical in the construction of families, imposing heterosexuality as the accepted norm. My interviewees were aware of the fact that their family backgrounds were affecting their social locations. Likewise, as will be discussed in detail, ethnicity and religion are also identities constructed within the family. As Hill Collins put it;

Individuals typically learn their assigned place in hierarchies of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and social class in their families of origin. At the same time, they learn to view such hierarchies as natural social arrangements, as compared to socially constructed ones. Hierarchy in this sense becomes "naturalized" because it is associated with seemingly "natural" processes of the family. (Hill Collins, 1998:64)

The learning process in the family is not significant in every case though. Even if the family is uneducated and conservative, if the kid is literate he can make it to the middle class. Two of my transsexual men respondents, for example, both come from uneducated housewife mothers and shopkeeper fathers. But while one of them<sup>189</sup> displays conservative habitus, other one<sup>190</sup> is politically active with a very high consciousness.

According to Bourdieu, "... the habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences...; the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences..." (Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1992:134) For this reason, the schooling experiences and the critical subversive agency of my respondents in relation to the structuring of school experiences will be discussed in the next section.

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<sup>189</sup> P25

<sup>190</sup> P19

#### **4.3.1.2 Education**

As Skeggs asserts, access to knowledge is a central feature of class reproduction (Skeggs, 2002). As a result, the classed, gendered, sexualized aspects of schooling has to be discussed, together with ethnic aspects. While Dunne (1997) asserts that education can provide the means of a positive identification; Taylor, on the other hand, pointed out that educational track of working class students are full of pain and failure (Taylor, 2014). Because the school curriculum itself is also gendered, classed, heterosexist and nationalist. (Thomson and Scott, 1991) Such that, as Willis argues, even resisting the schooling process is included in the reproduction of economic and social inequalities. Because as a result, they will be driven to manual work instead of mental work and this will reproduce poverty. (Willis, 1977)

In the same vein as Taylor's results, my interviewees were also "positioned as failures, both in terms of their class positions and sexual identities, by teachers and fellow school pupils alike." (Taylor, 2014:75) Because as Bourdieu puts it while mentioning of Algerian proletarians, those who lack the tools of thinking rationally and comprehending the conditions of poverty, are forced to undergo these conditions. As for Bourdieu, "even in the advanced societies the principal mode of domination has shifted from overt coercion and the threat of physical violence to forms of symbolic manipulation." (cited in Swartz, 1997:82) Through educational and linguistic capital, "the legitimate vision of the social world and its divisions" are accepted as legitimate by the dominated. (Swartz, 1997:147) For Bourdieu, educational system is the principal institution through which symbolic power is expressed. Those who lack the knowledge and skills for socialization into the cultural tradition become unsuccessful. In other words, school failure is a result of the uneven distribution of the cultural capital, as school functions for cultural reproduction.

Indeed, Bourdieu defines three forms of cultural capital. Institutional cultural capital refers to academic qualifications while the objectified cultural capital refers to valuable



objects, commodities individuals own. Lastly, the embodied cultural capital refers to the habits and abilities that lead the owners to success. All of these have a significant role in the educational progress of children. (Bourdieu, 1984) These dispositions of both mind and body are transmitted from the family unconsciously.

One of my working class respondents<sup>191</sup> who is a high school student in Sincan district of Ankara, mentioned of having difficulty at school because of her sexual identity. She expressed how her teacher discussed homosexuality as a mental disease at class and made everyone stare at her. Another respondent,<sup>192</sup> who is a working class Kurd, with an experience of discrimination from her teachers as a result of her Kurdish identity. She was exposed to sexual abuse because of her homosexuality as well, but she wanted to remain silent and pursue her education. However, one of her ‘fascist’ instructors, in her own words, said that she would never let her advance in her education. So, she had to leave the school. One of my transsexual respondent<sup>193</sup> was kicked out of school as a result of her sexuality, while another respondent<sup>194</sup> had experienced peer victimization as a result of her Alevi identity. She grew up in the slums of Mamak, near the dump and the school she attended was filled with conservative and nationalist kids. Later on, when she got into two-year secretary associate degree programme, this time she had trouble with nationalists and liberals. As a left-wing woman, she had to endure many problems such as investigation and suspension. After all, as Taylor puts it, as a result of lacking economic, social and cultural capital, working class LGBTQ children have often been “dismissed as angry, incompetent individuals; quiet at the back...” (Taylor, 2014:84)

Indeed, one of my working class respondent’s<sup>195</sup> school counsellor refers to her shyness, and silence. Most of my working class respondents are either disinterested in

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<sup>191</sup> P45

<sup>192</sup> P26

<sup>193</sup> P39

<sup>194</sup> P4

<sup>195</sup> P45

school or prefer not to attend at all because they are seen as less valuable than their middle-class peers. (Reay, 2004) As a result, their “narratives of education are often narratives of failure and missed opportunities; their stories represent the intersection of class and sexuality.” (Taylor, 2014:87) School counsellor of one of my working class respondent<sup>196</sup>, who is a high school student in Sincan, complained about the early and frequent sexual intercourses of his students. He also mentioned of violent fights and accused the Sincan district of being the cause of this kind of behavioral problems. Because as Taylor puts it, “with working-class kids if you’ve a problem with someone you go out into the playground and beat the crap out of them and you sort it all out. Whereas those middle-class girls they’ve got a completely different way of dealing with stuff.” (Taylor, 2014:86) Even educated people are judgmental against sexual minorities. My working class high school respondent<sup>197</sup> discussed above mentioned of her homophobic teachers. She also gave the district Sincan as the reason for all she has been going through, in the same manner as her counsellor. In fact, she firstly referred to the words poor and rich, but later she referred to the words educated and uneducated. Without even noticing, she read class over education and culture because when I directly asked her about class, she mentioned religion and Kurdishness. Even her teachers are homophobic despite their education. And as for her, the reason of this is living in a lower class district, Sincan. Moreover, she held Sincan responsible for everything she has been through. She, in some way, addressed geography.

The idiom of “Sincan bebesi”, is like the idiom of white trash and is characterized by harsh, distasteful, violent. In the end, as Taylor asserts, “discourses of class, of taste and distaste, of propriety and respect, excess and waste are profoundly linked to discourses of sexuality.” (Taylor, 2014:11) Social class and sexuality intersects with the case of Sincan, as there are only online platforms for those who inhabit Sincan and is looking for a sex partner.

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<sup>196</sup> P45

<sup>197</sup> P45

My working class respondents<sup>198</sup>, lacking needed economic and cultural capital, complained about their loneliness. Because you need money even in order to socialize. They mentioned of how they do not want to see anybody as they do not even have money for going out and having a cup of coffee. One of them<sup>199</sup> mentioned about feeling excluded from the football team she is a player of; as a result of not being a white-collar like the other members. In other words, she is exposed to psychological violence from the only community she feels like belonging to. As Taylor also asserts:

Because of the lack and inadequacy of infrastructure many women reported a degree of isolation and vulnerability in meeting women and in sustaining relationships, which necessitates a degree of ‘outness’ about sexuality and, as has been seen, about class. (Taylor, 2014:187)

My working class respondents<sup>200</sup> with a conservative habitus understood religion from education and referred to religion when asked about their educational backgrounds. On the other side, my working class respondents with a critical habitus were very intellectual and politically conscious even though they were also unable to study as they had to work. And they indicate the fact that their awareness results from their relationship with political left. One of my respondent<sup>201</sup>, for instance, was a high school graduate who had to work most of his life as sales clerk. But he identifies himself with his sexual identity and the Kurdish movement. He is aware of oppressed and exploited classes, those who are impoverished due to their ethnic identities or political ideologies and forced to that class. Likewise, my another respondent<sup>202</sup> who is a working class Kurdish Alevi lesbian states that both his retired worker father and housewife mother were uneducated but as a result of being leftist but not conservative, they were farsighted and educated herself as well.

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<sup>198</sup> Such as P37 and P45

<sup>199</sup> P37

<sup>200</sup> Such as my transsexual woman respondent P1, who went to Quran course by taking her imam uncle as an example and was educated in Imam Hatip High School (Religious Vocational High School).

<sup>201</sup> P6

<sup>202</sup> P10

To sum up, it could be asserted that the sensitivity and consciousness of Alevi's, Kurds, and non-Muslims are more advanced than others regardless of their class and educational level. Even if they lack education, they are politically conscious and they display critical habitus as a result of coming from leftist families or socialising within left environments. Such that, one of my Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondent<sup>203</sup> mentioned of her organization background while asked about her school life. In fact, when I asked her about her family and educational background, she only told me about her past in the organization. Also she explained how the boundaries of her Alevi and Kurdish identities taught by her family began to fade away when she was organized, but then sharpened during her university education as a result of actual assaults. And she told me that once they attacked one of her friend since they could not find her. His skull was fractured and he had to be in intensive care unit for fifteen days. As she puts it;

So I spent my university life struggling against fascism. That's why I didn't continue my education. (P21)

#### **4.3.1.3 Work-life**

Here, class struggles and resistances; as an outcome of the intersections of class, sexuality, gender and ethnicity; through post school transitions will be discussed. Because as Taylor indicates; “the intersection of class, gender and sexuality combines to produce a heavy disadvantage within and beyond the schooling system, impacting upon post-school transitions and entry into – or exclusion from – the workplace.” (Taylor, 2014:17) Most of my working class respondents end up unemployed as a result of their unequal and uneasy classed and sexualised positions. They were aware of the fact that what they do for living stigmatised them as classed. Most of my working class respondents reacted in a negative way when I asked about their social classes. One of them<sup>204</sup> reacted as “Was that appropriate?!” when I told her my study was based on the intersection of class and identity. Most of them are engaged in low

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<sup>203</sup> P21

<sup>204</sup> P4

paid, insecure jobs; some<sup>205</sup> even have experience in male-dominated manual sectors which they do not even want to even remember.

Most of the working class interviewees left school. Some of them registers at the beginning of each academic year, but never attends. Because they believe it won't make any contribution to them, in addition to being excluded from the schooling system. Instead, if they can, they work at NGO's. Most of them<sup>206</sup> leave school and start working at NGO's voluntarily. This is so common. They both try to help others and themselves. As Taylor asserts, voluntary work is perceived as a way out, but could rarely "be capitalized upon at an economic level." (Taylor, 2014:90)

In addition, as a result of leaving school at early age, my working class respondents lack the qualifications needed for employment opportunities. For instance, one of my working class respondent's<sup>207</sup> work experience in NGO is quite dissappointing. She started working voluntarily at first and then was offered offered a position. But afterwards, she asserts that she was exposed to mobbing and was excluded as a result of not being as white-collar as her colleagues are;

So I ended up there and I worked there for three years or so, but eventually I was too black for them, I mean apparently. (P4)

After her disappointing experience in a NGO, my working class respondent<sup>208</sup> started working at a café. Though her reaction towards working in that café which is located at upper middle class district reflects it well; "I don't fit in, I feel so suburban here!" Because as Taylor puts it, "Identifications also occur through recognition of what they are not (middle-class and straight) which highlights the comparative aspects of identification and identity." (Taylor, 2007:43) And my working class interviewees do not even have time to think over queer theory because they do not have time and energy

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<sup>205</sup> Such as P46

<sup>206</sup> Such as P26

<sup>207</sup> P4

<sup>208</sup> P4

left from working. One of my working class lesbian respondent<sup>209</sup> explains she cannot even come out in her workplace in order not to risk losing it because she needs money. She indicates that they are only two women if there are twenty employees working in the kitchen, and those men she works together with use sexist insults. It is impossible for her to come out. Besides, she works very hard, and that's why queer theory is, now, too far from her life.

On the flip side, most of my transsexual respondents had to migrate and leave their families. As a result, they are uneducated and they use drugs in order to endure sex work. Prostitution makes them psychologically weak, which makes it impossible for them to continue without using alcohol or drugs. Because, after all, it is both a physical and emotional labor. They indicate the fact that without drugs their body cannot stand sex labor for long time. There are also intersectional oppressions. One of my transsexual respondent<sup>210</sup>, for instance, was estranged from her family due to her gender identity, and she had to leave school because of her Kurdish identity. And later on, as she was threatened with death by her family, she had to take refuge.

As a matter of fact, for working class subjects, the worst thing they could undergo is prostitution. Those who are forced to sex work act as if that fact doesn't exist. Their reaction towards sex work is conservative. On the other hand, middle class subjects reverse the meaning of term from negative to positive, just as they reverse the meaning of the term queer. As for one of my middle class sex worker respondent<sup>211</sup>, for instance, she is a service industry worker. But for my working class transsexual respondent<sup>212</sup> who takes the stage and sings at clubs, prostitution is the worst thing she could ever experience. She prefers washing the dishes, doing cleaning but never prostitute. She feels pity for those who have to prostitute as they are not under the state control, do not have insurance and are stabbed most of the time.

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<sup>209</sup> P4

<sup>210</sup> P26

<sup>211</sup> P7

<sup>212</sup> P1

Likewise, my another working class sex worker respondent<sup>213</sup> acts as if she isn't doing sex work for living because for her it is an unacceptable, indecent work. Because one "need access to certain things that make you feel normal." (Taylor, 2014:81) She does not think highly of prostitution. She has to do it unwillingly in order to earn money. She is not allowed to do something else because she was thrown away from the nightclub in Kırıkkale she used to work at.

Sometimes sex work provides opportunity for approval and being desired. It becomes a source to develop self-respect. And this is determined by class. Because only those who belong to middle class with the adequate cultural capital consider sex work as a source of satisfaction and approval, while it is an indecent disgraceful job for my working class respondents.

What has to be discussed here is, as Zengin asserts, state establishes individual's private life as a political arena through the norms and values developed regarding their family and sexual life. In other words, state penetrates into individual's so-called private sphere, the site of intimacy, their daily life such as their marriage, family relations, sexual life and the way they raise their children. Moral codes determine women's body as state's own property. As a result, the sexuality of women is perceived as a threat to social order. In other words, those bodies which do not comply with hegemonic moral codes are perceived as dangerous for the society. For this reason, violence against them are justified and legalized. As Zengin puts it, all kinds of violence against the body that prostitute are justified and legalized. (Zengin, 2007) And regarding this study, my working class interviewees are performing conservative habitus and so sex work is a taboo for them; whereas my middle class interviewees performing critical habitus evaluate sex work as service industry.

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<sup>213</sup> P39

In the meantime, EU funded projects make some queer individuals climb the social ladder. Just as one of my middle class sex worker respondent<sup>214</sup> explains, the movement created its own “intelligentsia class”. While working on a project in associations, individuals with cultural capital may sometimes climb to an upper ladder in socio-economic terms. But those from lower class object to this situation. These projects also cause big conflicts to arise within the movement. The group in Mersin mentioned, for instance, how their transsexual friends were ignored through the elections of their organization as a result of lacking cultural capital. Moreover, they also stated that they had to re-organize as their old association elected cisgender heterosexual people to administrative body in order to receive EU funded projects. According to one of my working class Kurdish respondent<sup>215</sup> from Ağrı, the fact that some people who were graduated from university and speak a foreign language pursue money and try to have a job in the organization is unacceptable. That is to say, activism determined by capital creates class differences. And for middle classes, being organized refers to finding meaning in life and gaining dignity. Those who are more educated and experienced in terms of being organized, insult others, especially those voluntary ones. This means facing a double exclusion in the voluntary work which creates an emotional burden. Even, as Lewis indicates, middle classes refer to self expression and symbolic capital more than solidarity, and that radical queers with the symbolic capital represent themselves more anti-capitalist than working classes. As Lewis puts it;

if oppression and resistance are ranked according to normativity, then the banker’s child who resists homonormativity is more anti-capitalist than a working-class lesbian mother who shops at a big box store could ever be. It makes the urban queer more politically anticapitalist than the small-town ‘basic’ gay by virtue of lifestyle alone. (Lewis, 2016:230)

In conclusion, it could be asserted that the classy civil society intelligentsia is trying to transform the civil sphere into a more isolated, sheltered space. Instead of emphasizing the importance of volunteering and solidarity; activities based on

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<sup>214</sup> P7

<sup>215</sup> P28



fundings create competition and establish hierarchy between both the social movements and NGOs.

Non governmental organisations in Turkey are established after the 1980 military coup. In the beginning it was a field of struggle but later was professionalised. It diversified its scope and internationalised. Before it was based on voluntary participation and was charity-based; but later on competition occurred. As Ilter Turan discusses, economic growth also expands the resources that could be allocated to public goals, and liberalize associations from state, whereas, it establishes a professional managerial class that are after leadership. (Turan, 2015)

Some of my working class respondents<sup>216</sup> had the luck or ability to transform into flexible mobile workers. On the other side, some of them who work at the service industry complained about it as well. One of my respondent<sup>217</sup>, for instance, stated that he was pushed to work in the service industry, mostly in fashion industry, just as most of the other gay men. Though, he knew that service industry would reject him when he grows old. Whereas for some of my working class respondents<sup>218</sup>, working in service industry is a dream. They couldn't transform themselves into white-collar workers because they couldn't continue their education as they had to work. That is to say, white collar is characterized by fluidity and mobility, but the working conditions of blue-collar workers are worse. Just as Bourdieu (1984) states; they need "economic and cultural capitals, the resources of class, which could offer protection from uncertainty." (cited in Taylor, 2014:92) Here appearance is also a very important factor. While gay men are mostly white collar workers, women and trans-women are forced to work mostly in low-paid temporary jobs.

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<sup>216</sup> Such as P10 and P20

<sup>217</sup> P16

<sup>218</sup> Such as P4 and P13

One of my transsexual respondent<sup>219</sup> has a work history in NGO's as well. But even at their self-organization of transsexual women, they had a dispute to be settled in court because of economic issues. She explained how the people with whom she had founded the association forged papers, stole money and cast aspersions upon her. Finally, she lost her home and she was assaulted with a gun and lynched. She has a work history as a white-collar too, that ends up with transphobia. For a while she worked as a sales person; but she was fired when she started hormone therapy. This is not surprising, but what she went through in her transsexual organization is surprising. And now she is compulsorily in sex labor.

As mentioned above, most of the transsexuals are condemned to compulsory sex work. They state that it is impossible for a transsexual to open a workplace and get a license, because no matter how they try, everyone, especially the police has a prejudice that they are going to necessarily prostitute. As Berghan states, getting the license on someone else is also not a good solution as the police will view with a jaundiced eye and eventually close the workplace. Due to such prejudice against them, they cannot survive in any other sector than sex work. (Berghan, 2007) One of the transsexual sex worker<sup>220</sup> interviewed within the 'Social Justice and Art project of Gabrielle Le Roux in collaboration with Trans Activists in Turkey with the support of Amnesty International Turkey and the Consulate General of Netherlands' explains how she saved money in order to escape prostitution and study at university. She became a primary school teacher in Muş but because of her gender identity nobody accepted her, including the worker's union. In the end, she had to return to the streets and started working as a sex worker once again.

In 1996, a magazine called "Gacı" was being published by Kadın Kapısı<sup>221</sup> which was like a communication bulletin for transsexual sex workers. It was published for two years from 1996 to 1999. Later on, it was released again from 2004 to 2007 as well.

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<sup>219</sup> P21

<sup>220</sup> Amnesty International (2014)

<sup>221</sup> An association founded to support transgender sex workers

But reaching transsexual sex workers through a publication did not work out. Because they were working at night and sleeping through day time while those who work desk-bound jobs were preparing the publication. In other words, transsexuals and gays have been separated as blue-collar and white-collar workers. Because while gays are able to work at desk jobs, transsexuals are forced to sex work. In this sense, existing is all by itself a struggle for transsexual people. Such that, even gay bars exploit them through charging higher entrance fee than other people. Yet, it is the only place they can have fun and work at safely.

On the other hand, even in the sex industry transsexuals are at the bottom. Few studies show that transgender women are at the bottom of the hierarchy, earn less than male and female prostitutes, and experience more violence, with the highest HIV-positive rate. (Winter & King, 2009; Roberto et al. 2014) A transsexual activist<sup>222</sup> asserts that they had Kurdish friends or feminist friends who wanted to postpone the issues of transsexuals. There is a hierarchy of rights and transsexuals are at the bottom, the last to talk. As a transsexual activist<sup>223</sup> states;

There will be a friend of a friend's friend and he will employ you in his cafe but you will work in the back and wash dishes in the kitchen but not appear in the public space of the cafe. You are ultimately driven to prostitution. Someone forces you into sex work, but then create trouble as a result of not getting anything out of it. The state forces you, then creates obstacles when it becomes aware of how much you earn. They said İskitler was closed, for instance, İskitler is a popular district for sex work in Ankara, and everyone protested, all the transgender women gathered in front of the Ministry of Justice, but it's no go, the sex work we dream of does not exist, I'd also very much like to sleep in my warm bed at night, but if I do that then the next day I'll neither be able to pay my rent and my bills nor buy food.

In her ethnographic study on sex workers in Istanbul, Aslı Zengin defines the sexual margins of the state as a spatial construction to which marginal bodies belong to. And this practice of exclusion is in fact what constitutes the center. The way the state constructs these sexual margins and belonging subjects is the constituting element of

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<sup>222</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z8reQC96J0>

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z8reQC96J0>

politics. Zengin investigates how state regulates those sex workers who are legally registered and officially authorized. As she puts it;

In Turkey, the legal framework does not allow men and transsexuals to be registered as licensed sex workers. Being deprived of the right to work in the brothels, these out-law actors develop strong claims over the streets. Consequently, there occur severe contestations among sex workers about space to determine to whom those places rightly belong. (Zengin, 2007:57)

In other words, state constitutes a hierarchy of sexualities. Different groups occupy different areas. Tensions arise within the same group as well. My interviewees, for instance, assert that in order to regulate the sex industry, AIDS is being used. They spread rumors about those unwanted within their territory, accusing them of having AIDS. On the other hand, I agree with Zengin's argument, in that, instead of perceiving these as a failure of solidarity relations, this is the way they practice tactics to survive and protect themselves in the environment full of endless violence. (Zengin, 2007)

Houses transsexuals can and do work at are also available. They are called "Koli Houses". The term "koli" refers to their customers. There is a street in Istanbul, Bayram Street which is full of koli houses. Only two people work at one apartment. Women are not allowed in these apartments. They interact with their clients from the window. If the black curtains are drawn, that means there is a client at the apartment and that they are unavailable. The differentiation Zengin makes between the legal and illegal women sex workers is valid for the case of transsexual sex workers as well. Those that work at houses are subject to "strict, stable, continuous regulations and limitations, while those that work at the streets are constantly shifting their places as a result they are subject to more fluid, temporary, fragmented and slippery conditions." (Zengin, 2007:38) Though their wages are higher and they have opportunity to choose their clients and cost expensive, they are more defenseless against violence. According to Zengin, they are more vulnerable to police violence because of the '*bonus system*' which started in 2009. Under this system, police can impose fines for trans-women claiming that they are opposed to the law of Misdemeanors. They accuse trans-women of conducting attitudes, appearances and behaviors that disturb the environment. (Zengin, 2007) The number of trans-women who have been served with fine increase

the points that police need to accumulate for promotion, turning the penalty system into an operation of excluding transsexuals from the streets. Zengin continues with indicating that one of the most important reasons why this system was working brutally for trans-women was the fact that the fines imposed on trans-women brought the police more money than fines imposed on other people convicted of misdemeanor, such as thieves, harassers or street vendors. In other words, once again, police establish hierarchies between the misdemeanors. And in the case of trans-women, the punishment of this system was in fact to exclude them spatially. (Zengin, 2007) Later in 2014, a transsexual sex worker objected the fine police imposed on her under the law of Misdemeanors, and her legal objection is approved.<sup>224</sup> Though nowadays, transsexuals suffer from similar exclusionary measures once again. Some of my old transsexual sex worker respondents<sup>225</sup> mentioned of how they try to hide behind apartments from the gatekeepers<sup>226</sup>, and they complained about not being able to run away from them as a result of their age.

On the other hand, Abanoz Street in Tarlabası was the first venue for brothels, opened in 1970s. A transsexual activist states that transsexual women were working at Abanoz together with non-Muslim women. (cited in Çelik, 2013) She mentions of the fact that she was having sex with a hundred people a day at those times. She refers to the 1961 Constitution<sup>227</sup> as the power behind these little houses opened up like boardinghouses. Going outside was forbidden. But they were feeling free. Even transsexuals from Italy, France, Greece, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union were coming to work there. As the transsexual activist puts it;

It was like today's Netherlands; we were working freely. At the time, and by the same government all of us were given a card. These cards were used as working documents, because at that time there were sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis. It was written 'Bloods for two months are taken. They are clean. Reports of examinations are clean' on them in case of police search. And at the hospital, even if we

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<sup>224</sup> <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201712211031491432-aym-seks-iscisi-para-cezasi/>

<sup>225</sup> Such as P29 and P24

<sup>226</sup> The term referring to the officials

<sup>227</sup> on the basis of it's approach to rights and freedoms

have acne on our body, they would consider it seriously and would not leave us without healing. (Çelik, 2013:86)

Abanoz Street was closed on a night raid. Afterwards, squatters at Dolapdere were turned into brothels. After police demolished them, brothels were transferred to Ülker Street. They were driven out from Ülker Street as well being exposed to violence. At the moment, only brothels available are at Bayram Street.

Another transsexual activists<sup>228</sup> compares working at a club and working at the streets as follows;

You work as a B-girl, you see. I couldn't do that, you know, sitting at someone's table and chitchatting, 'my dear, sweetheart, my handsome darling, you are fabulous, my one and only' soliciting them for sex, negotiating the price, and go off with them. These procedures are too much for me. I am a street woman. As I am a woman of Ülker Street, chop-chop, I'm like "Action!" you know. All that, 'Are we going or not my love, these are the goods...' As a result, bosses didn't like me, because I wasn't able to bring a lot of costumers to my table. For instance I had a roommate named Gökçe. She was such a chatterbox. She was making the money we were earning from prostitution, working twenty tables, in an hour, she was so fast. She would work twenty tables and get the money you make from fucking through tips. That's a skill on another level you know. She was such a club girl. Getting all dressed up, dolled up. This is also an industry after all.

Though, working at the clubs is more secure because when they go with the client and do not come back in a while, their patron send the guards after them. The most dangerous is working at the streets, which they name "çarka çıkmak" in their language; "lubunca". Besides, back in the days of ghettos like Abanoz Street or Ülker Street, most of the transsexual sex workers were remunerated, while nowadays eighty percent of them are poor, trying to survive as the transsexual activist<sup>229</sup> indicates.

In conclusion, norms that aim to protect familial social order normalize and justify certain genders and sexualities while excluding and marginalizing others. In this sense, the bodies of transsexuals subverting this gender order serve as a manifesto and

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<sup>228</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5IAg6TQGjs>

<sup>229</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5IAg6TQGjs>

become political; in addition to bodies of women, bodies of sex workers as they are all regulated by the state.

This takes us to the section of appearance.

#### **4.3.1.4 Appearance:**

Bourdieu underscores the place of the body, its gestures, its stylistics, its unconscious 'knowingness' as the site for the reconstitution of a practical sense without which social reality could not be constituted. (Butler, 1997:2010)

During the 1980s; discussions focused on black working-class lesbian women and body politics. In doing so, they made use of Foucault's conceptual framework. (Bora, 2018) Foucault rejects the assumption that there is an essence of the body. Power is established and reproduced through the functioning of bodies. Individual's relations with power are established within the arena body politics takes place. Before, body was defined with sexuality; sexuality with reproduction of opposite sexes. With the impact of Foucault's argument that "sexuality is a constructed category of experience which has historical, social and cultural, rather than biological, origins" (Foucault, 1988:29); bodies and sexualities have begun to be discussed as fluid, varied and performative arena of social formation of identities. (Baş, 2013:15)

Le Bon measured the skulls of women and claimed that they were closer to children and barbarians compared to adult civilized men. Regarding today's class hierarchy, the poor are portrayed as animals and children (lacking the ability to postpone pleasure), while the working class is linked to body. (Plumwood, 2004) In a system of social hierarchies and inequalities, people's lower position is explained from their bodies and behaviors. As Zengin puts it regarding sex workers;

I propose that through the process of expulsion, the prostitute body becomes unliveable according to morally drawn limits. Being kept behind the walls and not being permitted to appear even through the window, the bodies of prostitutes are denied any existence in the social arena. On the other hand, this zone of inhabitability constitutes the "moral" and "proper" woman as the subject. (Zengin, 2007:49)

Rather, all those bodies external to the family and domestic space are stigmatized and pathologised. Foucault lists them as “prostitutes, fallen women, slaves, native Americans, immigrants, even working class white men.” (cited in Floyd, 2009:59)

Shilling emphasizes one of the main arguments used for the marginalization of black bodies according to which black people have an uncontrollable sexual and physical nature and that consequently they are easily criminalized because of their potential to rape white women (Shilling, 1993). In fact, as for Foucault bourgeoisie isolates itself from working class through sexual politics, by stigmatizing them dangerous, unclean and unhealthy. (Foucault, 1978) In other words, as Bartky asserts, in the formation of social order and drawing boundaries of class, gender and ethnicity; body politics is the most concrete, visible, and in most of the cases cruel dimension. (Bartky, 1998) Hennessy names these stigmatized racial, classed, gendered and sexualized devalued bodies as “second skin”, which prevent access to resources and labor market. (Hennessy, 2018: xviii)

Just as Taylor asserts, looking is equated with being and class and sexuality are “written on the body.” (Taylor, 2014:24) And as Skeggs asserts, “...the body experienced is always a social body made up of meanings and values, gestures, postures, physical bearing, speech and language.” (Adkins & Skeggs, 2004:21) Certain bodies, appearances imply certain classes as class is not just related with how much money you own but also the way you identify, classify yourself. As Skeggs puts it, the way bodies use space, for instance with confidence, “send strong class signals.” (Skeggs, 2002:91) And just as Skeggs claims; “that appearance, and particularly the classed reading of this, is the central mechanism through which spatial and entitlement struggles revolve, as the means by which classed ‘others’ are misrecognised.” (cited in Taylor, 2014:24) In other words, she highlights the fact that “appearance becomes the mechanism for inclusion and exclusion as the central resource through which claims for legitimacy are made.” (cited in Taylor, 2014:187) As one of my transsexual respondent <sup>230</sup> explains, when she gave her previous blue identity at the airport, neither

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<sup>230</sup> P1



policewoman nor policeman did not want to search her because although she appeared like a woman, her identity's color was blue. In fact, she also understands gender from class and asserts that people are classified based on their appearances. As she puts it;

There are those who reveal themselves in any case, either their bodies are not appropriate or as a result of something else. I can belong to the class. They may consider me as a woman. But the others are in worse shape. Especially gays. Or those who are still doubtful about their gender and sexual identities. Those who are stuck limbo. (P1)

As a matter of fact, most of my transsexual respondents who have undergone surgery marginalized those who have not. This might also be a defence mechanism, causing in a way psychic relief. For instance one of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>231</sup> finds those wearing bras, with their penises swinging like an axe in front of them unacceptable, in her own words. She expects them to wear modest clothes, be proper, as there are families around. That is to say, she always strives to go back to norms. As she puts it; "If you seem like a woman, how can you fuck a man? This is not possible, this means you do it to earn money, and they are not as noble as I am." I think what she means to be noble here is to comply with moral norms. On the other side, as a result of resembling cis-men, she considers gays as a different status. Once again she describes class over body;

They belong to a different social status. In other words, they are given special importance. Because they are like cismen you know. They won't prostitute themselves or whatever. So they are given special value. For that reason they are valued. But we suffer oppression as a result of preferring to transition in order to live comfortably. (P39)

There are similar themes in Kandiyoti's study. As one of her respondent who also marginalizes those who have not undergone surgery states;

These guys over there... They only do it for money. They don't go in for the hormones or anything like that. If you look at them up close you can see they barely attempt to conceal their beard. They even think that when they save enough money they will go back to where they've come from and get married. It's not so easy, of course. Anyhow, we don't talk to them. (Kandiyoti, 2002:282)

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<sup>231</sup> P39

This polarization reveal itself within the locations as well. As a transsexual activist states;

On the other hand, most of the clubs were selling sex work as well. For instance, there were some that only those who had undergone the surgery could enter. We would call them 'vagina clubs', but as those with vaginas also have credentials or the documents that allow them to hustle at nightclubs, some clubs were available only to them. We would go to the clubs to which those with dicks could go. Their clubs were closed early in the night, and they would come visit us to goof off. 'Argh! Smells like cock in here!' they would say. If you mention any of this today, it would cause an uproar online. But these were our daily dynamics at those times. But of course it was discriminatory discourse. (Kaos GL, 2019a:75)

According to Berghan's study, non-operative transsexuals are being desired either by those who have a fantasy of being with woman with a penis or by secret gays. One of her interviewees emphasize the relationship between having fantasies and money; and asserts that only upper class men have this kind of fantasies. (Berghan, 2007) On the other hand, the relationship between having fantasies and social class is significant by this means as well; just as negrophobia, both desire and fear of lower class sexuality is also at stake. In fact, both black and white working class women are perceived as sexual and deviant other in contrast to middle class femininity. (Gilman, 1992)

In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler defines that a body defining itself as one of the binary genders, does not only lose its performativity but also faces the risk of articulating into the network of what is normative and of fixing genders. Transsexual individuals break the so-called normalized links between sex and gender. However, at the end of the transition process, generally femininity and masculinity determined by the heterosexual order emerges. Even some obscure identities adapt to normative sexuality instead of unsettling it. Savran (2004) also indicates that transsexuality, where body and gender is not completely torn off from womanhood and manhood, appears to be a consistent living desire for one of gender identities within current gender order rather than being a breach. And according to Savran, only "a very small minority of those who wish to reassign their gender through surgery perceive this issue as going beyond genders." (Savran, 2004: 325)

Coming back to the intersection of class and sexuality, as for most of my transsexual respondents, the appearance becomes prominent. They state that nobody kills a transvestite because she is a Kurd. Instead they use violence only because she is a transvestite regardless of her ethnic identity or religion. One of my conservative transsexual respondent<sup>232</sup> reproaches by saying “We are Muslims and what difference does it make honey?”, while my Kurdish transsexual respondent<sup>233</sup> underlines that transsexuals are killed not because they are Kurds but because they are transsexuals, and prostitutes. On the other hand, she was dismissed from the school because of her ethnic identity. That is to say, discrimination works intersectionally. Indeed, their daily lives are a struggle because even going to a bank with their transsexual identities and bodies, and saying “You cannot call me mister, I am a lady!” unavoidably politicizes them.

When asked about social class, most of the interviewees raise the topic of transsexuals. Because as Grosz claims, gender order regulates male and female bodies and those categories outside this dichotomy are invalidated. (Grosz, 1994) In other words, appearance and body correspond to a class and everyone is aware of this fact. My Kemalist middle class gay respondent<sup>234</sup> asserts that transsexuals become automatically lower class along with being more fearless fighters. Indeed, my young transsexual respondents mentioned of feeling too old at their twenties as a result of the suffering they have been experiencing as a transsexual. One of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>235</sup> even compared gender to a wall and asserted that homosexuals can and do get into the cracks of this wall. They can and do exist within plazas. They are more likely to be camouflaged. But if you place a transsexual to that crack the wall will be destroyed.

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<sup>232</sup> P1

<sup>233</sup> P26

<sup>234</sup> P2

<sup>235</sup> P21

Because being trans in Turkey means being exposed to severe discrimination in all areas of social life including family, education, sheltering and employment. (Yılmaz ve Göçmen, 2015) Turkey is the country where trans murder was committed at the highest rate in Europe with 44 cases recorded between 2008 and 2016. (TMMM IDAHOT 2017 in Başar, 2019)<sup>236</sup>

But as Butler states, one needs to have an appropriately sexed, gendered and raced body in order to be grievable. (Butler, 2009) Laws are based on the notion of morality when it comes to the murders of transgender people. Perpetrators are supported with the defence of unjust provocation; claiming that they were offered anal sex and couldn't handle. Still, social class is determinant. In other words, we can not equate a transsexual sex worker who migrated from the East, to a transsexual who was born in Istanbul and who have received education before she reassigned her gender and started sex work. One of my transsexual respondent<sup>237</sup>, for instance, compares two transgender people from different classes;

Süleymen Ulusoy, aka Süleyman the hose was forcing transgender people to choose a hose and torture them with it. He was a man who listened to Bülent Ersoy in his office, while torturing transgender people at the same time. If you have money, you will be both the agha and the pasha, and that's the perspective of this society in regards to class conflict. If you have money, and you belong to upper class, your odds for recognition are higher at this point. While we were beaten up at the Pride march, Bülent Ersoy was sitting on the same table with Tayyip Erdoğan and his wife, they broke[Ramadan] fast together. (P21)

Even for the case of trans gender people, femininity becomes prominent in their efforts to be respected. As a transsexual sex worker asserts in the documentary Paris is Burning;

The thing that helped me make my most money through the escort service is being that I'm so little. I'm so petite and tiny. Um... the blonde hair and the light skin. The green eyes and the little features. And the client's hands will be bigger than my hands. While they would hold my hand or something. They are feeling that they are with

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<sup>236</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFSR\\_byDyTU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFSR_byDyTU)

<sup>237</sup> P21

something perfect and little, and not someone that's bigger than them, because I guess that kind of disturbs them. (Livingston, 1990)

Because as asserted above, black and white working classes are coded as deviant and sexual, in contrast to respectable femininity of upper- middle classes. It is valid for transgender people as well, except for those who exhibit critical subversive queer subjectivity, instead of reiterating the norms in terms of genders. As a result, as Skeggs (2002) indicates, women invest in their bodies as a form of cultural and symbolic capital. Body, being disciplined and regulated, also becomes the metaphor of political and social order. (Douglas, 1988) Bourdieu states that body reveals dispositions of class, gender, and race, in an effort to produce respectability. (cited in Skeggs, 2002:84) As for my respondents, their bodies refer to their cultural capital. Their body is a surface upon which distinctions are introduced; such as the polarisation between transgender people who have undergone surgery and those who have not. Model of ideal femininity and the ideal model of the 'other' according to which they construct their own self is cis women for most of my transsexual respondents, except for a few of them who display critical queer subjectivity, who are not even after breast augmentation nor genital surgery. One of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>238</sup> with a critical queer subjectivity is not affected by the judgements of others, mentioning of how cisgender women gets scared and get religion when they see her with pride. In other words, she is not after being respectable nor desirable; as a result of displaying full critical subversive queer subjectivity. In conclusion, sexuality and body are the means of respectability.

Most of my respondents related class with appearance. One of them<sup>239</sup> considers himself lucky as a result of not looking that feminine. He claims to look like an ordinary person who does not talk with excessive manners, and show off homosexuality. Likewise, although one of my respondent<sup>240</sup> lives in a ghetto in Adana and defines himself as urban poor, he tells that he has not been exposed to discrimination too much

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<sup>238</sup> P24

<sup>239</sup> P6

<sup>240</sup> P29

since he is not feminine. They feel themselves secure as long as they do look obvious and refuse their transsexual identities. Because the most restrictive thing in their life is their appearance, as they need money in order to change it and conform to the norms. One of my working class queer looking butch lesbian respondent<sup>241</sup> relates even being political to appearance and social class. As she puts it;

I am always working. If you come to my workplace, you can see me every day. Let me introduce you to my roommate. More political, more bisexual. (P13)

After all, as most of my respondents indicate, discrimination is highly related to appearance and masculinity that is dominant within the society. If you are a transsexual man, you cannot be recognized externally. Even if you are short, if you have a deep voice and beard, you are a man. And yet, transsexual women give themselves up because of their appearances, and thus they are exposed to violence and discrimination. Again, it is gender discrimination. You give yourself in because of your appearance. As a result, transsexual women are much oppressed and become activists due to this reason.

In fact, the reason of prioritizing social class and sexual identity instead of Kurdish and Alevi identity is also appearance. Kurds can be assimilated and they may not reveal their identities. So are Alevis. However, sexual identity is visible, you cannot hide it. Class cannot be hidden either because, in fact, it affects every feature of yours, your body, language, behaviours, etc. In normative man-woman coding, gay-lesbian may leak in through fissures, Kurd-Alevi may leak in, and yet transsexual cannot do the same. Those who are Kurd, Alevi, working class and LGBTQ have always told this. One of my Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>242</sup> has even ignored her class identity because due to their Kurdish identity and gender identity, they are being killed every day and in order to struggle for their class, they must primarily survive, be alive.

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<sup>241</sup> P13

<sup>242</sup> P34

A similar statement comes from Mignon Moore's work on Black sexual minorities;

Because that is just what it is. People see your Blackness, and the world has affected me by my Blackness since the very inception of my life. . . . My sexuality is something that developed later on, or I became aware of later on, [because] I think it's always been what it's been, but I think that it was just something that developed in my psyche. But being Black is something that I've always had to deal with: racism since day one and recognizing how to navigate through this world as a Black person, and even as a Black woman. (Moore, 2012:33)

It applies to transgender people as well; as they can not hide their gender and sexual identity; as it is all obviously visible. And as discussed above, physical capital in other words bodies become prominent because social inequalities are inscribed and reproduced within bodies. As Shilling puts it; "the body is a bearer of value in society." (Shilling, 1993:127) Or as Charlesworth puts it in his work on the bodies of working class, "Labour is unrooted, dis-embedded. . . creating people so vulnerable and atomized that they carry the marks of their impoverishment in their bodies." (Charlesworth, 2000:9)

My working class respondents were ashamed of their bodies. One of them<sup>243</sup> even mentioned of feeling suicidal. She wanted to get rid of her body which she finds indecent for the society. She mentioned of how people stare at her at the subway train or how she was laughed at on the grounds that her lower body is feminine while upper body is masculine. Most of my working class respondents<sup>244</sup> had recessive gestures and postures. They expressed their discomfort in occupying middle class spaces. As a result, they direct their grudge to themselves, to their bodies. One of my respondent<sup>245</sup> was trying to be tough-looking at her workplace in order to isolate herself from people. In fact, she even pretended not to know me when we run across each other after our interview. Because after all, as Bourdieu explains, the

Psychologization of the relation to the body is inseparable from an exaltation of the self, but a self which truly fulfils itself (growth, awareness, responsiveness) only when relating to others (sharing

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<sup>243</sup> P37

<sup>244</sup> Such as P13, P37 and P39

<sup>245</sup> P13

experiences) through the intermediary of the body treated as a sign and not as an instrument (which opens the door to a whole politics of the 'alienated body. (Bourdieu, 1984:194)

Further, Adkins mentions of the position of lesbians in the workplace as a source of amusement. (Adkins, 2003) My working class respondents were stared at and laughed at. One of them<sup>246</sup> was laughed at by the caretakers at the fitness center of the municipality where she works at, on the grounds that her lower body is feminine while upper body is masculine. While other<sup>247</sup> was stared at and laughed at by all when her teacher was giving a speech about abnormality of homosexuality at the class.

In addition, poor people are represented as immoral, dirty and unhealthy. They are considered referring to the material bodily stratum, which is as "construed as horrific, grotesque and monstrous, places of both physical disease and moral filth." (Giblett, 2008:61) One of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>248</sup>, for instance, referred to the shitty smell of her house. As for Bakhtin, aesthetics transcends the horridness of the lower body, (Giblett, 2008) but transsexuals are perceived as scary, repulsive and threatening both as a result of not obeying "the aesthetics of the beautiful and the sublime" (Bakhtin, 1984:35), but also as a result of being indefinable and revolutionary in terms of subverting traditional gender norms, which could trigger "social change" as Halberstam indicates. (Halberstam, 1998:3) Or as Kristeva puts it; "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection<sup>249</sup> but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules." (Kristeva, 1982:77) One of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>250</sup> mentioned of how cisgender women suddenly become religious shouting as "Bismillahirrahmanirahim"<sup>251</sup> when

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<sup>246</sup> P37

<sup>247</sup> P45

<sup>248</sup> P24

<sup>249</sup> '*...the notion of abjection designates a degraded or cast out status within the terms of sociality.*' (Butler, 1993:250)

<sup>250</sup> P24

<sup>251</sup> In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful



they see her and get scared by the way she looks. As Bakhtin (1984) puts it; “there was no room for it in the system of aesthetics... Its ruling passion is horror as distinct from the terror of the sublime.” (cited in Gibblet, 2008:63)

In conclusion, body and bodily dispositions are the sites upon which relations of social class, gender, sexuality, and race are practiced. The ideal femininity requires first and foremost a bodily transformation. And as Skeggs mentions, women are dismayed by the representations of the bodies of others that they do not want to be. (Skeggs, 2002) Their bodies and the level of their femininity is very significant and crucial for working classes; while middle classes search respectability and dignity through being politically organized. Hence, bodily expressions, such as expressing traumas, emotions, desires, fears are important; because they are inscribed on both our own and other bodies. (Hall, 1996)

And as Bourdieu asserts, differences and inequalities are embodied not only in intellectual categories, but in also gestures, behaviors, and all practices of individuals. This bodily domination reproduces the masculine and feminine differences over the meanings, movements and functions of the bodies. (Bourdieu, 1998)

Space, on the other hand, takes an active role in the formation of certain bodies and leaves deep traces on the bodies of the subjects. Therefore, different spaces and sociocultural environments produce and shape bodies by creating certain psychologies, emotions and behaviors. As Duncan points out, “Social relations, including, importantly, gender relations, are constructed and negotiated spatially and are embedded in the spatial organization of places.” (Duncan, 1996:4)

“As certain bodies, appearances and identities are unentitled to occupy space because of lack of capital, bodily or otherwise, to legitimately access that space...” (Taylor, 2014:3); the next part will explore the effect of spaces and places on the inequalities experienced by people at the intersection of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

#### 4.3.1.5 Geography:

As Massey asserts, spaces and places do matter in the construction of our identities. (Massey 1994) “Space is constitutive of identity in terms of where it places people, both materially and emotionally.” (Taylor, 2014:115) One of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>252</sup>, for instance, links her political apathy to geography, asserting that organisations, clubs and politics happen in metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir but not in small places such as the one she grew up in. However, she adds that she was an idol in a place like Zonguldak, where everybody lives their homosexuality in secret. In fact, as discussed before, most of my working class interviewees<sup>253</sup> always get above and praise themselves.

The intersections of sexuality, class and gender have an impact on both how subjects perceive space and how they experience it. (Valentine, 1993) Because as Foucault indicates, in the past those stigmatised as dangerous were institutionalised; while at the present time they are being isolated. In other words, spatial relationship refers to class relations; such as lower classes living below, while upper classes at the top of the city. The untouchables of India are a very good example for this. Or the way some of my respondents<sup>254</sup> represent themselves as “the underground”. Within the literature, studies have been conducted on urban (Brown, 2000), suburban (Brekhaus, 2003) and rural sexualities (Binnie and Valentine, 1999) as alternative geographies to urban ones. Still, Binnie & Bell (2000) complains about the fact that most of the studies conducted on location of inequalities are based on white middle class men, even though they are homosexual. Charlesworth’s (2000) study on the effects of stigmatised spaces on individuals living there is valuable, though lacking sexual inequalities. There are no comprehensive study regarding this issue in Turkish context as well. Here below, the effects of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity upon spaces; and the effects of spaces

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<sup>252</sup> P1

<sup>253</sup> Such as P1, P5, P39 and P11

<sup>254</sup> Such as P26 and P24

upon the inequalities based on the intersection of gender, class, sexuality and ethnicity will be discussed.

According to Kandiyoti's study; as a result of the fact that the exclusion mechanisms are so severe, transsexual individuals migrate from small cities where the control of the lives of transgender people is relatively more intense to the big cities where freedom can be experienced relatively. (Kandiyoti, 2002) Bell & Valentine (1995) state that in rural areas, most people get married or have long term partners of the opposite sex due to the heteronormative pressures. And due to the lack of a political movement and homosexual activities, they are unable to define themselves with their LGBTQ identities. Informal networks, telephone appointments, and cottages are some queer spaces within rural areas. (Kineşçi, 2016) Indeed, most of the community seem to be living in Ankara, Istanbul and Mersin; even though my interviewees claimed the other way around, that living in periphery was easier. Kineşçi, in his work comparing being queer in Konya and Diyarbakır, asserts that Konya indicates a different spatiality than the political one of Diyarbakır, lacking the oppositional political climate to carry out the struggle for political and civil rights. In other words, coming out requires a much more difficult struggle in Konya. As a result, most prefer to stay at the closet in order to survive. Kineşçi asserts that the narratives of his interviewees in Konya were much longer, and more detailed as they were expecting the right place to come out for so long time. Because they were having difficulties opening up to other people around them, after they come out to themselves. Kineşçi claims that it takes a serious time for them to accept themselves in such an environment. (Kineşçi, 2016)

As for Kineşçi, the respondents in Konya are more willing to talk as a result of lacking a community and feeling all alone. (Kineşçi, 2016) On the other hand, some of my respondents mentioned of provincial cities as more liberal. One of them<sup>255</sup> explained how the LGBTQ movement created a more effective change in provincial cities such as Adana or Mersin. Similarly, one of my respondents<sup>256</sup> who lived in Konya for a

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<sup>255</sup> P34

<sup>256</sup> P23

long time, and even met his lover there claimed that homosexuals live their lives better in provincial cities, as it is distant from the state. He mentions of a transvestite living in Konya without being subjected to discrimination with her women's clothes and make-up on. However, in metropolitan spaces, state tries to categorise you. It requires you to undergo gender reassignment surgery.

“Most are unable to move even if they wanted to because of their financial circumstances.” (Taylor, 2014:123) Some of my working class respondents<sup>257</sup> had to leave their hometown and move to bigger cities, such as Ankara or Istanbul, in order to live their sexuality. But they have hard time holding on to. They need to earn a lot more money. They might move to another city for better opportunities. But they can't run the risk of it; neither economically nor emotionally as they need economic and cultural capital to do so. And they have learned everything they know from the associations in big cities. They weren't able to define themselves back at their homeland, as they weren't aware of the terms. One of them<sup>258</sup> did not even know what incest relation was and learned everything from KAOS GL when she moved to Ankara. Or some people I met<sup>259</sup> who were harassed by their neighbors are unable to move to another neighborhood as they cannot afford it. And if they move to another apartment in the same neighborhood, most probably nothing will change, because it is a poor and conservative neighborhood. In fact, most of the working class interviewees live in the same neighborhoods; Seyranbağları in Ankara or Şirinevler in Istanbul, for instance. Especially sex workers prefer living in slums where they can hide their identities easily. Ghettos also allow the continuation of sex work. These sheltered ghettos are also essential for the need of an alternative solidarity network and security mechanism for transgender individuals who are not protected by the state and the law. (Öz, 2013: 204) A transsexual activist, for instance, narrates the days of Ülker Street as follows;

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<sup>257</sup> Such as P37

<sup>258</sup> P37

<sup>259</sup> Such as a Kurdish transsexual women working at the association of transgender sex-workers who I was unable to interview with but had a chance to make small talk.

One of the good things about ghettoization is that you don't have to worry about social integration. I mean I was coming across surreal characters, going to the grocery store at 9 o'clock in the morning in evening gowns with eyelashes three meters long. You don't care about anything much, neither about social values nor norms, you don't care about them and just live in your ghetto if you have one. The grocer and the butcher were also used to these, or even if they weren't, they tolerated and said nothing. Ülker Street was like the sets of Almadovar movies. There were around a hundred girls and they owned ninety-nine dogs, and the dogs started mating with each other so much that we created a new breed, the 'Ülker terrier'. I don't know, we probably felt so lonely, they were not for security, they were all toy dogs. I interpret this in a totally different way. Because there were no cats, only dogs. Dog is the most loyal animal, always begging for love. That's why I attribute this to the feeling of loneliness and the longing for company. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:148)

Cihangir was used to be a huge ghetto hosting all the outsiders and marginalised in the past. Cihangir has been a relatively more tolerant place where marginals, artists, sex workers, black community, all othered people have been living. It has been the location of bachelor pads, but never an elite or aristocratic district. By the end of 90s, though, transsexuals and black people were pulled out of their neighborhoods by being dragged by their hair. Now it is one of the most expensive and popular districts in Istanbul and became this time a ghetto of middle class and upper class wealthy gay and lesbian population.

So both sexualised and classed spaces are coded as unrespectable and excluded. In Eskişehir, most of the transgender people were living in a neighborhood distant from the city center. Put it differently, heterosexism determines the spaces stigmatised sexual minorities can live at, such as those working classes pushed into ghettos outside the city centers. As Bell (1991) puts it, housing embodies social relations. Most of my respondents in Ankara were living in either Seyran Bağları or Kolej for the same reason.

At the same time, subjects redefine places by attributing meanings to them by way of their experiences. Places have effects on the behaviors of individuals maintaining their daily life within. (Kineşçi, 2016) It is obvious within the case of Beyoğlu as well.

Beyoğlu “was firstly inhabited by non-Muslim minorities (up to the 1960s), and has since been populated by people engaged in the illegal sex industry and by transsexuals, immigrants, artists and political activists.” (Tsibiridou, 2014:28) In spite of the gentrification projects and all efforts of the state apparatus, it is still the center of social and political protests. As Tsibiridou (2014) indicates, it became the place for the development of political consciousness.

In the end, as Taylor asserts, geography together with the intersection of class and sexuality both produce feelings of belonging and also tensions, resentments (Taylor, 2014). On the other hand, Watt argues that people’s spatial differentiations in their understandings of locations after they have settled down in a particular neighborhood refers to a spatially uneven sense of belonging and attachment rooted in the relationships between people who reside in working-class and middle-class areas. (Watt, 2009) This is an outcome of habitus;

Moving away, or the desire to move away, can be seen as a ‘pretentious’ attempt to move somewhere you don’t belong; ‘habitus’ is ruptured by these articulated and disputed tensions, where there is a desire to move but a feeling that something, some reality and sense of belonging, would be left behind. (Taylor, 2014:123)

Because as Lewis states, “the elimination of physical poverty may not by itself eliminate the culture of poverty” (Lewis, 1966:25) as subjects “are psychologically unready to take full advantage of changing conditions or improving opportunities that may develop in their lifetime.” (Lewis, 1966:21) This indicates the separation of materiality and culture as well. This was the case for some of my respondents. One of my working class respondent<sup>260</sup>, for instance, chose to continue living in Mamak when she moved in with her middle class girlfriend, even though they could afford a house in another neighborhood. Whenever we were making plans to meet, she invited me to Mamak, assigning a positive meaning to suburbs. Once I visited her at the cafe she was working at. The cafe was in a rich area and she kept complaining about feeling too suburban for that neighborhood. She doesn’t feel she belongs to there, not ashamedly but dislikingly. Just as the respondents of Taylor, some of my

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<sup>260</sup> P4

interviewees<sup>261</sup> positively identified with working class spaces, rather than being disposed to middle class ones. Not all of them wish to escape where they come from. Some of them adopt their community. One of my respondent kept referring to Mis Street and Ülker Street which indicates the fact that they feel like belonging there. Some of them feel more comfortable in the working class spaces, while others were unable to move due to financial problems. Besides, the fear of becoming an object of ridicule also stops them.<sup>262</sup>

Bourdieu and Skeggs argue that misrecognition is a product of power relations which work for the sake of powerful. (Skeggs, 2002; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Belonging is also a part of this process. As Fathi asserts, the meaning of belonging is also multi-layered and multi-dimensional (Fathi, 2017), because it is linked to spaces, emotions, memories, and the sense of identity. (Richardson and Le Juez, 2019) Identities reveal also emotions and desires. As a result, what creates the feeling of not belonging and exclusion has to be analyzed in terms of the intersection of class and sexuality.

As Taylor indicates, even though there are some studies focusing on the sexualized spaces, they ignore social class, which is also an important factor. And that while most of the studies are on public spaces, domestic spaces such as homes have to be analyzed in terms of both economic inequalities and cultural judgements. (Taylor, 2014) As she continues, a dirty house can be an indicator of unrespectability and an evidence of poverty. As for one of my transsexual sex worker respondent <sup>263</sup>, the way her house smells shit is not an evidence of just poverty, but also the evidence of carelessness.

As Lefebvre (2014) emphasizes, the features of space both produce social classifications, and also functions as the means of production. Most of my respondents referred to geography when asked about queerness and stated that it is possible only in

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<sup>261</sup> Such as P4, P21, P24 and P26

<sup>262</sup> Such as P37

<sup>263</sup> P24

places like METU. They made a distinction between LGBTQ people from a Southern province, such as Antakya and from Southeast provinces such as Urfa or Siirt, as the Southeastern and Eastern parts of Turkey are less developed both economically, politically and socially. One of my working class respondent<sup>264</sup> explained that even the way they treat women differ in the village of her father and mother. Even though her parents are both from villages of Çorum, she states that her maternal side of the family are more open-minded as a result of coming from an Alevi Kurdish village, while she defines her paternal side of the family as very conservative as a result of coming from a village with a population of Sunni Turks. In other words, even the social construction of genders differs depending on the geography. Binnaz Toprak argues a similar experience from her study as follows:

Social pressure is sometimes about perception as much as reality. Perception can vary from person to person because it is linked to values of that person. As a matter of fact, in the first city we visited; Erzurum; we have realized how difficult it was to explain this complex process with a single factor; because our perception of oppression and that of inhabitants of Erzurum were different. Those issues we, people who live in Istanbul and whose personal preferences are not interrupted that much, describe as oppression didn't correspond with inhabitants of Erzurum. (Toprak, 2009:14)

Most of my respondents also referred to ethnic identity together with geography regarding lower classes. They mentioned of LGBTQ people born and raised in Eastern part of Turkey, those who migrated from the East and those that were tried to be killed in Central Anatolia Region. In other words, they referred to Kurdish LGBTQ subjects when asked about lower classes. One of my working class transsexual respondent stated that she views those migrated from the East as lower than herself because she at least dances, tells fortune, and washes the dishes, but those coming from the East has no other chance but to sell their bodies. On the other side, one of my middle class educated respondent<sup>265</sup> who referred to Şişli, his resident district, as a neighborhood where minorities reside; if you compare it to Bağcılar; where mostly working class Kurdish people reside; it is not so.

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<sup>264</sup> P4

<sup>265</sup> P31



My working class Kurdish respondents are from different cities such as Dersim<sup>266</sup>, Sivas<sup>267</sup>, Çorum<sup>268</sup> and Ankara<sup>269</sup>. All of them are from working-class. But their political consciousness is affected from their place of birth. Because as Merrifield indicates, places have political meanings. (Merrifield, 1993). They play a part in the construction of identities. Besides, just as Bourdieu (1984) remarks the identifications with classed space as a feature of habitus, my interviewees, especially those from Dersim, were identified positively with where they come from and what it meant for them.

Moreover, as Hill Collins (1998) claims, neighborhoods are indicators of inequalities as well. They are regulated for the purpose of not mixing different classes and races. Moreover, educational opportunities also depend on geographical location. (Lareau & Calarco, 2012) For instance, one of my working class respondent<sup>270</sup> who grew up in the slums of Mamak mentioned of the peer victimization she had experienced in terms of her Alevi identity as a result of attending a school within a classed area which was full of conservative and nationalist kids. Likewise, another respondent<sup>271</sup> who is a high school student in the district Sincan blamed the district for the discriminations she has been exposed to within her school life.

But the perception of community and sense of belonging in terms of social class, ethnic identity or gender identity; in other words being a member of the community of working class, Kurds, or transgender people can also be polarised by reason of other factors. For instance, as asserted above, my transgender respondents mention of a

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<sup>266</sup> P21

<sup>267</sup> P10

<sup>268</sup> P4

<sup>269</sup> P13

<sup>270</sup> P4

<sup>271</sup> P45

hierarchy between those living in Cihangir and Tarlabası. Those living in Cihangir were sniffing at those living in Tarlabası, accusing them of being poor and ugly. There was a perception that higher class trans people were living in Cihangir. Also as asserted above, clubs were separated into two as well; those used by trans people who have undergone surgery and others used by trans people without surgery. Same was the case with Taylor's respondents. While they were acting with solidarity on the basis of being vulnerable, they also differentiated based on the places they live at and the way they display it, as a sign of either decency or indecency.(Taylor, 2014)

Gay men mostly socialize and find partners through an application called Hornet. And that application as well shows you those who live close to you. One of my middle class respondent<sup>272</sup>, for instance, indicated with satisfaction that those who show up to him turns out all living in Çankaya.

The classes of the activists also differ depending on the city they are living in. For instance, it could be asserted that the activists of Ankara belong to a higher social class than those of Mersin, as most of them are graduated from METU. Istanbul distinguishes itself for being more identity oriented. Though, HEVİ LGBTİ association is successful at reaching ghettos and meeting the needs of lower classes. Other than that, the organized movement is beyond the reach of the working class. Working class LGBTQ's are visible only on social media in order to find themselves a partner; depending on their search of sexual orientation. Most of my respondents stated that queer theory is just a utopia, a movement led by a few intellectuals.

On the other hand, one of my working class respondent<sup>273</sup> stated that all of his siblings have followed different trajectories even though they were all born in the same squatter in Keçiören. He had his first experience with a family member, with his milk sibling. He told that although they attended the same school and grew up in the same socio-

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<sup>272</sup> P3

<sup>273</sup> P5

economic culture, they have chosen very different paths, and that his milk sibling has been very unhappy calling him when he gets drunk to talk, yet he cannot do it. As he puts it;

We all grew up in the same socioeconomic environment, under similar physical conditions, in a slum in Keçiören district. Rüştü, my milk sibling is also gay. But he is not aware of it. We even experienced our first sexual encounters with each other. But he chose that kind of life. He started to attend the meetings of the ultra-nationalist organization Grey Wolves, we used to smoke cannabis you know when we were only 15-16 years old, and he turned into this guy who cuts himself with a rozar blade and engage in neighborhood fights, and got married at the age of 20. He now works as a security guard for a municipality. He has two kids and is living with his parents. But he chose this life. Even though we went to the same school and grew up with the same culture, with similar parents, and similar socioeconomic opportunities, I escaped that place. I had a rough time. Here I am at 30, I came out of that same slum but now I live in a beautiful house in a privileged neighborhood of Ankara driving a nice car. I am respected by my friends and social circle. (P5)

Here he mentions of the respect he got from people as a result of his success at moving up the social ladder but not living his sexual identity openly. He goes a step further and asserts that he has established his own Paris here in Ankara, Turkey. He even describes homophobia with social class and social space. He asserts that if one with a mobile phone and a car worth thousands of Turkish Lira goes to someone's house who even does not know how to speak Turkish, he of course will be subjected to violence. Because with his description, sex and fantasy will be involved in this situation. However, he is also a Kurd. In other words, according to him, being subjected to violence is related with which neighborhood you reside and how you talk. Even though he is also an Alevi Kurdish, he defines himself as Turkish nationalist and claims that being subjected to violence is related with which neighborhood you reside and the language you speak.

As discussed above, social space is also determined by power relations. Due to Bourdieu's (1990) analysis of social space, spatial distances indicate social distances. In other words, "social space also functions as symbolic space." (McNay, 2004:184)

He also adds the fact that it is also inscribed in mental structures, creating symbolic violence “that goes unperceived as violence.” (Bourdieu, 1999:126) Bakhtin, for instance, correlate the lower strata of body with lower stratum of earth, stating that “grotesque places are physical places, both earthly and bodily.” (Gibblett, 2008:57) In this sense, the places of poverty are also represented as at the bottom. One of my respondent<sup>274</sup>, for instance, defined herself as *‘the undermost’*. In a similar way, a transsexual describes the places they live at as follows;

It’s been Seyranbağları for years, and still all the lubunya<sup>275</sup> is at Seyranbağları, Ballıbaba. That was our path, we were staying on the lower rungs. In other words, away from the people, away from the cops, we used to go home very late at night for instance. As if no one should see or hear us, in order not to stain the reputation of the building. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:299)

Wray and Newitz indicate that locations connect class and sexuality, such as Essex girl, scousers, white trash, hillbillies, rednecks...etc. (Wray & Newitz, 1997). One of my middle class respondent<sup>276</sup>, for instance, uses the idiom of “Sincan bebesi”; stating that he prefers to hang out in Bilkent in order not to come across with them. When asked about the places he prefers to hang out, he answered “Bilkent of course!” And he mentioned of how uncomfortable and out of place he feels when he sees people from Sincan at the gay bar called Sixties. In fact, he defines the elite places he prefers in comparison to suburbs by comparing the neighborhoods Bilkent and Sincan. As Fathi asserts, the importance of a space is discussed in relation to the residents occupying these spaces, the values attached to agents and the habitus associated to them. (Fathi, 2017) Likewise, the locations of individuals determine their access to resources. (Bourdieu 1998)

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<sup>274</sup> P26

<sup>275</sup> Refers to effeminate gay men and trans women. Twink.

<sup>276</sup> P36

While my middle class respondent<sup>277</sup> mentions of those high quality people living at Bilkent; my working class respondent<sup>278</sup> from Sincan attributes every problem to the fact that she lives in Sincan. She herself as a resident identifies the district with poverty and crime. In other words, she marginalizes herself and hate herself for belonging there. Taylor refers to postcode discrimination according to which the whole area and the individual within are stigmatized in such way that those come out of the area are assumed to be a particular type of person with low economic, cultural and symbolic capital, which give rise to emotions such as pain and anger. (Taylor, 2014) My respondents were stigmatised as a result of being a resident of the districts Sincan, Mamak in Ankara and Bağcılar, Şirinevler in Istanbul. Such that, the conceptualisation of underclass even holds individuals responsible for their poverty, instead of challenging structural disadvantages. (MacDonald and Marsh, 2000) This applies to my respondents from Sincan<sup>279</sup>, Mamak<sup>280</sup> and Bağcılar<sup>281</sup> as well. But still, in spite of being devalued by others, some of the respondents<sup>282</sup> prefer to belong where they come from instead of pretentious middle class areas.

Stigmatizing as sexual through implicit signifiers such as vulgarity, loudness, openness and bluntness (Griffin, 2000); or through hairstyles and clothing (Ortner, 1991) are very common. Such as the case of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>283</sup>, who mentioned how cisgender women get scared of her look and scream “Bismillahirrahmanirrahim”.<sup>284</sup> And working-classes “manage ‘outness’ within space,

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<sup>277</sup> P36

<sup>278</sup> P45

<sup>279</sup> P45

<sup>280</sup> P4

<sup>281</sup> P22

<sup>282</sup> Such as P4 and P21

<sup>283</sup> P45

<sup>284</sup> In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful

at times feeling unsafe, whilst many also explicitly and impressively challenge homophobic attacks, thereby attempting to change their social landscapes.” (Taylor, 2014:118) One of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>285</sup>, for instance, stated that one of her clients wanted to have dinner with her and took her to a fancy restaurant in Gaziosmanpaşa quarter of Ankara but lacking the right appearance, as a result of not looking classy, they didn’t allow her in. On the other side, my other transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>286</sup> mentioned of her training towards her homosexual neighbors. She claims that when she opens her door and starts screaming, her neighbors start calling her “Lady, please!”. “Suddenly I turn into a lady” she states laughing. But middle classes “may have more resources to protect themselves against discrimination – they can choose to re-locate to a more liberal, trendy area, choose to enact their sexuality in a space they know is going to be more tolerant.” (Taylor, 2014:119) One of my middle class respondent<sup>287</sup> lives, for instance, in wealthy neighborhood, in Paris street. As a result, he doesn’t report any homophobic attacks. Similar housing means similar lifestyle choices and housing embodies a set of social relations. (Valentine & Bell, 1995)

On the other side, the issue has to be analysed from an intersectional perspective. Because even living in a poor neighborhood of the city and living a luxury life in the countryside differs. One of my middle class respondent<sup>288</sup>, for instance, compared countryside with the city and asserted that gay men live more comfortably in Konya than those in Ankara as in Ankara state tries to fit people into societal norms. But he is a middle class gay who went to Konya to study art. As a result, he might not be exposed to discrimination at the middle class places he stayed at. On the other side,

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<sup>285</sup> P39

<sup>286</sup> P24

<sup>287</sup> P40

<sup>288</sup> P23

my respondents from the districts of Tuzla<sup>289</sup> and Şirinevler<sup>290</sup> of Istanbul mentioned of poverty. Nevertheless, Istanbul has to be evaluated differently from other cities as it is a cosmopolitan city with lots of opportunities. And it is easier to practice solidarity and reach the LGBTQ associations in Istanbul. For instance, Kineşçi indicates in his study how the political climate to carry out the struggle for political and civil rights is missing in Konya. (Kineşçi, 2016)

Also, geography and employment opportunities are related with each other. Employment opportunities are multiple and varied within cities. But appearance has a very big impact as well; such that, my transsexual women respondent<sup>291</sup> from Zonguldak would probably begin a career again in singing or prostitution in Ankara as well, because of her appearance as a transgender women. Still, geography and employment opportunities are intertwined. As it is asserted;

Regarding the Koliev's, the girls working in the brothels of Alsancak were of higher quality, I mean being able to work at a brothel in Alsancak was a huge thing for transsexuals. It was so difficult to get in there. Those working at the casinos, nightclubs were in Alsancak. And those prostituting on the highways, OK not exactly highways, but those who hitchhike to truck drivers and take long road trips were at the hotels of Basmane. At those times it was so hard to find a house, transsexuals were not allowed to rent houses. There were similar places in Hatay as well. The places we mostly hang out were Güven Park in Kızılay, and Botanik Park in Çankaya. And Seyranbağları as a district. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen,2013:291)

One of my working class Kurdish Alevi interviewee<sup>292</sup> mentioned of how they migrated from country to city for employment and the education of children.

Folks come to the city due to their problems, but then where we end up is, like, some quarry in Mamak, next to the Ege district, the place that used to be called garbage dump. I can say I grew up there. It is a shanty

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<sup>289</sup> P41

<sup>290</sup> P22

<sup>291</sup> P1

<sup>292</sup> P4

town. Ghetto. So I had a ghetto childhood. Poor. Impoverished. I was both a very poor child and growing up in the ghetto. That's why we were wearing the old clothes of our elders and passing down our old ones to our young. (P4)

Some of my interviewees have migrated to big cities for better opportunities. But instead, it meant class on top of a class. Because as Taylor puts it; “Working-class areas are not only spatially marginalized but also increasingly depicted as ‘sink’ estates, symbolic of decay and degradation, and synonymous with an ‘underclass’ status.” (Taylor, 2014:116) One of my respondent<sup>293</sup> mentions of Ege district and Tuzluca Mutlu district populated mostly by Alevi families migrated from Çorum and Sivas. Immigration also means entering a new cultural field to which the habitus of the immigrants might not fit. Within his study based on Algeria, Bourdieu also mentions of the peasantry that had to migrate to large towns. They had to adopt a whole complex of practices and representations. (Bourdieu, 1962) Those that enter a new field have to catch up the new habitus in order to fit in. And my immigrant Kurdish interviewees emphasized the fact that they had to live together in ghettos, create a collective living space in order not to turn into fish out of water in the cultural field of the larger towns.

In addition, as discussed above, “sustained poverty generates a set of cultural attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices” (cited in Lamont et al., 2010: 7) and this culture of poverty, as Lewis (1966) names it, “tend to perpetuate itself over time, even if the structural conditions that originally gave rise to it were to change.” (cited in Lamont et al., 2010: 7) One of my Kurdish working class respondent defined herself as “varoş”, attributing a positive meaning to it and owning it as a source of pride. In fact, the usage of the word “varoş” for slum areas has a cultural meaning. As Etöz puts it; selecting a foreign word instead of a local one stigmatize those excluded as outsiders. (Etöz, 2000) And the way my respondent attributes a positive meaning to the term “varoş” is significant because another tool middle class uses to separate themselves from working

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<sup>293</sup> P4



class is language. Both Butler and Skeggs emphasize the significance of recognition. As Skeggs indicates, “discourses produce symbolic power that has the ability to define what is and what is not valuable.” (cited in Fathi, 2017:28) And attributing a positive meaning to a term which has a negative meaning stands for queerfying it.

After all, spatial separation reveals itself through language as well. As a transsexual activist puts it;

Well, you know how we always say lubunca is a thing, even the dialects of Tarlabası and Cihangir were different from each other. We used to call the cops ‘paparon’, while they call the cops ‘beby’, there were small differences in nuance. Even lubunca had language differences. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013:314)

This gets us to our other section; language and discourse.

#### **4.3.1.6 Language:**

As for Bourdieu, cultural capital means the language first and foremost. Cultural capital is everything that comes with the language. Language is a limited source distributed unevenly. And one’s habitus could limit access to certain fields, positions, locations, activities ...etc.

Therefore, the working class subjects also lack the capacity to produce discourse about the social world as they lack the language and the cultural capital. (Bourdieu, 1991) Because, as Bourdieu indicates, linguistic system is a “re-translation of a system of social differences” which also means “linguistic exchanges are also relations of exchange of symbolic power.” (Bourdieu, 1991:37) As Swartz explains, via habitus;

Social structures become internalized into the cognitive structures of individuals and groups who then unwittingly reproduce the social order by classifying the social world with the same categories with which it classifies them. (Swartz, 1997:86)

My working class interviewees also lack the capacity to produce discourse. Lacking both the economic and cultural capital, they have no idea what queer theory means or which social class they belong to. Mostly they mention of their declaration of gender when asked about class. Most of my working class respondents<sup>294</sup> had no idea neither what gender and queer means, nor LGBTQ refers to. Most of them heard them for the first time. When asked about her social class, one of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>295</sup> answered as;

Well, since I consider myself as a woman, I only consider myself as a woman, I have never considered myself as a man, my dear. Only woman. (P11)

Also their language was conservative. One of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>296</sup> openly referred to the treatment of homosexuality. In a similar manner, my another transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>297</sup> answered each question over religion. When I asked about social class, she mentioned of those who are veiled and who are not. Talking with current conservative codes, she kept praising the values of family. She was proud of having married and veiled neighbors. She did not even know what LGBT refers to and understood ‘queen’ when I mentioned of queer movement. And she answered many questions by saying “I am sorry, I am not stupid but I cannot understand your question.” (P39) as a result of lacking the language and the cultural capital.

When questions on politics or organization were asked, members of working class either formed routine sentences like they read them from a book, or they talked nonsense. Those who are member of an organization caught some phrases from their organization; and kept repeating them as if they memorized them. Most of my

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<sup>294</sup> Such as P1,P11, P37, P39 and P45

<sup>295</sup> P11

<sup>296</sup> P1

<sup>297</sup> P39

organized working class respondents<sup>298</sup> spoke the same organizational language. On the other side, those who did not belong to an organization talked nonsense. For instance when I asked to one of my working class respondent<sup>299</sup> who did not have any connection with an organization whether the practices of struggle were changing, he replied as “I think LGBTQ is not an organization, I think it can be on behalf of fellowship of all people.” And added; “it is for those who are intensely homosexuals.” Likewise, when I asked my other working class respondent<sup>300</sup> how she could define herself, she replied as being lesbian. When I asked her what else feature she would use to define herself, she replied as being active. This is another feature of the discourse of my working class interviewees. Since they were not able to express themselves easily, they always gave short answers without content to my questions like “Yes, it affects” or “No. it does not increase.”

They tried to talk with the dominant language, but in a contradictory way. For example, in some sentences of one of my working class interviewee<sup>301</sup>, it seems like he is class conscious, but when I directly asked him about class he talked nonsense. He also stated that income difference did not have an impact on his life. Likewise, when I asked about his Kurdish identity, sometimes he said it had nothing to do with his sexual identity and that his sexual identity was far more important, while other times he formed very complicated sentences referring to Kurdish movement as if he heard it from the organization and memorized it, but could not digest it.

Those who are organized spoke the language of their organisations. In fact, one of my working class Kurdish respondent<sup>302</sup> referred to his organization in every question I asked. He even gave the LGBTQ movement as the answer when I asked him what

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<sup>298</sup> Such as P22, P43 and P 28

<sup>299</sup> P41

<sup>300</sup> P45

<sup>301</sup> P22

<sup>302</sup> P32

class he belonged to. He was rejected by his pious family. As a result, his organization was the only thing in his life. He even left his hometown by the help of his organization. Since, he could not receive any training, and he does not have his own language, he has spoken the language of his organization. And when I asked him something in detail, he talked nonsense. He gave conflicting and meaningless answers as “I both agree and disagree”. As a result of being a member of an organisation he defines himself as politically conscious. However, when asked about whether LGBTQ movement include class politics as well; his answer is senseless. As he puts it;

It should include that. I mean. Actually it seems to me that it shouldn't include that at all because they are different things. I mean the two things can support each other but I consider them to be different things. There can be an alliance in the sense of support. Since they are different fields, it can be exactly like, you know. (P32)

Likewise, my other working class transsexual man respondent<sup>303</sup> who was born to a conservative, nationalist family and lacks political consciousness has spoken the language of his organization and gave contradictory responses to different issues. He claimed to support Kurdish movement, while he could not know what gender meant. When I asked him about class, he understood it as Kurdishness. He gave a senseless answer to the question on queer as; “Since the concept of queer has come into my life, I feel myself more informed and thirsty for knowledge.” I think this is what symbolic capital is; working for him within his organization.

After all, as Bourdieu asserts, poor people lack the power to produce discourse, unable to master their own language. He also argues that poor people speak to the ruling class with the discourse they borrowed from them, repeat what they heard from them, even regarding the representations of themselves. (Bourdieu, 1884) In my study, it is the language of their organisations, for those who are somehow affiliated with political organisations. In fact, Bourdieu also mentions of two different tendency within the discourse of politicized working classes. He asserts that activist workers either talk with universal ready-made formulas, or mention of their unique experiences.

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<sup>303</sup> P35

(Bourdieu, 1984) The answers my working class respondents have given to the questions about socio-political problems were also either personal and senseless, or ready slogans and judgments of their organizations.

In other words, language is related with respectability and that ownership of the means of production is not just material but also related with the ability to produce discourse. One of my working class respondent<sup>304</sup> became suspicious in the middle of the interview and questioned for how long have I been analysing her. In a similar manner, my other working class respondent<sup>305</sup> asserted that she would only talk to someone who understands instead of me in reply to some questions and pretended not to know me when we came across months after our interview. They felt threatened against the symbolic violence my questions constitutes I suppose. In response, they either displayed critical habitus and expressed their anger; or displayed conservative habitus and chose to keep silent. While one of my working class respondent<sup>306</sup> kept asking for her problems to be heard by the authorities, my other working class respondent<sup>307</sup> mentioned of feeling suicidal and doubted my sincerity.

My respondents used different words for the movement based on their class differences; such as '*lubunya*', LGBT, or queer. While middle class LGBTQ individuals discuss queer theory with those graduated from Boğaziçi University at the association SPOD, HEVÎ association respond to the needs of LGBTQ children of poor Kurdish working class families. HEVÎ have been carrying out activities, providing Kurdish lessons in Gaziosmanpaşa, Sarıgazi and Bağcılar for poor, migrant, Kurdish LGBTQs as they feel estranged and do not understand the language spoken in SPOD. They try to help those who need to flee from their families in Diyarbakır, providing them legal and financial support. In other words, while middle class is in need of queer workshops, assimilation victim Kurds in diaspora needs Kurdish lessons.

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<sup>304</sup> P37

<sup>305</sup> P13

<sup>306</sup> P39

<sup>307</sup> P37

As for another example, while my middle class respondents speak English and attend the events voluntarily at the associations; my working class respondents work at the associations out of necessity in addition to working as a sex worker. Some of them dropped out of school in order to work full time. Indeed, in a social media video they made for their association, while middle class transsexual activist prefers to say “you are so populist!”, working class transsexual activist says “you are infamous!” when they address someone they both got angry with. (Pembe Hayat, 2019) <sup>308</sup>

After all, class is expressed through language. And my working class respondents were also aware of the significance of their cultural and linguistic capital within their social positionings. And they either refrain from speaking as a result of lacking confidence, reiterate hegemonic norms, despise and marginalise themselves. Or they try to raise their voice but talk with the voice of the sovereign, such as the organisations. Another example is my transsexual respondents who support Justice and Development Party.

But there is also resistance. The language of transsexual sex workers; “lubunca”, is a good example. The establishment of a new language is very significant in the struggle towards emancipation. Kontovas (2012) indicates that it is a language created by sex workers in hammams of Beyoğlu, in order to communicate with each other by protecting themselves in such a secret way that nobody around them, neither their costumers nor the cops could understand them. “Eventually, the spaces where lubunca was used expanded into unregistered brothels and their neighborhoods, where male and trans sex workers interacted with minority communities...” (Kontovas, cited in Mortada, 2015)<sup>309</sup> In other words, it is a slang incorporating words mostly from languages of the non-Muslims, such as Greeks, Romani, Armenian... etc. As Kontovas (2012) claims, during the last years of the Ottoman Empire or the early years of the Republic, there were a lot of slang emerged in Istanbul; some pertain to Sufis, some to

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<sup>308</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJb79GQhC7o>

<sup>309</sup> <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/1/17/turkish-languagesexworkers.html>

musicians, while some to Köçek dancers<sup>310</sup>. Lubunca consists of 400 words. It is spoken in trans ghettos, streets, pubs, pavilions, bachaler pads... etc. It is a type of cryptography against the heterosexist oppression, gaze of the society and violence of the cops as Kontovas states. (Kontovas, 2012) Though, it also functions as creating a sense of belonging to a subculture, or a private club, making people feel more safe and comfortable. But as a transsexual activist<sup>311</sup> states, there are situations where this encryption is insufficient because it can protect them to some degree when people are dragged by their hair and displaced from their homes.

Lubunca is fed from ethnic identities it came into contact with, such as Armenians, Greeks, Kurds of Istanbul. The meanings of the words change from city to city, which maintains the secrecy. It continues to change as long as people continue to socialize. Trans sex workers have to learn it because their work and life may depend on it. As a transsexual activist asserts;

Lubunca is a language built for sex work and security. Therefore, you cannot make a sentence like "I ate potatoes while having breakfast today". You can only say things like 'this guy is a psychopath', 'he will give me five hundred liras', 'this house is bad'. In this sense, we cannot say that it is a language in its fullest sense. You can say 'altımda çubut şil, naş', 'the man next to me is a psychopat, lets hightail it from here immediately'. For instance 'babilof mu alıktın' means 'did you let a fart'. There were many communes in Beyoğlu, Istanbul. Back then while we were living in Cihangir, the dialect in Tarlabası was different. We used to call 'paparon' what they call 'beybi'. You see 's-beybiler' were undercover cops. This for instance was diversity. For instance I no longer understand the dialects of lubunya who live in communes when I visit my friends. What they speak has evolved into another dialect. Because the main idea was secrecy and the language was built to exclude those who are not lubunya<sup>312</sup>. (Artı 90, 2020)

It obviously indicates class differences. Up until two decades ago, cis-gays were not at all enamoured with Lubunca. According to a former transsexual sex worker<sup>313</sup>, there

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<sup>310</sup> Cross-dressed male dancers

<sup>311</sup> (Artı 90, 2020)

<sup>312</sup> Refers to effeminate gay men and trans women. Twink.

<sup>313</sup> <https://attitude.co.uk/article/the-secret-language-used-by-lgbtq-people-in-turkey-1/23524/>

was a lot of discrimination against sex workers in Istanbul, also within the LGBTQ community. As she puts it;

When I was a 19-year-old student, I mainly used to hang around the streets and in neighbourhoods where I could easily pick up johns. In clubs and locations that were frequented by middle-class gays, I was often insulted because of the way I spoke Lubunca, as it was a giveaway that I was a prostitute, and therefore from a lower class. It meant you weren't considered gay, but 'ibne', which basically means 'faggot', and at the time it had the same negative meaning within the community for being the same way heteros use the word. (Wissing,2020)

After all, one need to transform cultural capital into social capital in order to gain recognition and the role of the language is significant here. When one of my working class cross respondent<sup>314</sup>, for instance, introduces himself as LGBT, people act as if they encounter an alien. On the other hand, the sense of the word queer lightens the mood. And he attributes this to the fact that the term does not involve ethnic identity nor sexual identity. Because as Skeggs argues, different forms of capitals enable subjects to be recognized as legitimate. (Skeggs, 2001)

The process of recognition and misrecognition applies to intimate relationships as well. For instance, one of my respondent<sup>315</sup> coming from a middle class family barely earns a living by telling fortunes at the moment but his cultural capital is high. While telling that lower-class has no time to think of politics because they work so hard and try to survive, he also gets a low salary. Yet as long as he does not come out to his family, he does not see himself as a member of lower-class since he receives education with the support of his family. He states that he and his partner get similar salaries, and live in similar conditions; however, his partner has strived hard to get to this point, and lacks cultural capital to answer these questions. According to my respondent, although there is no class difference among them, the reason why they manage their relationship is that they do not socialize often, and spend their times together at home outside working hours. He states that, otherwise the cultural difference would matter.

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<sup>314</sup> P20

<sup>315</sup> P14



There is a similar situation in the case of my another middle class respondent<sup>316</sup> and his working class boyfriend. My respondent's boyfriend declined the interview. He was doubtful and he could not find time since he works hard in a mall. My respondent kept complaining about his lower class partner, asserting that he was both homophobic, conservative and extreme Kemalist, even though he was also conservative himself. He only had this illusion of being a left-winger since he is a member of middle-class and is interested in arts. These will be discussed in detail in the next section.

#### **4.3.1.7 Intimate relationships, emotions and tastes**

Intimacy, friendship, relationships are also indicative of structured inequalities. Because the presence of class reveals itself in everyday relations, intimate relationships, judgements and interactions. And class always appears as an obstacle, a structure within intimate personal relationships, as a result of the economic, cultural, symbolic and emotional capitals operating. Even though they might share gender and sexuality, class has a big impact on their choice of partner.

Besides, class reveals itself as anger and resentment within intimate relationships as a result of not being able to feel self-confident lacking the cultural capital and feeling threatened by the partner who owns them. Savage names this class defense. (Savage, 2001) Another factor that trigger this defense mechanism is classed and racial appearances.

My working class respondents mentioned of struggling and surviving together, becoming comrades towards the difficulties life brings when asked about what they expect from their partners. As one of my working class respondent<sup>317</sup> puts it;

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<sup>316</sup> P23

<sup>317</sup> P13

If she somehow accepts this, does not dull the edge of it, you can keep her alive and she will keep you alive. Even if you are going to move on, you will be able to go into a new relationship smoothly. (P13)

As a matter of fact, for this reason most of my working class respondents<sup>318</sup> preferred middle class partners; in order to be supported by. Even though one of my working class respondent<sup>319</sup> with a critical habitus claimed that her sexual identity was the most important thing from now on and that she decided to work at places where she can come out; she was actually on the lookout for a middle class partner, someone who has more income than she has. At first she mentioned of the importance of empathy within a relationship, expectance of comradeship. But afterwards, she expressed her heartbreak as a result of getting dumped by her middle class ex-partner. As far as she states, her upper middle class ex-partner left her on the grounds that she has a tough life, and continued with a white middle class partner. Her middle class ex thought that their relationship was going nowhere because of financial problems. As my respondent<sup>320</sup> explains;

We did not experience a conflict due to her personality in this sense. After all she was coming to poor left-wing cafe to drink tea with me you know. And I was from time to time accompanying her to the places where she eats. So on and so forth. Of course you do not come from the same socioeconomic background. There is a cultural difference. And you are aware of it. She is also aware of it. In fact, at first I wondered would this be a problem you know. But we actually considered this as more like understanding each other's lives and conditions, witnessing the way the other lives. (P4)

Even though they were sharing their sexual identities; my respondent<sup>321</sup> indicates that the real reason of their separation was economic. She would become poor and homeless if she leaves her job. She can not survive. She would famish; become homeless. But her middle class ex-partner can set up her own business and even can chose which city she would want to live in. She can survive even if she drifts into

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<sup>318</sup> Such as P4 and P5

<sup>319</sup> P4

<sup>320</sup> P4

<sup>321</sup> P4

unemployment. And the reason of their break-up was the fact that my working class respondent's life was too difficult for her middle class ex. In other words, class is reproduced within intimate relationships in terms of how people feel about each other and behave with each other. Because as Jamieson indicates, intimate relationships are "not typically shaped in whatever way gives pleasure without the taint of practical, economic and other material circumstances." (Jamieson, 1998:482)

Unlike Taylor's (2014) respondents, within my work none of the respondents denied partners as a result of not having working class roots; instead always the working class ones were rejected. But my working class interviewees complained about feeling uncomfortable, inadequate, insecure, threatened, even jealous and resentful against middle class partners. Because as Reay asserts, the sum of economic and cultural capital generate emotional capital such as sense of security and self-worth which working classes lack in contrast to their middle class partners. (Reay, 2004) Because as Johnson and Lawler (2005) states, class inequalities produce emotional distance as well in addition to material and physical ones.

Lacking economic and cultural capital create dependence on middle class partners. One of my working class respondent<sup>322</sup>, for instance, was living together with her middle class ex-partner, but when they were separated she had to go back to her parent's house because they can't afford to live together with her new partner, who also belongs to oppressed class, unlike her middle class ex-partner. And they have to stay overnight at their friend's or rent a hotel room in order to spend the night together.

Moreover, they feel dependent on their middle class partners in order to fit into middle class environments, be compatible with middle class lifestyle. One of my working class respondent<sup>323</sup> was going to move to Holland after getting married with his middle class boyfriend and started learning English. In fact, he at first stated that his priority was not his partner's standards. But afterwards, while telling about the process leading

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<sup>322</sup> P4

<sup>323</sup> P5

up to their marriage, he confessed about being cheated on. And when I asked him why he still wants to marry him, his answer was all about his partner's standards. That he bought him a house, and that they were going to move to Netherlands and that he was learning English thanks to him. After all, he was getting married to him in order to have better living conditions.

Likewise, my other working class respondent<sup>324</sup> had a chance to invest her cultural capital, get involved in art and get round to activism, as her middle class ex-partner's family were supporting them financially. Due to her ex girlfriend's economic capital, she felt secure and valueable, at least for a while in her lifetime. Even though at first she stated that discrimination is not only related with the issue of class, that being an upper class does not make one safe from discrimination; the concerns she expressed regarding her leisure time and intimate relationships asserted the contrary. For instance, when I asked about her leisure time, she couldn't mention of socializing with friends as a result of working so hard and lacking time. For her, even coming back to home from work takes too much time. She works all day long on her feet with only two cigarette breaks. So even taking a shower is a torment for her because it takes too long to boil water and to dry hair; and since she works hard in the kitchen, she has to take a shower every day in order not to stink for oil. And she asserts that in order to socialize, she stays overnight at her friends' as she doesn't have any other time, but only the short time before going to sleep to have a talk with her friends. As for political activism, people have to organize considering her weekly day off. That is the only way she can attend. As a result of trying to make ends meet, she leaves political activism to white collar people. In other words, coming out and public visibility also depends on your social class. On the other hand, her middle class ex-partner can move to another city at will and start a new life by starting her own business. But if she quits work, she will lead a poor life.

Yet, as Taylor (2014) asserts, there are times working class women also refuse spoiledness and pretentiousness of their middle class (ex) partners. One of my working

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<sup>324</sup> P4

class respondent<sup>325</sup> praised her current girlfriend, stating that she is understanding as a result of belonging to oppressed class just like herself. Because as Taylor indicates, “class is a significant factor in shaping their sense of self and many women wanted this affirmed and taken seriously by partners, or prospective partners.” (Taylor, 2014:169)

While my working class respondents mentioned of social class and structural inequalities when they mention of their intimate relationships; middle classes referred to culture. They mentioned of the significance of culture, the importance of being able to speak and share with other people; rather than materiality. What they expect from a partner is to enrich each other’s life. One of my respondent<sup>326</sup>, for instance, defined himself as middle class as a result of being literate even though he was coming from a working class family. And he preferred his partners to have the same consciousness he has. He added that one needs consciousness in order to be educated. While middle class respondents stated that they find manners, attitudes attractive, working class respondents stated that they prefer partners with a profession. Or they mentioned of lacking energy and time to find someone attractive, as a result of having too many responsibilities. One of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>327</sup>, for instance, asserted that she finds soldiers and cops attractive as a result of finding them strong.

Most of my respondents related class with culture. One of my working class respondent<sup>328</sup>, for example, mentioned of her ex-girlfriend, who had less income. They had spent the summer working as seasonal agricultural workers together and shared my respondent’s scholarship. Still, my respondent doesn’t define her as someone that belongs to lower class because of her level of education and cultural capital. Because

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<sup>325</sup> P4

<sup>326</sup> P9

<sup>327</sup> P24

<sup>328</sup> P10

for her, being foresighted is related to keeping away from the ideology of conservatism.

Bourdieu's conceptualization of capitals; the interconnection of economic, cultural and social capital, reveals itself all the time. Regarding the leisure time activities, for instance, while my middle class respondents<sup>329</sup> mentioned of theatre, jazz concerts, or tennis; as for one of my working class respondent<sup>330</sup>, the only place she can socialize is EskiYeni<sup>331</sup>. Yet she tries not to spend a lot of money and drinks energy drink instead of alcohol. When asked about her hobbies and leisure time, she mentions of work. On the other hand, my middle class gay respondent<sup>332</sup> goes to Starbucks in order to read books. He works in the family-owned business. He identifies himself as socialist but wants his boyfriend to become a bank employee as it is a guaranteed job. He was raised by helicopter parents, who have been worried over him with regards to his homosexuality and political activism. He envisions a classless society but when asked, he doesn't know any working class people. And his biggest economic concern is not being able to travel to Athens with his boyfriend this summer. Else, while transsexual sex workers go to gay clubs in order to find clients and make money, and are exposed to violence sometimes, as for my middle class crossdresser respondent<sup>333</sup>, going to gay club is just for fun. In fact, he also mentioned of British literature in response to what he does in his spare time.

After all, art is a type of cultural and symbolic capital. As a result, interest in art was as important as economic relations for my respondents. For instance, one of my

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<sup>329</sup> Such as P3, and P40

<sup>330</sup> P37

<sup>331</sup> A queer bar in Ankara

<sup>332</sup> P3

<sup>333</sup> P36

working class uneducated respondent's<sup>334</sup> life was based on working. She found hope in art, but construed it in a negative way;

I try to go to the movies as long as I have time, but then I try to write. It makes me feel like I can do things better you know.(P13)

In fact, most of my activist working class respondents were directed towards art in order to excel themselves since they were socializing with white-collars. Some of them were introduced to art while working at associations. My activist transsexual respondents believe that they can raise awareness and receive approval of the society through art. They support art from transsexual perspective. But even though they all refer to art from queer perspective, class difference also operates between them. For instance, both my middle class crossdresser respondent<sup>335</sup> and my working class transsexual respondent<sup>336</sup> mentions of the significance of cosmetics and the difficulties they had in order to afford; but one of them<sup>337</sup> is an Alevi Kurd in a refugee camp. On the other side, the other one<sup>338</sup> is a Sunni Turk living in Şişli, who keeps partying with his friends, and studying at Boğaziçi University. He refers to performance as a profession. That is to say, for him profession is on the forefront. He despises sex labor. He responds in a conservative manner like his family. He claims there are many sources that people can read, and yet, he is not aware of the fact that not everyone knows English as he does.

Still, the complexity of habitus provides different opportunities. Born in a slum in Keçiören, one of my working class respondent<sup>339</sup> has little opportunities but getting in social interaction with animal rights activists, those happen to be mostly middle class, provides him with opportunities. His animal rights activist friends became his “cultural

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<sup>334</sup> P13

<sup>335</sup> P31

<sup>336</sup> P26

<sup>337</sup> P26

<sup>338</sup> P31

<sup>339</sup> p5

mentors.” (Lareau & Calarco, 2012:65) Likewise, a transsexual activist<sup>340</sup> also comes from a peasant, conservative but political family. She organizes in feminist movement and starts doing theatre with the support of her cultural mentors.

To sum up, all these differentiations, judgements and feelings are proof of the fact that class is a significant factor in relationships. It has effects and outcomes. Even though sometimes not expressed explicitly, some attributions contain classed assumptions. Structural inequalities continue within intimate relationships, relationships with the family and friendships as well.

#### **4.3.2 How they interpret class**

Within the literature, many studies emphasize disidentifications from working classness, avoidance of being labelled in terms of class and avoidance of all signs of class in order to prove themselves as respectable, decent, moral, and worthy. (Reay 2004, Lawler 1999, Skeggs 2002, Taylor 2014, Bettie 2003, Brown 1997, Savage et. al., 2001) In the way Taylor’s respondents identify with gender with more ease, my respondents identify with gender, ethnic identities, or sexual identities more easily than they do with social class. Some of my respondents disidentified from classed identities explicitly, while others latently, displaying it through their feelings. After all, they were aware of their classed positions; it was explicit in their narrations even though they did not mention it openly or reject it.

Just as Skeggs asserts, “the regulation of moral behavior during the nineteenth century was part of a wider formation of class identity, nation and empire.” (Skeggs, 2002:42) Because the regulation of sexualised identities, femininity and prostitution are all controlled. In fact, for this reason class narrations are based on morality, recognition and respectability. Especially regarding the transgender people forced to sex work; morality conflict replaced class conflict. In other words, even if they did not name it,

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<sup>340</sup> In the documentary of Melisa Önel ‘Me and Nuri Bala’, 2009



they were aware of their classed positions and expressing it through feelings and manners, focusing on morality.

In this section, the class consciousness, political awareness, activism of the respondents and their subversiveness against class relations will be discussed. Because while some of the respondents<sup>341</sup> chose to stay in the closet in order to move up the social ladder; some of them transformed their sexual identities in itself to for itself; struggling for their sexual identities at the risk of becoming impoverished. Here, in addition to becoming political activist, daily life activism will be discussed as well.

Likewise Taylor's (2014) data, my respondents were also very class aware, even though some of them didn't name it, class had a big impact on their daily lives and relationships, but not just regarding their occupations or educational skills. Though, their class awareness was based on exclusions, stigmatisations, and as a result they expressed pain, resentment, anger, loneliness. As Dunne (1997) indicates, such exclusions both made them aware of their class and dis-identify with it. They display their class in terms of what they are not. Because, even identifying your subjectivity requires certain social, economic and cultural capital. In contrast to those middle class educated self-confident critical queer subjects; working class LGBTQ subjects are unable to even identify themselves, as a result of lacking the language. And just as Skeggs (2002) indicates how her respondents configure class through improvement; my interviewees subverted and challenged class through improving themselves as well; through improving their appearance, their relationships, their employment opportunities, educational skills, in order to enhance respectability. In fact, they differentiate and compare themselves with both those lower and higher from them. They identify themselves in terms of both who they are, who they are not (middle class) and who they do not want to be (those lower than them). My respondents<sup>342</sup> who chose their social class over sexual identity configured class through improvement as well.

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<sup>341</sup> Such as P33

<sup>342</sup> Such as P33 and P5

One of my working class Kurdish Alevi gay respondent<sup>343</sup>, for instance, distinguishes himself from other working classes and Kurds by asserting that he created his own Paris and that he had never exhibited nationalistic behavior. His social circle is chosen from middle class respectable people elaborately. His choice of partners is also based upon social class. Likewise, some of my working class respondents<sup>344</sup> prefer middle class partners while some of them<sup>345</sup> have an interest in art in order to climb the social ladder and decrease their cultural capital. Though one of them<sup>346</sup> complains about the hope art gives to people. She does not know what queer means and didn't have a chance to continue her education but the things she narrates tells a lot even though she cannot name them.

We pretend to do the right things, but in reality we don't. That's all. We accept it as true and even if we do not accept we exhibit ourselves doing it so that it was the right thing. This is also a very disgusting thing. (P13)

Unlike Taylor's respondents, none of my working class respondents romanticize class. Some of them<sup>347</sup> do not identify with class as a result of lacking the language, while some of them<sup>348</sup> pathologise class and do not want to be recognised as devalued, pathological, dangerous working class. On the other side, there are those<sup>349</sup> who identify with class but still pathologise it. In other words, reactions differ.

Sennett (1997) asserts that the consciousness of the poor alternate between angry spectatorship as a result of having a life beyond control, and responsible agency as a result of feeling responsible of their experiences. Likewise Taylor's interviewees, my respondents also either passively reiterated the hegemonic norms and obeyed the structure, or actively criticised and resisted. In a similar way, American working class

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<sup>343</sup> P5

<sup>344</sup> Such as P4

<sup>345</sup> Such as P26 and P13

<sup>346</sup> P13

<sup>347</sup> Such as P11

<sup>348</sup> Such as P39 and P37

<sup>349</sup> Such as P4

is also considered as alternating between being angry and undecided about having right to be angry. While rejecting being responsible for their poverty, they could also be ashamed of themselves at the same time. (Sennett, 1972) As discussed and asserted above, the reactions of my respondents in relation to class were varied and multiple. In addition to either pathologising or romanticising social class, there were also contradictory in between positions. Because some of my respondents were displaying critical subversive subjectivity against both class structure and gender norms; in addition to being very annoyed at the homophobia of the left wing.

My respondents either stated that capitalism should change, that poverty was not their own fault; and/or blamed poor for being lazy. My respondents with conservative habitus asserted that not everyone could be equal, while those with critical habitus complained about social inequalities and their poverty.

Taylor (2014) brings Marxism and queer theory together, in order to adopt a materialist reading of Butler's subversive performativity. Floyd (2009) takes a step further and tries to examine Marxism from the perspective of queer theory. He claims that "the reification of sexual desire is a condition of possibility for the development of a new form of antiheteronormative, queer knowledge" (Floyd, 2009:25); suggesting that it "produces two types of subjectivity; passive contemplation and the potentially critical negative standpoint of proletariat." (Floyd, 2009:25) In other words, just as Foucault's conceptualisation of resistance as a precondition of power; he suggests two types of subjectivity; a passive and a critical active one. Moreover, his queer reading of Marxian term 'totality' is discussed with regard to intersectional solidarity and struggle. This thesis also tries to merge Marxism with queer theory and suggests two types of habitus; a conservative and a critical one. In fact, the LGBTQ movement itself exhibit two types of tendency. On the one part it follows an assimilationist, conservative track and aims to co-opt and win basic civil rights; while on the other side it follows a more radical and subversive path and aims at challenging "the very terms in which civil rights would be granted, an affront to a bourgeois, repressive state." (Floyd, 2009:127) This thesis explores the possibility of challenging and

subverting the normative intelligible order, from an intersectional perspective, as a dynamic in the classed queer existence.

Additionally, within the literature, Wolf (2009) emphasizes the involvement of left politics in queer struggle, while Drucker (2015) discusses the history of queer struggle from a historical materialist approach. While Hennessy (2018) addresses political economy of sex, bringing mechanisms of late capitalism and formation of sexual identity together, Binnie (2004) draws attention to pink economy meaning commodification of sexuality. Floyd (2009) studies Fordism as the system which legitimised the crisis of sixties and caused the emergence of new social movements; while Hennessy (2018) prefers referring to the concept of 'neoliberalism' for the reason that it brings economy, politics and culture together, in order to escape both class reductionism of Marxism and postmodernism's culture centered analysis. As she puts it; "many usages of the term 'neoliberalism' featured a complex social system in which cultural discourses accompanied an aggressive invasion of bodies, populations, and life forms that was becoming integral to political economy." (Hennessy, 2018: xv) This thesis also refers to the term neoliberalism in order to examine the intersections of both economic, cultural and political spheres. Besides, morality politics, which this thesis argues excessively, is a significant feature of neoliberalism.

Özbilgin (2017)<sup>350</sup> emphasizes the paradox that both the achievements and fragilities of the movement are outcomes of neoliberalism; remarking individualization as the most significant identifying characteristic. Drucker (2017)<sup>351</sup>, as well, emphasizes individualisation; asserting that gay men moved away from identifying themselves based on collective struggle and solidarity, as a result of the increase of individualization under the neoliberal order. My working class respondents who chose class and being respectable over their sexual identities, in other words those with conservative habitus also exhibit individualism, rejecting collective struggle and solidarity. They kept emphasizing the individual potential and personality of subjects.

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<sup>350</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usdi\\_KMUs44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usdi_KMUs44)

<sup>351</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usdi\\_KMUs44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usdi_KMUs44)

Eventually, class debate is also ideology and class consciousness debate; class consciousness referring to the realization of class interests. But the aim is not to identify social class nor impose consciousness. It means the transformation of class in itself into class for itself after becoming aware of its interests and begin struggling for. It is the transition between isolation and solidarity. But my working class respondents lacking education, family support and social capital were unable to become active agents of their lives.

Besides, class and gender are not separate identities. Because the fragility and insecurity of the LGBTQ people being forced to work precariously is strongly related with class divisions and labor market. The discrimination and oppression they are exposed to are also structural features of classed capitalist society. Moreover, in the USA, existence of gay venues may appear as a sign of greater tolerance and cultural diversity, but in fact it indicates spatial segregation instead of integration. As a matter of fact, Daniels mentions of the fact that real estate agencies add sexual orientation to the forms. (Daniels et al. 2001: 169 in Kineşçi, 2016). That is to say, they are stigmatised and confined to ghettos, which means they also can not come out in places other than those ghettos. (Kineşçi, 2016) And just as Hennessy indicates, the reason for the so-called tolerance towards queer subjects and growth of gay markets is eventually capital accumulation. (Hennessy, 2018) Also, it is considered that a group of people with economic privileges constitute the LGBTQ movement but it is not the case for Turkey, even it could be the case for USA. Instead, in the case of Turkey people are staying at the closet in order not to lose their jobs. Even though some laws have been bended, still you cannot work as a civil servant with your LGBTQ identity in Turkey.

After all, class identities and ethnic identities are intertwined with sexual identities in the capitalist system. The worker is an Alevi, a Kurd, or a gay while working in a factory. Or an office worker is a lesbian at the office as well. Class and other identities are not isolated, and separate from each other; they are intertwined. The political identity, sexual identity, gender, ethnic, religious identities are actually parts of a

whole, but not fragmented identities. However, lower classes mostly identify with nationalism and religion.

This takes us to the discussion of religious and nationalist identities.

#### **4.4 Queer subjectivity and religion**

My working class interviewees are those who are the most religious and conservative. Most of them come from a religious, nationalist and conservative family. And they are religious as well but they live their religion privately. In other words, they are against institutionalised religion. While most of my working class interviewees<sup>352</sup> started every conversation by saying “Thank God, I’m Muslim”, they mentioned their own beliefs instead of those imposed upon them. One of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>353</sup>, for instance, told about his modern turbaned elder sisters. She accused people for misinterpreting the story of Lut and stated that Imam was aware of her sexuality and that she was fulfilling the religious duties completely. Likewise, one of my transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>354</sup> explained that since she prostitutes she cannot perform prayer, but yet she kept mentioning Allah and she had strong belief. She kept referring to her spiritual wealth, asserting that mercy comes from Allah, and that Allah does not give mercy with money. As for her, like other working class interviewees, spirituality is important above all and that it is available within her.

An interviewee of Berghan’s study summarizes well;

People like us pray a lot. He is up there who created us. He knows the good and the bad of us. Our creation was in his hands. So I think he understands us better. That's why I believe we're closer to him. I always believe that people like us are more special. We live more special than normal people, our feelings are more special, our lives more special. So we're closer to him. (Berghan, 2007:89)

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<sup>352</sup> Such as P1, P11 and P39

<sup>353</sup> P11

<sup>354</sup> P39

They hold on to religion because they are lonely. Some of my working class respondents mentioned of how they gain confidence with the help of their faith. Because they do not have anything else to hold on to. They go through hard times with the help of their faith, as they told me. A transsexual activist, for instance, explains how she was affected by the religiosity within her neighborhood. She observed how everyone was hoping and waiting for something through performing prayer in her neighborhood and thought she could be saved as well. So she started to pray God. (Amnesty International, 2014)

But Alevism is perceived as a philosophy, rather than a religion. My Alevi respondents<sup>355</sup> stated that they could discuss the existence of God but not the philosophy of Alevism. As one of my respondents<sup>356</sup> puts it;

Alevism focuses on the heart's eye, leaving aside whether someone is a Kurd, or Sunni, or poor or any of that. This is very important for me. This is something I could never ignore or refuse to accept. I could discuss the existence of a creator but not Alevism. Because I am defending it philosophically. (P10)

In the end, nobody cares about institutional religion. My respondents did not see any conflict between their sexual identity and their faith; stating that if they were heterosexual, they would still commit a sin when they had sexual intercourse without imam marriage and drank alcohol. None of my interviewees confront a dilemma on this issue. On the contrary, they resort to religion and God against discrimination and social exclusion. Berghan explains the issue as;

Loneliness affects many things as well as the way they see religion. They are left alone as a result of not being able to tell people who they are. As a result, they consider God as the only one who knows their innocence, as he is the one who created them and fully understands them. (Berghan, 2007:44)

In the end, the culture of poverty expresses itself most easily and most strongly in the field of religion. More precisely, it legitimizes itself mostly in the field of faith. Most of my working class respondents with a conservative habitus adopted their religious

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<sup>355</sup> Such as P4 and P10

<sup>356</sup> P10

and nationalist identities instead of their sexual and class identities. One of the reason for this is the fact that they pathologise class and choose to disidentify. Likewise, they pathologise their sexual identities and despise themselves. Another reason is that they lack the knowledge and the language. That is to say, their sexuality and class are strongly intertwined. They need a certain type of habitus, the critical habitus, in order to exhibit critical subversive subjectivity Butler mentions of.

My working class respondents with conservative habitus do disidentify with their social class because as Simmell states, poverty is not just deprivation of material economic sources; but also cultural and social capital; which deepens problems of identity and belonging. (Simmell, 1971) Most of my working class respondents<sup>357</sup>, especially my sex worker respondents, defined themselves as pious and used religion in order to prove their respectability as a result of being ashamed of the social class they belong to and the profession they are forced to. As a matter of fact, the ideologies of nationalism and conservatism use this and emphasize morality in order to take the votes of the lower classes. Rather than economic development, they emphasize moral development as an alternative to immoral capitalism and communism. Burhan Kavuncu, quotes in his article how nationalists emphasize morality;

(...) The spread of cruelty and exploitation in the society is primarily the result of certain moral changes. (...) The source of all kinds of exploitation is immorality. (...) The reason for exploitation is ideological, economic, so the fight against exploitation must also be an ideological one (not economic). (Kavuncu cited in Can, 2002:680)

And together with the victims of forced migration, communists, and foreigners, LGBTQ people are also seen as the reason of decline of morality. My working class respondents with a conservative habitus disidentified with their social class, chose to live their sexuality secretly, and referred to morality and religion in order to gain dignity and self-respect.

In conclusion, just as religion helps poor people endure the world by easing the contradictions stemming from poverty, it also helps LGBTQ people endure the world

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<sup>357</sup> Such as P39, P1 and P11



by easing the contradictions stemming from oppression of heterosexism. Within my study, political affiliations are expressed more acutely when leaning towards left wing; while those leaning towards right wing refer to God to explain everything but still in a doubtful and ambiguous way. They refer to religion, though not the institutionalised one but their individual interpretation. It could also be asserted that in this way they subvert the religion, as we also refer to religion as a normative structure. Though, generally, sexual emancipation is associated with secularism and religion with oppression, the experience of queer subjects is more complex. As Taylor emphasises: “In reality, people don’t live this dichotomy so discretely: religious beliefs and practices intersect with family, community, and cultural arrangements in complex ways that cannot be reduced to this simple axiom.” (Taylor, 2014:xiv) My respondents also hold on to religion and God while suffering from the oppression of the society. On the other hand, the institutional religion mostly justifies homophobia and oppression. A very significant example comes from the recent history. Recently, homosexuality and adultery have been accused of being the cause of Covid 19 pandemic by the directorate of religious affairs. And in response to protests against this statement, it is asserted that the target audience of the statement was religious people. Yet, many religious LGBTQ people or those LGBTQs living with their religious families have not taken into consideration, because as discussed above, most of the LGBTQ subjects are exposed to homophobia and oppression from their religionist parents as well. In response to the oppression of institutional religion, my respondents chose to live their faith individually and privately. They interpret the rules and the sins in their own way. As one of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>358</sup> puts it;

They always attack through referring to Lot, oh cursed people, the people of Lot have been cursed you know. But those who assert this are idiots who couldn’t get inside the matter, if only they knew, in reality the verse from the Quran says that the people of Lot tended towards men leaving their wives and children aside. You see they had a wife, they were able to get marry and even had children. But I never had any interest in women. Never. There are some people, I don’t mean to malign anyone but I have a friend, who was forced into marriage and he takes pills in order to sleep with his wife, I mean just to make her happy at that

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<sup>358</sup> P1

moment. Just like that. I have never experienced that either. I have never been a top. That's why I think like, why did God create us if we were cursed? He shouldn't have, I did not choose this life. I did not ask to dream of men. Feelings of femininity, I have been like a girl since I was a child. In that case he should have created me as a man. Why should I contradict myself? Allah, blessed be His name, there is something like this in Islam, in our religion, our religion is a very beautiful religion. Our religion prioritizes equality. If I was supposed to go directly to hell, why did he create me? That's all. (P1)

To sum up, as O'Brien puts it, religion is a site of inclusion and exclusion because it provides legitimation within the families, communities, society. (O'Brien, 2014) While my respondents are being excluded from the public sphere through the institutional religion, they chose to live their faith in their private sphere. They subvert the institutional religion, interpret the rules stated in their own way and accept themselves still in a conservative way as "god's creation and therefore equally worthy of love and respect." (O'Brien, 2014:xix) In this way it could be asserted that they explore new forms of subjectivity. They find themselves new ways to be included, even though the institutional religion excludes them.

This takes us to the section of politics; in which the perception of poverty, inequalities, oppressions and the reaction of my respondents against them will be discussed.

#### **4.4.1 Politics**

Within the literature, working class subjects are either represented as apolitical (Skeggs, 2002), or potential revolutionaries (Skeggs, 2002), or as inherently homophobic and racist. (Moran, 2000) And despite the fact that they are all aware of the inequalities and injustices, as Bettie (2003) and Jamieson (1998) indicate, possibility of either political, social or emotional solidarity is challenged by the distinctions based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality.

They have transformed themselves but they do not believe in politics. None of my working class interviewees have faith in change. They find politics absurd. And there

are also those who are statist. One of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>359</sup>, for instance, asserted that he was not interested in politics but he was supporting the president Erdoğan for the sake of state. He doesn't support the party but the president Erdoğan. Another transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>360</sup> criticizes the state, but again supports directly the president Erdoğan. Most of the transsexuals in fact are conservative and they support Justice and Development Party. Some of them<sup>361</sup> were reactive against Kılıçdaroğlu<sup>362</sup> because of his affiliation with HDP<sup>363</sup>. Some of them were enemies of Feto<sup>364</sup>, even though they<sup>365</sup> used to be a big supporter in the past. As Bora argues, some of the oppressed go right instead of left because they lack the hope needed to believe that everything could be different, which comes with education. And they lack access to education unlike middle class subjects. (Bora, 2020)<sup>366</sup> One of my working class assimilated Kurd respondent<sup>367</sup> with a conservative habitus, for instance, stated that she had stopped dreaming as she knew they were not going to come true.

The working class respondents with a conservative habitus neither believe in politics nor the ideal of equality. As for them, it would be unacceptable and unfair if the intelligent and hardworking subjects earn the same with the lazy ones. As one of them puts it;

Everyone's occupation is different. Everyone's income is different. You can not expect everyone to be equal financially. Right? Some are doctors, professors, building contractors, and so you can not expect everyone to be equal, that would be communism. We can't have that. I mean this has nothing to do with gender or anything. I mean that is just

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<sup>359</sup> P11

<sup>360</sup> P39

<sup>361</sup> Such as P39

<sup>362</sup> Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu: Leader of Republican People's Party

<sup>363</sup> HDP: People's Democratic Party

<sup>364</sup> Feto: An Islamic movement led by Fethullah Gulen.

<sup>365</sup> Such as P1

<sup>366</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7d9pf2KUqYI&t=45s>

<sup>367</sup> P13

wrong. Some deserve to be a factory owner. Some might have built factories and he'll damn well drive the best car too. He'll live in the most luxurious house if he wants to. You can not say no to that person. You can not stop them from purchasing, doing, traveling, living. You see not everyone is equal my dear. Isn't that so? And it has nothing to do with gender nor sexuality, no. (P39)

And yet, again, there is a dilemma here, because she also told that gays were in a different status.

It is regarded that masses on the brink of absolute poverty can be easily manipulated politically. However, my working class interviewees were not only disinterested but also afraid of politics. They do not have faith in politics because they do not have power to be included in the political arena. In addition, they are afraid to get harmed. They believe that if they meddle in politics, they will get in trouble. Instead, they lean towards religion out of desperation. As a result of lacking the support of their families, education and cultural capital, they despise themselves and instead of politics, they hold on to religion and faith. While my respondents with a conservative habitus mentioned of how they prayed the God through their transition process; my respondents with critical habitus believed in politics and themselves. As an activist Kurdish transsexual woman<sup>368</sup> states: "Allahu akbar, how did you create me, though you did not create me very beautifully, you were a little evil, I came to myself with aesthetics afterwards." Most of my Kurdish respondents display critical habitus and recreate themselves, instead of leaning on faith though.

Savcı's respondents make similar statements; "Doga also had similar comments, and told me 'even their jokes are political', and that she could not understand them even though she tried to get to know them, even though she tried to understand." (Savcı, 2011:243) This indicates a cultural bifurcation. On one side stands the apolitical conservative people in contrast to elite activists, in their terms. My conservative respondents also mentioned of restrictiveness, imperceptibility and exaggeration of

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<sup>368</sup> A Kurdish transsexual woman working at the association of transgender sex-workers who I was unable to interview with but had a chance to make small talk.

activists. Once again, Savcı mentions of how the attendents of Kadınca Club perceive politics as limitations and restraints imposed on life, and that find those political ones going to LAMBDA or other feminist organisations irritating. (Savcı, 2011)

Within my work, there are also those who used to be political and then have become apolitical. Survival is further in the forefront, and thus they have become apolitical. One of my working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>369</sup> indicates that while he was political, his sexual identity and ideology were intermingled and they were in the forefront. This is common in all of them, of course, if economic hardship has not come to the fore. In fact, the lower the class is the less they become political. Only Alevi Kurds are both lower-class members and political. Even though he is also a Kurdish Alevi working class, this respondent's<sup>370</sup> survival purpose has moved him away from left-wing politics.

Likewise, my other assimilated Kurd working class respondent<sup>371</sup> refers to fight for survival, but in addition she also states that the political orientations of people are related with their families and geography. She mentions of her right wing ex-girlfriend as;

When I mentioned my ultra-nationalist ex-partner, it was a very standart thing you know. She grew up in Sivas. She was born and raised in Şarkışla. She has been exposed to family violence. She had to take shelter in the Grey Wolves. So now can you blame this kid? Well OK she has sympathy for those ideals, she admitted that too, but you are going through a certain period. And there is only one side that defends and protects you at that time. You will choose that side of course. It seems like there is not much choice left here. So I understand them for sure. (P13)

It is stated before that national identities come to the forefront together with religious ones. Because nationalism, like religion, allows individuals reflect their aggression

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<sup>369</sup> P43

<sup>370</sup> P43

<sup>371</sup> P13

stemming from exclusion and poverty, by appealing to their feelings of loneliness and despair. Because as asserted above, getting involved in politics requires sustainable relationships which both poor people and LGBTQ people lack. Political leanings of my respondents were also based on their relationships. Some of them<sup>372</sup> mentioned of their family members such as fathers; while some of them<sup>373</sup> mentioned of their socialisation with left milieus. One of my Kurdish transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>374</sup>, for instance, mentioned how her lover erased the tattoo of Ataturk after they became lovers. But those who lack any type of relationship mentioned of religion. And as discussed in the above section, religious and nationalist parties have used their loneliness and despair as a result of lacking both economic and social capital for their own sake. As Ayata puts it; they “have expanded their voter base among the urban poor in large Turkish cities who resent their economic and social exclusion.” (Güneş-Ayata, A. and S. Ayata, 2002:153)

One of my working class apolitical respondent<sup>375</sup>, for instance, defines herself as a very lonely person; lonely, poor, disadvantaged and unsuccessful. She mentions of both economic and emotional consequences of being unemployed. She doesn't trust people but she also doesn't have money to socialize. Even she makes joke about it and states that her fitness is not an outcome of doing sports but an outcome of starvation. She can't afford to move to another city as well if she finds a job there. In the meantime, she blames others for her unemployment. She complains about other people who are less qualified than herself finding employment through special treatment. Likewise, my other working class high school student respondent<sup>376</sup> is not interested in neither organizations nor politics. And she has not come out at school, either. She is very introvert and lonely as a result of lacking both cultural and economic capital.

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<sup>372</sup> Such as P45 and P36.

<sup>373</sup> Such as P6 and P20

<sup>374</sup> P26

<sup>375</sup> P37

<sup>376</sup> P45

The only place where she can talk freely and actively seems to be social media. That is to say, my lower class interviewees try to represent themselves on social media as a result of lacking the cultural capital, language and self-confidence. Besides, financial worries leave politics behind. My working class respondents were afraid of political activism because they were afraid of being criminalized, losing their jobs and social acceptance.

On the other hand, there are those political ones who raise consciousness as a result of multiple, intersecting minority identities. Researches on intersectional identities show that those with more than one minority-oppressed identity, either ethnic, racial, classed, gendered, or sexualized are more likely to develop political consciousness. (Harnois, 2015) This applies to my respondents as well. My respondents with the intersection of class and other minority identities raised political consciousness and displayed critical habitus. In other words, subjects who are conscious of more than one system of oppression, inequality are more likely to develop political consciousness. Besides, in spite of those assertions that class inequalities are replaced by status inequalities such as ‘post-colonial racism, sexual preferences, gender discrimination, environmental degradation, citizen participation, religious commitments, and ethnic self-determinations’ (Pakulski and Waters, 1996); in practice my respondents<sup>377</sup> mentioned of inequalities in terms of intersections of both. They mentioned of intersections of class and other factors; such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality.

Those<sup>378</sup> with political consciousness are hopeful. They see themselves as a member of the disadvantaged community of working class people. They both grew up in politicised families, environments and these have great impact on their class consciousness. They both claim their working-class identities as positive sites of self-identification; on the other hand, religion and ethnicity alienate them within their own class communities. One of them, for instance, as a Kurdish Alevi working class

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<sup>377</sup> Such as P21 and P22. In fact, every counselee of Hevi LGBTI+ Association.

<sup>378</sup> Such as P4, P10 and P21

transsexual<sup>379</sup>, keeps sharing her history of organization whatever you ask; even when asked about her family or education. Regarding of her student life, she mentions of how they were in the public eye of Black Sea region as a result of being coded as terrorists and that how even children were stopping playing marbles when they came across them.

On the other hand, she is aware of the fact that the most homophobic and transphobic class is her class; the working class. Therefore, she also turns against the conservatism and religiousness of her class. She indicates that she cannot integrate into the social class to which herself and her family belongs because of too much violence. She asserts that the class identity she possesses does not give her the opportunity to live her transsexual identity. As she puts it;

That is to say, class holds a position that both kills me and will keep me alive ultimately. (P21)

After all, those who have political consciousness do not give importance to profession nor money. Struggle is in the forefront. Their sexual identities are intermingled with politics and ideology. Such that, as Daser indicates, political activism is also the site their social and ethnic identities are formed and developed. (Daser, 2013) But those who are not political are in the pursuit of money and status. For example, when I asked about organization and ideology to one of my middle class respondent<sup>380</sup> with a conservative habitus, his initial response was money. After all, middle class perceives politics as a profession.

While middle class emphasizes individuality, working class brings united struggle and organization to the forefront. Of course, this is the case for those who are not conservatives. As for middle class subjects, social class does not have an impact on the personality of the individuals which is the most important thing. My middle class interviewees kept emphasizing the importance of personality and own potential of the individuals; and here traditional moral codes became involved. For one of my middle

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<sup>379</sup> P21

<sup>380</sup> P18



class respondent<sup>381</sup> everything is related to individuality, and individual freedom will bring social freedom. But on the other side, as for one of my working class respondent<sup>382</sup>, achievement of personal struggle is too little and it alienates one from struggle. Middle class subjects are of the opinion that they do not need to be organized since they already have friends. Some of them<sup>383</sup> even have no idea about organizations and political consciousness. The only things they know about LGBTQ are from documentaries and videos they have watched online.

In contrast with Daser's (2013) work stating that those who became politically active are influenced by their own individual character and rebelliousness, trying to be in charge of their own lives; my middle class apolitical respondents were individualistic, focused on their personalities. They do not believe in politics and instead keep mentioning of love.

The description of discrimination for one of my middle class respondents<sup>384</sup> was, for instance, those who reject effeminate or old partners at the mobile application Hornet<sup>385</sup>. Or another middle class respondent<sup>386</sup> thinks that discrimination has nothing to do with class, and that everyone is subject to discrimination. However, later on he told that in the past he participated in meetings of transsexual men, but, since he did not have so many problems unlike other transgender people there, other transsexuals with more severe problems were disturbed by his presence and therefore he stopped participating in these meetings by his own will. That is to say, although he does not name it, since he is a member of middle-class, since his family supports him, and so he has insurance, money, education and a profession, he is doing well. He does not

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<sup>381</sup> P23

<sup>382</sup> P30

<sup>383</sup> Such as P27

<sup>384</sup> P40

<sup>385</sup> An application they use to find partners.

<sup>386</sup> P25

have problems like those from lower-class. While working class subjects struggle to survive, his biggest problem is lacking childhood photos. Although he is not aware of it, this is the sign of class. And since there is no class consciousness in those middle class interviewees; they, in an ironic way, think of themselves as socialists. They define themselves so when asked about their political view. They<sup>387</sup> told that they were socialists even though they were not even organized within a LGBTQ association, let alone any other political organization; in addition to those other middle class respondents who mention of Kemalism as their political views. Else, my respondent who is a middle class business woman<sup>388</sup> expects either intelligence or successful career from her partners, even though she defines herself as left-winger.

My Kurdish Alevi working class interviewees<sup>389</sup> all positively identify with their working-class identity, while conservative Turkish Sunni ones dis-identify and see themselves as ‘queens’, rejecting their economically marginalized positions. As a matter of fact, as an Alevi working class bisexual, when moving in with her old middle class girlfriend, my respondent<sup>390</sup> chose to live in Mamak again because she feels like belonging there. She is proud of her class. Some of my working class respondents<sup>391</sup> even label themselves as undermost and they are proud of it. One of them<sup>392</sup> does not even identify herself with Kurdishness; describing herself as the underground;

I am the underground. The most rancid place to be. The academy is also a class, for instance. Capitalist, intellectual. Kurds, Alevis also form a social class. But I am not involved in any of them. There is no color, language, or gender in the underground. It comes from the streets. Even the street is above you. (P26)

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<sup>387</sup> Such as P25 and P27

<sup>388</sup> Such as P44, P21 and P4

<sup>389</sup> P30,

<sup>390</sup> P4

<sup>391</sup> Such as P24 and P26

<sup>392</sup> P26

Those Kurdish Alevi ones stand up for where they come from. Their identifications are bound up with where they came from and what that meant. (Taylor, 2014) One of them<sup>393</sup> defines herself as a Kurdish Alevi from Sivas. Another one<sup>394</sup> mentions of the squatter settlement she grew up in; how everyone was squatting in solidarity with each other after work. Since the whole neighborhood was Alevi, she learnt that her identity was in minority at school. Even her mother learnt about Sunnism after she migrated to Istanbul. All they knew before was “Tirt”.<sup>395</sup> She emphasizes the differences between village and city, and states that violence has never occurred in her family because her parents are peasants. In addition, she asserts that her ethnic and religious identities have sharpened due to the fear of assimilation after they migrated to the city.

My respondents who come from similar class and families, with similar education, and identify themselves as Sunnite-Turks lack political consciousness, while those who have Kurdish and Alevi identity are politically conscious. For instance, my Sunnite-Turk respondent<sup>396</sup> shows a typical apolitical, conservative reflex and is afraid of demonstrations; while my Alevi Kurd respondent<sup>397</sup> has always participated in special events/days such as 1 May Labour Day, Newroz, Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) trials, and Suruç. Nevertheless, they are both educated and both have police officer father and housewife mother. But my Alevi Kurdish respondent<sup>398</sup> answers even questions on leisure time activity in a political manner. She does not say that she goes to the movies or pubs. Instead, she talks about news portals she follows such as *Bianet, Etha, Evrensel, Sendika.org, Siyasi Haber etc.*

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<sup>393</sup> P10

<sup>394</sup> P4

<sup>395</sup> A word used for Sunni's

<sup>396</sup> P33

<sup>397</sup> P34

<sup>398</sup> P34, likewise P4

But my interviewees do not bear anger or rejection towards middle class standards. Instead, they all have the will to move up the social ladder and live a better life. As a matter of fact, let alone being bound up with Keçiören, my working class respondent<sup>399</sup> with a conservative habitus chooses to take pride in establishing his own Paris.

Only exception was my working class transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>400</sup> who was proud of her house “smelling like shit.” (P24) And this confirms Skeggs’ claim that; “Many women often experienced harsh realities in the areas where they lived, but this sense of reality, no matter how harsh, was often valued, measured against a more ‘middle-class’ ‘pretension’ and unreality.” (cited in Taylor, 2014:137) My respondent<sup>401</sup> states that even though she can easily move up the social ladder through sex work by picking her customers from Bilkent, instead she chooses the smell of shit by her own will.

Contrary to the approach of my working class interviewees; middle class respondents<sup>402</sup> mention of profession when asked about politics. They perceive activism as a profession and state that one needs to have full knowledge of legislations in order to become an activist.

For members of middle-class, politics is already like a football team. They just choose one team and even though they do not follow the matches; they identify themselves with the team and mention of it whenever asked. And that they have no belief in change. They possess new age eastern philosophy, the issues of cosmic energy like a religion. They do not accept presence of discrimination within the society, and call those claiming discrimination marginal. According to them, those who indicate the presence of discrimination are seeking and creating discrimination themselves. They also indicate that the discrimination have nothing to do with class conflict. One of my

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<sup>399</sup> P5

<sup>400</sup> P24

<sup>401</sup> P24

<sup>402</sup> Such as P12

middle class respondent's<sup>403</sup> activism is limited to one minute of darkness protests. She tells that she also participated in Gezi, and yet she found it meaningless since her life was at risk. Another member<sup>404</sup> of middle-class similarly indicates that if there is a permitted meeting he will participate in, or else he will not because life safety is his priority. And he states that his psychology cannot handle participating in such an activity. He is individual-oriented. One of them<sup>405</sup> even told me about entropy when I asked him about activism. Similarly, my another middle class lesbian respondent<sup>406</sup> mentioned of evolution when asked about queer theory and activism; referring to the fact that religious people are unable to believe in evolution.

Some of my middle class subjects<sup>407</sup> introduced themselves as cosmic energy therapists; as healers. One of them<sup>408</sup> stated that she does not support any decayed political organisation except for those who work with bioenergy. They embrace new age philosophy as a belief. They indicate that they have a consciousness other than given reality and they feel themselves responsible of healing other people. Even one of them<sup>409</sup> told that someone's statement of being oppressed intersectionally has something to do with their sensuality; with their effort to raise to higher dimensions. He even linked this to spirituality.

Feminism and opposition towards male domination is common among my political interviewees. Could this be considered as a collective performance as Kevin Floyd (2009) asserts? Especially trans people lean towards feminism, even those Kurdish and

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<sup>403</sup> P12

<sup>404</sup> P18

<sup>405</sup> P38

<sup>406</sup> P42

<sup>407</sup> Such as P12 and P14

<sup>408</sup> P12

<sup>409</sup> P18

political ones who avoid organising within political parties. A transsexual activist, for instance, highlights feminist approach of HDP;

Chp is a very male-dominated party... While distributing leaflets in the bazaar, those women who consider us as the party of Kurds in a prejudiced way are surprised when we give them our brochures and tell them that we have a 50 percent quota for women. I don't see any difference between CHP, MHP and AKP in terms of their relationship with neoliberalism. (Güneş, 2016:98)

There are times they come into conflict with feminism as well, but only with trans-exclusionary radical feminism. Trans-exclusionary radical feminists insist that transsexual woman once had the male privilege. On the other hand, it is discussed above how unhappy childhood most of them experience. In addition, trans-exclusionary radical feminists do not consider sex work as a form of labour. But as Selin Berghan<sup>410</sup> states, sex work is actually a legal concept that aims to provide transsexual sex workers insurance, right to health and right to retirement.

Apart from feminism, another significant factor that had impact on the development of critical habitus is ethno-religious identities of my respondents. This takes us to the next section.

#### **4.5 Queer subjectivity and ethnicity**

As Taylor states, class hierarchies within race and racial hierarchies within class are a way of separating yourself from the other. (Taylor, 2014) Since the civil rights movement; and the intersection of black politics with feminism, class and race has been bound to each other. (Pastrana, 2004) Within the literature, Wilson's (1987) class based analysis of race caused equating poverty with Blackness (Belkir, 2001), and equating the concept of underclass with non-white. (Pastrana, 2004) However, this is not just an economic position but a system of oppression including social and cultural capital as well. In the case of Turkey, Kurds are forced to low skilled jobs, which

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<sup>410</sup> Transfeminist activist and the writer of the book 'Lubunya: Transgender Identity and Body'.

reveals the ethnic division of labor. In the case of USA, Latinos are the second group to be unemployed and live in poverty because of their ethnic identities; as a result they struggle against inequalities together with Blacks. (Pastrana, 2004) In Turkey, likewise, Kurdish movement struggle together with women. Kurdish women's movement played a pioneering role in the process of Kurdish LGBTQ's organisation; and acts in solidarity with them. As Evren Savcı remarks;

Sexual assault and rape have been reported to be major tools employed by the police against women under detention, and studies show that most women who had reported sexual assault or rape under detainment were detained for "political" reasons and most of them were Kurdish. (Savcı, 2011:68).

And that

According to the report of The Legal Aid Project for Sexual Assault and Rape under Detainment; prepared in december 2001, among 150 cases 114 of the women were Kurds; their ages ranged from 10 to 67, and 135 of them had been detained because of political reasons. (Savcı, 2011:68)

After all, the political, ideological and ethno-religious identities of queer subjectivities effect their experiences. This chapter will explore how the ways in which individuals identify themselves effect their queer experiences.

Just as Engels define the working class as; "a physically degenerate race, robbed of all humanity, degraded, reduced morally and intellectually to bestiality" (cited in Skeggs, 2002:5); within the neoliberal era most of the Kurdish people are condemned to work in informal, insecure, flexible jobs. Most of the Kurdish people are either young unemployed, urban poor, or seasonal workers. Because labor market is divided by both gender, sexuality, class, race and ethnicity; creating opportunities for some while obstacles for others. (Vries, 2015) In his work based on a Kurdish transsexual activist, Tsibiridou indicates how the ethnic, sexual, gender and class identities intersect. As Tsibiridou puts it;

Selling mussels in the street is a low-esteem, very low-income job; the sellers are usually young Kurdish boys or men. It was not by accident that Esmeray ended up doing this job. As ideologically like-minded friends hesitated to hire her, she started to sell mussels following the advice of an ordinary woman, her landlady. The latter replied to Esmeray's objection that that would be a bizarre job for a transsexual

woman saying that it was no problem, that Esmeray ‘was strong enough as man and could deal with attacks and harassment. (Tsibiridou, 2014:36)

Besides, differences of religion and ethnicity do divide the members of the same social class; just like sexuality does. In the next section ethnic and religious identities will be discussed in detail.

#### **4.5.1 Prioritizing identity politics; Ethnic and religious identities:**

Alevi are a religious minority. They are a heterogeneous community with varied ethnic, cultural, political, regional and linguistic backgrounds. Both Alevi and Kurds have been subjected to marginalization, discrimination, coercion and assimilation policies since the Ottoman period till now. Until the 1970s, they were living in rural areas and hiding their identity, practicing their rituals secretly. Since 1990s, they have been expressing their identity and demanding recognition. Especially Kurdish Alevi have been subjected to discrimination and exclusion due to their religious practices and ethnic background during the rule of the Ottoman Empire and later by Turkey. (Keles, 2014)

In fact, since the establishment of the Republic religious-ethnic minorities have been considered as security threats. As a result, as Turan indicates, the republic developed a policy based on Turkifying them, reducing their role in the national economy, expropriating the properties and institutions of their communities in order to encourage them to leave the country. (Turan, 2015) Apart from those who left the country, the remaining are tried to be integrated and assimilated through education and socialization, by Islamizing them and teaching them Turkish. (Turan, 2015)

In the Ottoman period, Alevi were living with extreme secrecy, taking to the hills. Being one of the biggest enemies among other minorities, Alevi were not even included into devshirme system.<sup>411</sup> In fact, they were “neither Muslims nor non-

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<sup>411</sup> Ottoman method of employing slaves as soldiers



Muslims, but a group of people who were either persecuted or assimilated into Sunnism.” (Şen, 2018:130) They supported the declaration of the Republic with the expectation of becoming equal to Sunni citizens (Şen, 2018) and after the transition to Republican system they started to move to cities as secular policies rescue them from the oppression of Sunni’s.

Unlike Sunnism, Alevism is a folk religion, without a written text and institution. Their religious identities are formed within the closed community. After migrating to cities, in 1960s, the only instrument to form their identity was politics. In other words, until 1950, they were a rural population living in villages. After migrating to cities as a result of economic and political reasons, they got involved in the process of urban integration. Their social and religious organisation transformed. Even though the establishment of secular Turkish Republic was in support of them, the dominance of Sunni conservative values have continued.

At first they started to support left-wing politics passively but in 1970s they started to participate in politics actively and became a target of extreme Right. (Şen, 2018) Additionally, after 1980 military coup, the adoption of Turkish-Islamic synthesis, making religion lessons based on Sunni Hanafi interpretation compulsory, increasing Quran courses and Imam Hatip schools, construction of mosques in Alevi villages and appointment of Sunni imams to them were perceived by the majority of Alevis as the increasing Sunnization of the state and attempts to assimilate Alevism. (Turan, 2015; Şen, 2018) Because as İlder Turan asserts; along with communism, and Kurdish separatism, religious reactions were also perceived as security threats to the Republic. (Turan, 2015:115)

Eventually, as a result of this rapid rise of political Islam, and massacres such as Malatya, Sivas, Maraş, Çorum and Gazi district, Alevis started to search for new ways to struggle against the exclusion of their identity. They started to organise more strongly in order to be recognised as a religious sect, but not a cultural group. (Şen, 2018)

On the other hand, it is not based on class conflict. Ecevit<sup>412</sup>, for instance, named it folk equality. Because it has emerged within the city against the oppression of Sunni Islam; it is not based on class conflict but an issue of identity. Even a businessman could support left politics in this context. In fact, the struggle has to be intersectional against the intersecting systems of domination.

Roots of Kurdish conflict also goes back to Ottoman Empire's attempt to organise the central government and reorganise its relations with local power groups. And the central theme of the Republic of Turkey was creation of a homogeneous Turkish identity in terms of ethnicity, religion and language which was also to the detriment of Kurds. As İlder Turan (2015) asserts, Kurdish identity and their linguistic rights have been denied. Even the process of Turkification undertaken by the state involved the nationalization, or seizing of the land. (Turan, 2015) On the other hand, due to the unequal development and developmental differences between regions, a significant Kurdish population migrated to the cities in the west. These developments brought with them the class, cultural and political differentiation of the Kurds. (Savcı, 2011) Pressure against them increased after 1980 military coup. Because the military "treated the Kurdish problem as one of security, and it also led the governments to see the PKK insurgency as exclusively a security problem..." (Turan, 2015:139) Hence, the evacuation of villiages and the insecurity of those who felt stuck between the pressures of the PKK and military forces caused the second wave of migration from the countryside to urban areas. (Çelik, 2005) They had to make a decision between assimilation and Kurdish nationalism as a result of the problems they encountered in the city due to their Kurdish identity. (Çelik, 2005) In other words, their Kurdish identity was constructed as a result of the difficulties they have experienced in the cities they migrated to. As Çelik puts it;

This sense of deprivation, disempowerment, and material loss, in many cases, reinforced their ethnic consciousness since many believed that it was solely because of their ethnic backgrounds that they had to live through such traumas. As a result, many found refuge and safety nets in their ethnic communities and identities. (Çelik, 2005:149)

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<sup>412</sup> Turkish politician who served four times as prime minister in the past.

The forced migration caused Kurdish-Turkish, and Sunni-Alevi conflicts. As Ayata puts it, “in the past, the two communities existed more or less in isolation from one another in their separate villages. Rural to urban migration has brought them together in close neighborhoods in the cities.” (Güneş-Ayata, A. and S. Ayata, 2002:151) The local communities have reacted to immigrants. And nationalist parties has been taking advantage of this conflict. Their base voters have been anti-communist and anti-Alevi. They receive most of their votes from the cities where Alevi’s and Sunni’s are living together; such as Yozgat, Sivas, Çankırı, Çorum, Kayseri, Tokat and Amasya. As a result of migration conflict, Alevi’s and Sunni’s vote for different parties. After a while, MHP began to make peace with Alevism, considering them as a secular community; but this time it marginalised Kurds.

Kurdish Alevi movement is based on two different movements; namely Kurdishness and Alevism. As Keles asserts,

The feeling of belonging to both these identities varies from individual to individual but also from region to region. Some are strongly affiliated with Kurdish identity and disinterested in Alevi identity politics, while others prefer to be more involved in Alevi identity politics. (Keles, 2014:4)

Some have been involved in both movements. Some criticize Alevi organizations for not practicing the rituals in Kurdish language. Some support more liberal version of Alevism, while some get involved in left- wing politics, even within one family.

Though, just as my assimilated respondents<sup>413</sup>, many dissimulate their identities to avoid discrimination as the majority of the society is nationalist conservative.

Alevism is a very complex faith and cannot be limited to a particular ethnicity, region nor culture. There are Alevi’s that speak Kurmanji, Zaza, Arabic and Turkish. They are known for their involvement in left-wing politics but their leftism is based upon their ethnic identity. There are also Alevi business men who define themselves as leftist.

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<sup>413</sup> Such as P13 and P5

On the other hand, some discuss Alevism as a sect of Islam, believe that they are Turkish. But most of them are Kurdish and they do not define themselves as Muslim. Alevism is a different religion for them. Trying to reduce it to shamanism is problematic because most of them are Kurdish. As Keles puts it, “Despite being tax payers, Alevi have been denied the right to worship therefore they have become the “forgotten people”, a term usually used to describe Kurds in Syria.” (Keles, 2014:11)

In the past, Alevi and Kurds hid their identity and tried to express it through political participation in left-wing politics. They have been subjected to massacres in Maraş, Çorum, Sivas, Malatya. They were named as communists and anarchist, and have been oppressed, discriminated, marginalized. And that as Keles states, these state orchestrated violence caused a collective trauma. (Keles, 2014)

Some of the existing works on Kurdish Alevism are politicized and attempt to show the origin of Alevism through a Kurdish ethnicity in order to produce a juxtaposition to a Turkish-centric version of Alevism. (Gezik cited in Keles, 2014) Majority of the Kurdish Alevi are from Dersim region. Kurdish Alevi had to immigrate to larger cities for political reasons. They live together in ghettos. Despite differentiation in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture, they have a strong sense of belonging, loyalty and solidarity as Keles asserts. (Keles, 2014)

One of my Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>414</sup> explains how there was always a state of opposition in the house because of Alevism, and that all family members were playing ‘*baglama*’, and listening musicians such as Enver Çelik<sup>415</sup> and Emekçi<sup>416</sup>;

I am from Dersim, but I was born and raised in Istanbul. But of course I did not grow up with an urban culture because with the start of the migration from village to the cities before the 80s, my parents came here to work in leather factories. That’s where they organized. My uncles are

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<sup>414</sup> P21

<sup>415</sup> Folk singer from Dersim

<sup>416</sup> Socialist folk singer

from the tradition of Kırılımlı. And my father always feels closer to them. They even named me. And the neighborhood we live in was a neighborhood with Kurdish and Alevi residents. See for instance they would come from their work. Everyone bought parcels of land side by side, as it was a shanty town. They would get off from the factory at 7 o'clock. They would eat till 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock or so. At 9 o'clock, for instance, all the men of the neighborhood would come together and build each others' shacks. In order not to pay for the construction, in order to reduce the costs. Just like that, I grew up in a neighborhood where people were acting collectively in solidarity. (P21)

Migration is a significant factor in discussing social class. Such that, one respondent of Daser expresses class by referring to migration instead of wealth. (Daser, 2013) Because especially in the case of forced migration, migrants are left with no connections, neither material nor social. As a result of lacking education, they experience difficulty in finding jobs. In addition, as a result of lacking cultural and linguistic capital they also experience difficulty in building relationships with people. They are excluded because of the cultural differences. As a result, they end up in urban poverty, compelled to live in ghettos. (Çelik, 2005) Even the settled families tend to isolate themselves from them due to the political events in the East. (Erder, 1996) The role of HEVİ LGBTI Association<sup>417</sup> is significant in this context. Though, as Erder states, their children develop political consciousness different from their peers as a result of the inequalities and injustice they are subjected to. (Erder, 1996) This applied to my respondents as well; as one of my Kurdish Alevi respondent stated that one day everyone will start singing folk songs, revolting against inequalities, just as they have been singing from their childhood.

Wacquant mentions of residential segregation (1993) that makes negative judgements of the residents, inhibiting their integration into labor markets and stigmatising them in the eyes of the police, court, local authorities and civil servants. They are regarded as the sources of urban pathology due to ethnic identities and crime rate. Within my study, my respondents were also stigmatised as a result of residing in Sincan<sup>418</sup>;

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<sup>417</sup> Association working on problems of Kurdish LGBTI people living in Turkey

<sup>418</sup> P45

Mamak<sup>419</sup> and Şirinevler<sup>420</sup>. As Bourdieu asserts; the stigmatized regions symbolically lower the status of their inhabitants in the urban hierarchy, while the residents of the region symbolically lower the status of the region by strengthening this stigma. (Bourdieu, 1999)

After the forced migration, displaced Kurds had to settle in ghettos and were segregated ethnically. As it is also asserted in the oral history project of Siyah Pembe Üçgen Association;

Women, men, homosexuals, transvestites and lesbians we were always working together. There was a small area between Taksim and Tarlabaşı. We were all working at the buildings. As a matter of fact Tarlabaşı accepted us at first. Gypsies and Kurds, the people of Southern Anatolia were living there. And the Armenians. Armenians or Jews, the population was mixed. That region accepted us. Nowhere else would accept us. And we were stuck in that small place. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2012)

The rituals of Kurdish Alevi are totally different from those of Muslims. They place emphasis on gender equality and consume alcohol, for instance. Also there is a belief in the transmigration of the soul after death in different forms. They wish for the cycle of the soul to be everlasting. (Van Bruinessen, 1997). Kurdishness is more inclusive, does not differentiate based on language, gender nor faith but Alevism is also very heterogeneous. Some are assimilated; while some involve in Alevi Kurdish political and voluntary activities.

Most of my interviewees, though, take Alevism as a love based belief and philosophy instead of a religion. One of my working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>421</sup>, for instance, questions God but never the doctrines of Alevism.

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<sup>419</sup> P4

<sup>420</sup> P22

<sup>421</sup> P10

In fact, as for Keles, internalization of the ideological discourse of the Turkish state and ending up assimilated is also a form of habitus. (Keles, 2014) Some individuals dissimulate their minority identity; some put their ethnic identity forward while some put their religion. After all, habitus is transferable from society to individuals. One of transsexual respondent<sup>422</sup> coming from both a working class and Kurdish family, states that her family prepared her for future discrimination resulting from her Kurdish identity. Her family told her that she would learn folk songs and that others would mistreat her by calling her filthy Kurd. She was told by her parents that she would always be subjected to violence and mistreatment, and would be marginalized as a result of not speaking Turkish. And yet, she has been surprisingly exposed to transphobia even in revolutionary movements; in the socialist movement, and Kurdish movement as well.

To sum up, Kurdish Alevis differentiate within themselves. Some of them place their Kurdish identity above their Alevi identity and follow Pir Sultan Abdal, in contrast to those who follow the path of Haji Bektash Veli. (Keles, 2014) Even the members of the same family differentiate based on the place of worship they choose. Some choose to attend ceremonies at Cemevis<sup>423</sup> while some get involved in Kurdish institutions. Combination of Kurdishness and Alevism is important because compared to interviewees who are Kurd and yet Shafii, Alevi Kurds are more activist.

And for most of my interviewees, oppression of woman is of primary importance. Most of them define themselves as feminist, no matter what their gender is. Even those non-political ones mentioned about it. Because those who come from lower-class especially belong to crowded families with male predominance. And as for these families; destroying manhood is unacceptable. As a transsexual activist puts it from an intersectional perspective;

Feminism is a theory for me. I am a Kurdish woman from a feminist point of view, I am a transsexual woman from a female point of view. I

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<sup>422</sup> P26

<sup>423</sup> Alevi houses of worship

am a Kurdish woman, for example when I am in the Kurdish Movement, I still believe in feminist theory and define feminism as producing policies from a female point of view. Feminism is not an identity for me, my transgender identity outweighs it because it is more visible. So is my Kurdish identity, but if you ask for a definition for transsexual, how would I define myself, I am a transgender woman. For me that is it, like I said feminism is a theory for me, indeed not an ideology, not like the ideology of socialism. Because socialism also needs a feminist perspective sometimes, or likewise homosexual organizations, that's what feminism is for me. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen, 2013)

But except for her, regarding the political ones, those who transformed themselves from queer in itself to queer for itself, they may or may not be Kurdish, Kurdish problem comes to the forefront. In other words, intersectionality is at stake. For most of my respondents, Kurdish issue is a threshold in terms of democratization and resolution of other problems. For most of my queer respondents, freedom of Turkish LGBTQs pass through this threshold. Such that, as for one of my respondent<sup>424</sup>, for instance, it takes precedence over the sexual identity;

Transphobia among the Kurds is no more prevalent than the transphobia of the people in Kütahya. It seems to me that perceiving transphobia or homophobia as something intrinsic to Kurds or painting Kurds as more transphobic or homophobic is latent racism. But the politics of the left is not free from homophobia or transphobia, what I intend to say is that what I care about is the political potential. And I believe there is that potential in certain dynamics of the Kurdish movement such as the Kurdish women's movement. This potential is very open to transformation. That's why I prefer to fight against the homophobia there instead of separating myself from it. (P6)

Instead of leaving the potential in Kurdish movement, he prefers to fight against homophobia in this movement. However, the reason behind this is the fact that he is a gay man. Transsexual women experience and struggle with transphobia and homophobia within the Kurdish movement in a different way though. My Kurdish transsexual woman respondent<sup>425</sup> coming from a political family have been subjected to discrimination within the Kurdish movement as well. And she asserts that people try to kill her not because they see a Kurdish girl but a transsexual woman when they

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<sup>424</sup> P6

<sup>425</sup> P26



look at her face. As a result, her sexual identity becomes prominent. Anyhow, she adds the fact that she had to leave her education because of her Kurdish identity. Her teacher intimidated that she will always fail her class as a result of being Kurdish. But appearance has the strongest effect. And so, it could be once again asserted that, from the perspective of her, queer theory is just a utopia as there is a hierarchical inequality within the LGBTQ community as well. This was the case for most of my Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondents.<sup>426</sup> My non-Kurdish respondent's<sup>427</sup> support for Kurdish movement is different from the support of my Kurdish respondents as they experience it first hand. Supporting and constructing the political identity without experiencing it is rather different from experiencing and then constructing political identity over it.

For some of the interviewees<sup>428</sup>, their Kurdish or Alevi identity are just family matters. So they do not repeat the identification and maintain the dispositions. But as for most of my Kurdish Alevi respondents<sup>429</sup> this is not an issue to be ignored. Their struggle includes both Alevism and Kurdishness because they are already interrelated.

Such as my working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>430</sup> who is struggling for her both Kurdish Alevi identities, and sexual identity. She is aware of the fact that she belongs to working class. She states that she has the characteristics of her class; such that she tries to survive with minimum living standards and that she has to work in order to survive.

I graduated from open high school. I worked as a hairdresser during that time. Then I said to myself, enough working; I have to go to university. I finished the open high school and got into university. I worked while studying at the university, as a waitress you see, or making accessories

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<sup>426</sup> Such as P21

<sup>427</sup> P6

<sup>428</sup> Such as P13 and P5

<sup>429</sup> Such as P4, P10, P21 and P26

<sup>430</sup> P10

to sell. After that, I graduated and started working as an editor. I am still working as an editor. (P10)

Later on, she went back to working as a nail artist. For her, class is a significant factor but not a definite part of her identity though. Because she is a member of working class; and yet since she is educated she cannot possess her class because unlike Syrians or waste paper collecting workers, she has a social life in a way; as she can go to the movies, and go to a pub to drink alcohol. Most of the educated interviewees have emphasized culture anyway when asked about class. Uneducated group's response to the question of social class was either gender or ethnic identity or religion.

My working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>431</sup> discussed above does attach importance to Kurdish nationalist movement more than class struggle. But it doesn't change the fact that she also defines herself as socialist. As she explains; one of her identity overweighs and determines her political tendency; which is her Kurdish identity. Because if Kurdish struggle is won and if the problem of racism is resolved, class struggle will begin. Since she is oppressed more because of Kurdish identity, she puts national struggle in front of class struggle; she sees it of first priority. Therefore, she even leans towards support America provides for Kurds because they have been struggling for recognition. Similarly, another Kurdish working class respondent<sup>432</sup> thinks that freedom will be gained with the resolution of national problem at first before the class conflict. He defines himself as a socialist patriot. Even though Marxism covers his ethnic and class identities, gender identity is not included.

In fact, this is a good example of how oppression works intersectionally. Neither any race and language nor religion matters for my working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>433</sup> discussed above. In theory she is a critical queer subject. But in practice; she adopts her Kurdish identity as her family were killed because of being Kurdish.

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<sup>431</sup> P10

<sup>432</sup> P30

<sup>433</sup> P10

On the other hand, she accepts the fact that economy is determinative in the last instance. That is to say, the main reason why she cannot live her sexual identity freely is the social class she belongs to. Her future is always uncertain. She is worried if it is always going to be like this; if she will ever have a child or will she get married. And what lies behind this is also her ethnic identity. The reason why she cannot be appointed as civil servant is her Kurdish identity. Her social class and ethnic identity are all intertwined.

In fact, one's wound determines their trajectory. One of my working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>434</sup>, for instance, tells about her mother who had to go for house cleaning or babysitting for a living;

Regarding the oppression we experience, I believe that it grows proportionately to our identities. I am talking about what is visible though. We can only know the visible ones. I have a Kurdish mother and Turkish father, for instance. But the maternal side of the family is assimilated, they migrated and did not even teach their children to speak Kurdish. My mother knew it as a child. But she did not even teach us, for example, we do not know Kurdish culture or anything. And they married Turks. In fact, they do not have a perception of race nor ethnicity at all. I mean they are not in a position to approve the oppression against Kurds but they won't tell they are Kurdish unless you ask. But they will tell that they are Alevi. Their Alevi identity is very seminal. The fact that they are women, or Kurds, or poor, or whatever, these are secondary. Alevism comes first. Because they have experienced the trauma of Alevism. As a result they embraced their Alevi identity. They were massacred due to their Alevi identity. They were deterritorialized. Their children couldn't land a job. They were fired from their jobs. And so on. They had to drop out of school you see. They had to hold their tongue in order to survive and make a living. But as I said before I had experienced oppression from my peers as a result of being Alevi. My cousin of the same parentage is also Alevi but he did not experience any oppression due to his Alevi identity. I mean according to him he didn't experience anything in that regard. (P4)

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<sup>434</sup> P4

As has been noted throughout the foregoing discussion, my respondents developed two types of habitus, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

## CHAPTER 5

### TWO TYPES OF HABITUS

#### 5.1 Critical Habitus

Since habitus explains why agents from same social groups (i.e., social class, gender, and race) show same pattern of social behavior and attitude, which leads to same social outcomes, it explains the mechanism of stable reproduction of social structure. After all, gender and race are also structuring together with social class. Habitus is not solely tied to social class. As it is a method for analyzing the domination of some groups over others (Reay, 2004), it can be formed and influenced by not only social class but also other factors such as gender and race (McClelland, 1990).

As for my study, the intersection of Kurdishness and Alevism raise political consciousness and develop critical habitus. In fact, Kurds are considered at the conservative traditional side of the cultural bifurcation of Turkey. (Turan, 2015) But in my study, ethno-religious identities had a significant impact on the development of critical habitus. In addition, being educated, increasing cultural capital, entering the language as a result of cultural capital, transforming cultural capital into social capital, and being organized are the other elements that develop critical habitus. Daser mentions some other factors that affect the development of political consciousness; such as “family background of leftist sympathies, ethnic and religious minority status, local cultural practices, rural-to-urban migration, and emotional engagement with inequality, injustice, religion and rejection of God.” (Daser, 2013:86) In fact, these correspond to the findings of this study as well.

Even though Kurdish people are assumed to belong to conservatist wing of the cultural bifurcation (Turan, 2015); as a result of being marginalized by Kemalist nationalism,

they oppose state and join leftist movements. (Daser, 2013) As one of Daser's respondent states;

Being Kurdish and Alevi means you're both political and a minority. You have no relationship with the state, there are no relatives in the police or military. Automatically you're in opposition by the nature of who you are. My family was left-leaning but not too much. My mother and father are illiterate. (Daser, 2013:74)

Here Daser emphasizes how lacking relationship with state and having illiterate families are the signs of being marginalised lacking access to state and its organs such as school as its educational institutions. Likewise, as another interviewee of Daser indicates; there are K's that have been considered dangerous since the beginning of the Republic: "Kürtler, Kızılbashlar, Komünistler." <sup>435</sup> (Daser, 2013:74) As a result, it could be asserted that being born into a Kurdish Alevi family, and as a result being exposed to marginalisation and exclusion and growing up with the feeling of insecurity makes one political.

As for my middle class transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>436</sup>, her sexual identity is far more important than her social class. She chooses to be employed in the sex industry. The most important thing for her is to become a woman. She comes from a middle class family and speaks two languages. She is well educated. And for her prostitution is a part of the service industry. She is very self-confident as a result of her cultural capital. In fact, one member of her family is also Kurdish, but she doesn't identify herself with her Kurdish identity. On the other side, my another respondent<sup>437</sup> coming from a Kurdish Alevi but working class family raised consciousness. And to the contradistinction to my working class respondents<sup>438</sup>, my middle class respondent<sup>439</sup> is not interested in upper class partners. Instead, the most important thing she looks for in a partner is sexual satisfaction. In fact, most of my middle class respondents were

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<sup>435</sup> Kurds, Kızılbashes, Communists.

<sup>436</sup> P7

<sup>437</sup> P4

<sup>438</sup> Such as P4 and P5

<sup>439</sup> P7

looking for sexual satisfaction in a relationship; while working classes were looking for upper class partners to be supported by.

In addition to Alevism and Kurdishness, another element that develops critical habitus is the ability of transforming cultural capital into social capital and the role of education is significant here. As Tyler puts it:

Movements and mobilities are structured through class ... class still affects access into positions, travelling through space. Having the right type of capitals produces opportunities across social spheres. And when those capitals are legitimized, they turn into symbolic capital. (Taylor, 2014:2)

While one of my middle class respondent<sup>440</sup> was going to the NGO in order to socialize and have fun, one of the volunteer who is from working class was there in order to dress like woman and put make up on. He was asking help from people to put on nail varnish. He was unaware of who he was, telling people that he loves the smell of the nail vanish. And after sitting at the kitchen in woman clothes, he removes the makeup, changes his clothes and leaves the office. As Taylor puts it; “if you are not offered the options, how can you make the choices, how can you realize what you could be?” (Taylor, 2014:83)

That is to say, being Kurdish and Alevi is not enough to develop critical habitus; as there are those assimilated and conservative ones. Likewise Daser’s study, some of them deny their Kurdish background and pretend to be Sunni in order to reproduce the dominant structures; while others become politically conscious of their minority status and challenge, subvert or oppose the dominant structures. Both these incompatible practices are influenced by “the milieu in which they grew up.” (Daser, 2013:76) This study names critical habitus in relation to those counter-hegemonic practices Daser discuss. (Daser, 2013)

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<sup>440</sup> P7

For instance, a transsexual activist<sup>441</sup> who was born in a village of Kars also comes from a conservative but political family. She is aware of her Kurdish identity. As a result, she overcomes her conservative perception and chooses to be politicized. She was raised in a feudal family where the concept of honor was so prevalent, although she became an atheist at the age of thirteen-fourteen without having been affected from religion, she could not get rid of cultural concepts like honor. She explains how she saw herself as a prostitute and could not go home for a while and she made up professions like hairdressing or tailoring when asked as a result of looking at herself from a moral perspective. Because, as Skeggs and Lawler states, “morality is a constituent of the performing middle-class self. It is seen historically as an antithesis to working-classness.” (Lawler 2005; Skeggs 2002 cited in Fathi, 2017:122) In fact, two types of women are identified as unrespectable; the prostitute and the fallen women coming from respectable classes, yet was victimized. (Nead, 1988) Yet now the transsexual activist also sees herself as a service industry worker, like a waitress, in the way my middle class educated sex worker respondent<sup>442</sup> does. Though my middle class respondent’s critical subjectivity result from her education; while the critical subjectivity of the transsexual activist results from her Kurdish identity. In fact, the transformation of her agency is based on feminism as well. When she was living in a village of Kars, she was trying to replicate the practices of women such as crocheting with a head scarf of her mom’s. She was even willing to be hit by her brothers like a ‘real’ girl hit by men. But later on, after she raises political consciousness, she starts challenging the norms, selling mussels at the street and gets angry at those asking isn’t she afraid to get in trouble as a woman working at nights at the street.

According to Daser’s study, those born into politically left environments and those socialized within such environments seem to become political activists and oppose state structures and nationalist discourse. (Daser, 2013) For instance, while some of

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<sup>441</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJslSMWLwzE>

<sup>442</sup> p7



my high school graduate respondents<sup>443</sup> who were organized in a leftist movement were knowledgeable, some of my apolitical respondents<sup>444</sup> who received higher education were lacking consciousness. On the other hand, most of my respondents mentioned of being exposed to homophobic behaviors within the politically left environments as well, such as the socialist parties / organizations and Kurdish movement. In the next section, their relations with the left-wing milieus will be discussed in detail.

### **5.1.1 Relations with the Left:**

Both socialist associations and Kurdish movement are not safe from homophobia and transphobia. One of my respondent<sup>445</sup> mentions of what types of reactions their socialist LGBTQ association got both from identity politics and class politics. By designing a banner expressing “Equal citizenship in socialism”, they participated in the pride march with a flag having a long red strap. Organization committee warned them to put down the banner since it is ideological. However, according to my respondent<sup>446</sup>, the pride march is also ideological. Even though pride march must supposedly be an anti-hierarchical and lateral organization, they were taken at the back of cortege.

He indicates that since TKP<sup>447</sup> traces back to Soviet tradition, it is homophobic and it needs to be transformed;

For instance, two people from TKP are throwing around the word faggot. If the transformative effect of telling them ‘oh comrades, communists do not talk in this way, shame on you’ is one unit, the transformative effect of telling them ‘Guys, I am a homosexual and I

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<sup>443</sup> Such as P6

<sup>444</sup> Such as P22 and P8

<sup>445</sup> P3

<sup>446</sup> P3

<sup>447</sup> TKP: Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey)

feel disturbed' is ten units. Self-censorship is the first step of transformation. Being able to hold your tongue. (P3)

Most of my activist respondents<sup>448</sup> stated that the inadequate politics of left wing have brought them to queer politics. They criticized the socialist movement for not being inclusive and not having a word for other problems apart from the class inequality. They find it unacceptable to leave other issues to the aftermath of the revolution. One of my respondent<sup>449</sup> questioned how she can carry out a common struggle with people who does not recognize her other identities, such as her gender identity and sexual identity. She actually encountered LGBTQ associations for the first time on 1 May. After becoming aware of the presence of LGBTQ organizations, her LGBTQ identity has begun to come into prominence, and her politicization in this field has begun.

Most of the interviewees get annoyed of the homophobia of the socialist movement. Most of my Kurdish Alevi and left winger interviewees<sup>450</sup> complained about it. Homophobia and transphobia within left movement is at an unbearable level, and situation of women's movement is similar. Some of my respondents are even scared of coming out to their families who have left-wing views. As a result, their sexual identity gets ahead of class struggle. It affects their working life as well. One of my respondent<sup>451</sup>, for instance, decided to work where she can come out. In other words, her sexual identity took precedence of her social class. In the past, she worked in Altındağ municipality ruled by Justice and Development Party. Though she worked in Yenimahalle as well; but she quitted her jobs since all local administrations were the same. She worked in an animal shelter, and at a supermarket as well but Gezi period was a turning point for her and she started working at Kaos GL in order to do politics more easily and actively.

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<sup>448</sup> Such as P17 and P4

<sup>449</sup> P4

<sup>450</sup> Such as P26, P21, P4, P10

<sup>451</sup> P4

In a similar manner, another working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>452</sup> mentioned of the homophobia of her leftist foresighted family. Even though her family is very progressive and left-winger although their education level is low, they are still homophobic. Or one of my transsexual respondent<sup>453</sup> explained how she has been exposed to violence in the left-wing movement. She has confronted another form of violence in Kaypakkaya tradition.<sup>454</sup> She describes both Kurdish movement and socialist movement as movements which do not open a living space for her; on the contrary, she is drown in and by them. It has been difficult to exist in these milieus. Another working class Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondent<sup>455</sup> describes this as “the method of the enemy”. For example, she explains how HDP<sup>456</sup> supporter women dismissed her since she does not have breasts. She believes nothing will change if Demirtaş<sup>457</sup> comes to power and Kürdistan is established because then there will be another power bloc established. She exhibits a full critical subversive subjectivity in this sense, although she wants to become a woman in terms of gender, and her biggest problem as a refugee is not having enough money to afford cosmetics.

For my Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondents, socialist movement and Kurdish movement are way more pathetic than feminist movement which reproduces the gender binary. Because their gender identity and existence are restrictedly recognized by the socialist and Kurdish movement. Recognition does not spread to the base and hatred transforms into symbolic violence. As one of my respondent<sup>458</sup> puts it; telling that transsexuals exist in the party bylaw is the most visible form of invisibility.

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<sup>452</sup> P10

<sup>453</sup> P21

<sup>454</sup> Communist leader

<sup>455</sup> P26

<sup>456</sup> Peoples' Democratic Party

<sup>457</sup> Co-leader of the Peoples' Democratic Party

<sup>458</sup> P24

Likewise, as my another Kurdish Alevi transsexual sex worker interviewee<sup>459</sup> explains;

If you are active in a socialist organisation or if you are visible in a field that they consider important, the things you say in a discussion are devalued. I mean even if a lot of people would agree, they shut you up. Or they constantly try to hinder your work. Or your value is not considered equal with the value of others. Your practice is not considered equal with the practices of other revolutionists. They single you out as being below them. Especially if you are a sex worker, oh lord! Even if the things you envision and believe in are the same regarding class conflict, they have a lot of prejudice against you. Therefore, they neither allow you to get to a central decision-making position, nor help pave the way the political arena. They block you through various means. (P21)

In addition, as for her it is easier to change the ordinary people than the socialist left, as the socialist left is unaware of itself. She offers transforming their performances, queering their relationships so that the dominant masculinity could be terminated. In a similar manner, my another transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>460</sup> who exhibits full subversive critical queer subjectivity indicates that transsexuality stands for dissolution of the Kurdish identity, which as a result allows access to places Kurds are excluded. And consequently this enables Kurdish transsexuals to enter upper middle class environments. Yet, another Kurdish Alevi transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>461</sup> indicates that while socialist movement imposes further violence to other transsexuals, it accepts her more since she is a Kurd. According to her, Kurdish movement is also very homophobic. While the LGBTQ associations were organising a campaign against the restrictions on the use of Kurdish language, Kurdish political movement remained unresponsive.

The reaction of local organizations are as follows: ‘these ones are foreign to us, you can’t make LGBTQs of Dersim or Zaza folks. These are the products of political corruption that’s bent asimilating us.’ We tried attending every event in order to subvert this discourse and show that we are the children of these lands. The only organization we did not

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<sup>459</sup> P21

<sup>460</sup> P24

<sup>461</sup> P26

apply to is Halk Cephesi - Yürüyüş Dergisi. We do not want to engage with a homophobic and transphobic, male dominated political movement. (Güneş, 2016:83)

But even though conservatism is on the rise in Kurdistan, LGBTQ visibility is also increasing. With the increase of conservatism, discrimination and exclusion, LGBTQ people turn into an effort to establish themselves through organized struggle.

Oktaç Ince interviews with the organisations ÖDP<sup>462</sup>, TKP<sup>463</sup>, EMEP<sup>464</sup>, İHD<sup>465</sup>, Amnesty International, Mazlumder<sup>466</sup> and Yurtsever Cephe<sup>467</sup> in his documentary called '*Devrim Bizi Aramadı*'. He begins by asking "One wants to work on whatever hurts more. Is it possible to mention of a hierarchy of rights?" The answer of Halkın Kurtuluş Partisi <sup>468</sup>is;

We have much busier agendas, such as the working class. That is one of the moral corruptions caused by capitalism and imperialism. And while there are more important problems, this is a problem that can only truly be solved through the emancipation of the working class.'

As for Nejat Taştan, from İHD;

But the reality stands that you naturally focus less on the issues of women in an environment where the right to life is being explicitly violated, because a limited number of people is putting in the work there. It is not due to lack of interest on the part of İHD I mean. Our volunteers are struggling against more painful, more visible problems.

Mazlumder mentions of the fact that it is an issue they can not come to an agreement; as they focus on human rights without making distinction between ethnic or sexual identities. Yurtsever Cephe considers the issue as freewill but rejects answering the

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<sup>462</sup> Freedom and Solidarity Party

<sup>463</sup> Communist Party of Turkey

<sup>464</sup> Labour Party

<sup>465</sup> Human Rights Association

<sup>466</sup> Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People

<sup>467</sup> Patriotic Front

<sup>468</sup> People's Liberation Party

question of whether they admit LGBTQs. And a member of Halkın Kurtuluş Partisi expresses the view of their party as follows;

We consider homosexuality to be people who are physically and psychologically ill and in need of treatment, this is also true scientifically. Accepting them as is and including them in our party program would mean keeping a cancerous cell there. The important thing is to diagnose and treat. And after all, the most appropriate place for treatment is Cuba. In this sense, we don't have any special, they are not on our agenda. In Cuba, they treat homosexuals psychologically and spiritually. We have much busier agendas here such as the working class, the struggles of the working class. That is (mentioning of homosexuality) one of the moral corruptions caused by capitalism and imperialism. And while there are more important problems, this is a problem that can be solved in real terms by the emancipation of the working class.

In fact, his documentary is based on the perceptions of homosexuality. He interviews with people; including the citizens on the street, human rights associations, socialist parties, feminist organisations and finally LGBTQ people from Ulus to Kızılay and Çankaya, and asserts that homophobia increases as income level increases. However, some of them result from lacking the language; such as these workers who are asked about LGBTQ associations answering as;

We have nothing to do with all that, we are construction workers, if we find work today we are lucky, we are after work, we have nothing to do with anything.

Also the trade unions of DİSK<sup>469</sup> and KESK<sup>470</sup>, and organizations TTB<sup>471</sup>, TMMOB<sup>472</sup> does not take LGBTQs on their agenda. While institutions are making macro politics, they open up space for LGBTQ people; such as LGBTQ commissions, women's branch and refer to them instead of accepting the problems of LGBTQ people as theirs. Their policies are based on heterosexual nuclear family; leaving even single mothers aside. Or, sex workers are also excluded from the agenda. However, LGBTQ people

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<sup>469</sup> Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey

<sup>470</sup> Confederation of Public Laborer's Unions

<sup>471</sup> Turkish Medical Association

<sup>472</sup> Union of Chambers of Turkish Architects and Engineers

lose their jobs due to their gender identities and sexual orientations. In fact, they are one of the groups who suffer extreme hardship in finding employment. They are in the lead regarding dismissals as well. They are oppressed by patriarchal heterosexist capitalist system but not represented by labor movement. Labor movement prefers to address traditional religious conservative norms.

But Gezi Park events are a milestone in LGBTQ movement. As a transsexual activist asserts;

We live the most primitive form of transphobia and homophobia in Turkey. There is a much more crude fascism here. We even hear bad news from Diyarbakır in spite of the organized Kurdish population living there. There are people with leftist moralist, traditional moralist practices even in HDP. BDP and HDP have always supported the movement. Since 2009 there was a group within CHP as well. But the support of the party itself came after Gezi. (Güneş, 2016:102)

### **5.1.2 Gezi uprising:**

Gezi Park events mark a turning point for socialist movements. Before Gezi, leftist groups were not considering homophobia and transphobia as an issue; but are forced to after Gezi. Yet, after Gezi, it became a current issue in the agendas of both right wing and left wing ideologies. The platform for political representation and participation of LGBTQs is established. As Güneş states, SPOD organised politics schools in order to support political engagement. HDP and CHP nominated LGBTQ candidates. And people from CHP, HDP, BDP, DSP signed the LGBTQ friendly municipality protocol. (Güneş, 2016) Their demands are taken more seriously. In addition, new queer organizations are founded as a result of the self-confidence queer subjects have gained after Gezi. And the queer movement in Turkey became visible internationally. An Alevi transsexual activist express this as;

At first when I was organized in the HDK, when we brought up LGBTQ issues in Kars, our friends were pressing on as ‘Oh Comrade! Come on, we are not in Istanbul.’ They were saying ‘Our people may react, let’s talk about these issues later, let’s be careful’ and so forth. But after Gezi, for instance, they were unable to say such things. (Oğuz, 2017)

Because LGBT block was one of the most significant, prominent and famous block of the Gezi resistance. As a matter of fact, the 21st LGBT Pride of that year and Trans Parade also “adopted the theme of resistance” (Pears, 2014:113) and “became a simultaneous sympathy march for Gezi Park”. (Pearce, 2014:114) Around ten thousand people attended the parades, including some deputies from Republican People’s Party and Peoples’ Democratic Party. (Pearce, 2014)

Gezi uprising brought different groups together. Anti-capitalist Muslims, socialists, Kurds, nationalists, football fan groups came together. In fact, for the very first time LGBTQ people came together with Islamic groups and Kemalists. (Tsibiridou, 2014) As for Evren Savcı, being at the other side of the moralizing mechanisms of the government brought different identity groups with LGBTQs. (Savcı, 2021) Through Ramadan, protestors including the LGBT bloc protected prayers from the police attack, stopped consuming alcohol and organised fast-breaking dinners, which they named “earth tables”. (Ünan, 2015:87) As a matter of fact, even some supporters of Justice and Development Party established a group called ‘AK-LGBTİ’ after Gezi Events. In fact, this proved the inclusionary character of the movement. After Gezi uprising, in a way LGBTQ movement became the core movement. It opened up fields for articulations. People with different problematics saw the potential of emancipation in the LGBTQ movement. It offered the opportunity for emancipation for all kinds of minority. The movement demonstrated that it involves basic rights of LGBTQ people with different ideologies.

In fact, Gezi Park also has a significant importance as a public space in the lives of LGBTQ people. Together with the district of Taksim, Gezi Park has been a home for LGBTQ people from past to present. They have been meeting in Gezi Park to socialise, develop relationships and find partners. Transsexual sex workers staged their first public resistance, a hunger strike in Gezi Park in the late 80s. The park “made room for various groups to make gendered, sexual, racial and classed claims.” (Özbay & Savcı, 2018:517) Before being converted into a park, it was the land of Pangaltı



Armenian Cemetery. This symbolic importance of the park as a public space also encouraged people to participate in the resistance.

After all, Gezi had huge influence on the LGBTQ movement. Most of my respondents emphasized the achievements after Gezi. Even socialist left which used to be more homophobic 15 years ago has now begun to support LGBTQ movement after Gezi. So has the Kurdish movement. According to one of my activist respondent<sup>473</sup>, while Öcalan was connecting the collapse of Rome to homosexuality in the past, today, in the words of Karayılan, LGBTQs have at least transformed into the marginals of Beyoğlu. This is also a progress. But even though after Gezi experience the movement was in a development and expansion period, unfortunately this momentum has faded. Even the numbers of LGBTQ people emigrating and becoming refugees have increased at the moment.

Because as a result of being used to police violence, and fighting; and as a result of having strong defence mechanism, transsexuals were in the forefront through the clashes between the police and the protestors. Also transsexual sex workers opened their work places and the places they reside to protestors escaping from the police. As a result, LGBTQ people were recognized as brave, powerful, respectable agents. People eradicated their prejudices, and in order not to insult their LGBTQ comrades, they stopped using slang terms such as “faggot” or “son of a bitch”. (Ünan, 2015:88) Likewise, they have overcome their prejudices against Kurdish people and Kurdish movement as well, as a result of “witnessing the manipulation of reality by the mainstream media” (Okçuoğlu, 2013) through Gezi Events. In other words, they displayed critical habitus.

On the other side, as a result of the visibility, recognition and reliance they have achieved, LGBTQ people gained self-confidence and started to come out of the closet to their parents, colleagues and bosses. This self-confidence triggered their critical

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<sup>473</sup> P3

subversive queer subjectivity. In addition, some of those who avoid activists and organizations were encouraged to feel part of the community.

As a matter of fact, for the time being, even the oldest LGBT organization of Istanbul, Lambda doesn't have an office. And the self-organization of transsexuals, Istanbul LGBTTT Solidarity Association has been fighting with each other over economic issues. They ended up in court. But still, Gezi protests were a breaking point. People's perception has been reframed. As one of my activist respondent<sup>474</sup> puts it;

It's gone from 'oh what a pity he is a homosexual' to 'so what if he is a homosexual. (P6)

Because, as Ayşe Deniz Ünan states, after Gezi, "the LGBT movement not only built up connections with the wider heterosexual community but also gained support from LGBT individuals who hesitated to support them before." (Ünan, 2015:90) In other words, from those with conservative habitus as this study suggests. This takes us to the section of conservative habitus.

## **5.2 Conservative Habitus**

If the critical habitus is constituted by elements of Alevism, Kurdishness, being educated, getting socialized in the left-wing milieus and being organised; the conservative habitus is constituted by institutionalized nationalist and religionist framings, Sunnite-conservative reflexes and lack of education. It is also transferable from society to individuals. Those Kurdish and Alevi respondents who deny their identities and choose to be assimilated also exhibit conservative habitus.

Alevis were living in isolated mountains but after they started to migrate and settle in towns, the clashes between Sunni Muslims and Alevis began. Sunni Muslims accused Alevis of being immoral, indecent, sexually depraved, communists and anarchists.

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<sup>474</sup> P6

Where they had to live together, tensions arose as nationalist conservative Sunni Muslims are not interested in cultural and religious pluralism.

Many Alevis see Alevism as a philosophy and something universal but not as a religion. But even those non-believers who take Alevism as a love based universal outlook cannot express their Alevi identity as well, against the perceived threat from the state and the society.

So to speak, religious and nationalist identities are at the forefront in Turkey. The laborers neither identify themselves as working class nor homosexual. Some do not even identify as Alevi. Very few of the women have political consciousness. Instead, they identify themselves as religious, as nationalist, as Turkish and Muslim. As a result, the main problem is not the disconnection between identity politics and class politics but people's identification with religious and nationalist themes.

And conservatism is the biggest obstacle against subverting the normative legitimate structure and power relations. It appears in people from different socio-economic backgrounds. One of my middle class respondent<sup>475</sup> identifies himself as moving upwards and downwards on the class scale; changing places from lower middle class to middle class at a time, and from middle class to lower middle class at another time. And his attitude towards activists is conservative. As he puts it;

They start saying things like, 'we are going to fuck, we will fuck here and there and everywhere' at the LGBT things, pride marches or whatever. I mean even those who like us start to look upon us with disgust. I cannot think of myself in that position. I am not the kind of person who does that here and there and everywhere. And you know the pride march doesn't have to be a cussing march. I believe the proper way should be like people having fun and playing music and such. (P2)

In fact, conservatism is like unconscious of the society, like doxa. As Bourdieu puts it; doxa happens when we "forget the limits that have given rise to unequal divisions in society: it is 'an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure

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<sup>475</sup> P2

inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident.” (Bourdieu 1984:471) Even though some of my respondents were victims of the violence of their religious families, they displayed conservative habitus themselves. One of my respondent<sup>476</sup>, for instance, mentioned of her mother accusing her of being possessed by Devil, while other<sup>477</sup> mentioned of how her family hospitalized her. But at the end, they exhibit conservative habitus themselves and despise those who live their sexuality openly.

My interviewees expressing a conservative habitus differentiate themselves from others by accusing them in being immoral, indecent and unclean; in a similar way middle class subjects differentiate themselves from working class subjects based on morality and hygiene as Skeggs mentions of. (Skeggs, 2002) In fact, my conservative interviewees insult both themselves and the other LGBTQ subjects by reiterating the norms. A transsexual woman working at Pürtelaş Street, for instance, states that they are brought under control as a result of revealing their sexual identities and shares her concern regarding those who do not reveal; as if they were suffering from a sickness. As she puts it<sup>478</sup>;

I mean really I am ashamed of the fact that this is a not proper place to raise children. Okay this is not our street this street belongs to everyone. But we need to stay here, I mean people here are used to us.

One of my working class Kurdish Alevi activist respondent<sup>479</sup>, on the other hand, discusses conservatism as an obstacle in politicizing the Kurdish identity; emphasizing provinces like Bingöl, Elazığ and Muş where Kurdish struggle couldn't emerge as a result of conservative Kurds. As a matter of fact, even though when they refuse their ethnic religious identities or the lower status attributed to them, they reproduce the unequal structures and norms.

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<sup>476</sup> P13

<sup>477</sup> P1

<sup>478</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPbZfvE3jSU&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1amKnLOUtVaCA3ZP9S3xzSNGW62aI-usSrnRcOLy-ysviH1aAsYShvzmg>

<sup>479</sup> P10

As asserted above, conservative habitus is constituted of Sunni conservatism, religiosity and nationalism. In fact, the intersection of nationalism and heterosexism can be traced back to Ottoman literature. For Rıza Nur, who denies his homoerotic desire because he cannot take the risk of losing his masculinity and Turkishness, the loss of his masculinity means the loss of his Turkishness as well as the loss of his Turkishness meaning the loss of his masculinity. He is not only excluded from love based marriage and family ties; but also from the imaginary community of the nation as a result of being excluded from the Turkishness envisaged by nation. Because the ideal man was who had control over his feelings, and would only get wasted for the sake of his homeland but not for love. (Saritaş, 2018)

Nationalist discourse distinguished sexual acts that end with reproduction and eroticism by labeling them as immorality and unpatriotism. Moreover, homoerotic desire was linked to minorities regarded as the other of Turks. For instance, Mazhar Osman wrote in 1929;

Those who played the role of male prostitutes were preferably Greek young men. If there were Greek agents as well, it would mean that prostitution had widely disseminated and became the source of living as it was in the ancient times. Greek young men were the beloved ones, the favourite stars of the pashas and princes at the most elegant mansions. As Greek girls also competed closely with them, this nation, so to speak, had monopolized prostitution in Turkey. Other races remained secondary. Among Armenians were many who consulted a doctor for treatment of the love they felt for someone of the same sex. In fact, their mothers and aunts often dragged young men in their twenties into our clinics for treatment. (cited in Saritaş, 2018:224)

Koçu, as well, in his work *Istanbul Encyclopedia*, refers to different ethnic groups - especially Greek youth - as erotic subjects. Charming greek boys are the leading actors of homoerotic stories, represented as sexually approachable. Still, Koçu does not adopt the nationalist discourse completely but establishes erotic and historical bonds with those excluded identities as well. (cited in Saritaş, 2018)

On the other hand, Kandiyoti exemplifies the nationalist tendencies of LGBTQ people with the *'flag incident'*. Through the first congress of HADEP<sup>480</sup> in July 1996, some participants lowered the Turkish flag. In response to this, many streets inspired by the local branches of the MHP<sup>481</sup>, known for its anti-Kurdishness, were equipped with slogans such as “The flag flies, the call to prayer never ends, the motherland remains undivided.” (Kandiyoti, 2002: 289) And a male homosexual who was attempting to found the ecologist party of Turkey displayed Turkish flag in front of the house of the representative of the German Green Party, Claudia Roth, in order to condemn her Kurdish partisanship. According to Kandiyoti, this incident was interpreted as an attempt to gain appreciation of the authorities by revealing ‘nationalist’ identity. As Kandiyoti puts it;

What appears certain, however, is the establishment of gendered personae, even when these represent major infractions of dominant cultural codes, are always cross-cut by other identity, and remain captives of the broader discursive universes of which they form a part. (Kandiyoti, 2002: 290)

Likewise, within the study of Evren Savcı, interviewees find members of LAMBDA as too political, such that, some of them consider the members of LAMBDA as PKK<sup>482</sup> sympathisers. (Savcı, 2011)

Another similar example is the case of Ülker Street. As Öz explains how militarism, nationalism, patriarchy and heterosexism work together;

One of the striking situations in Ülker Street Incident was the campaign to hang Turkish flag, which was initiated by neighborhood residents. Those who were not transvestites and transsexuals hung Turkish flag in order to ensure that their houses were not attacked as well. Turkish flag, which was chosen as a symbol and reference it makes to nationalism, was a striking indicator of how patriarchal and heterosexual values and nationalist values are perceived together.’ (Öz, 2013: 206)

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<sup>480</sup> People’s Democracy Party

<sup>481</sup> Nationalist Movement Party

<sup>482</sup> Kurdistan Workers’ Party

Even though Ülker street was a cosmopolitan place for students, artists, immigrants and transsexuals, the residents collaborated with police with the discourse of morality, honor, nationalism and religion in the process of violent evacuation, asserting that it was a district only for families. As it is stated, one of the residents named Demet Güngör

appeared on the street wearing all green, she went to the police yelling ‘Allahuekber’<sup>483</sup>, she complained about us saying “We are religious people. This disturbs us.”... Sometimes they called themselves nationalists, sometimes they called themselves religious. People who were smugglers, who were dealing drugs turned into modest family men all of a sudden. (Turan,2011)

In a similar vein, within her documentary *Southern Comfort*, Katie Davis shares how white transsexual men living in Georgia begin to resemble other men of their villages, even those who are supporter of Ku Klux Klun. (Ögüt, 2013:54)

Of to one side, there are those who use religion to justify their homophobia; while on the other side there are secular but still moralist and homophobic nationalists. Likewise the incident of Ülker street, trans people’s houses were sealed and even a trans was killed in Avcılar district as well. The victims state that after they were displaced, people celebrated by eating together ‘baklava’s.

In conclusion, most of the working class LGBTQs repress their sexuality; trying to seem like a nationalist conservative in order to hide it. Even though his friends directed me, a hairdresser in Eskişehir showed me the door when I asked him if I could ask some questions. He also didn’t know what LGBT means and when I explained, he told me there was no one there fitting my description. One of my working class respondent<sup>484</sup> who lives in a ghetto in Adana stated that there are more homosexuals in lower-class even though white-collars are more visible. Because lower class LGBTQs stay in the closet.

Working class subjects replicate pathologization themselves. As a result of lacking power, working classes are more conservative; while upper classes raise class

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<sup>483</sup> Allahu Akbar!

<sup>484</sup> P29

consciousness. (Wolf, 2017)<sup>485</sup> Some of them probably see homosexuality as sinful and keep swearing off. Some of them live it just as sexuality but does not identify themselves with it. Most of them are secretive and right-winger. They recreate heterosexuality and they use foul language. Covertness feeds right-wing thinking. In this sense, covertness has a political meaning. In order to be covert, they further embrace nationalist and religious discourses. While coming out directs towards left-wing, covertness leads them towards becoming right-wingers. Covertness directs them towards masculine, nationalist - religious profile. Because self-regulation and being in control of sexuality is required for gaining and maintaining respectability in reference to the dominant normative-intelligible order. In other words, apart from being restricted by external structures; subjects do self-constraint, self-monitor, self-regulate their sexuality as well, because as Skeggs assert; “producing oneself as respectable becomes the means by which internal regulation and the specific policing of bodies occurs.” (Skeggs, 2002:130) As transsexuals interviewed by Amnesty International try to prove their respectability by conforming to norms;

Oh, I am a heterosexual transsexual in full acceptance of the word...  
Actually if you think about my gender identity, I feel so ordinary, I am  
a heterosexual woman. (Amnesty International, 2014)

The distinction between private and public sphere is critical here. My interviewees display different behaviors in private and public spheres and this results from their habitus as well. They present themselves as critical agencies subverting the normative legitimate norms at their private spheres; while exhibiting conservative attitudes at the public sphere. They keep complaining about the hypocrisy of the society towards homosexuality but they repeat and dissimulate the same attitude. And although the conceptualization of habitus is created through a social process, private sphere is also crucial as private is the political. Because as Zengin indicates, private sphere is also a public sphere subjected to regulations. (Zengin, 2007) As a result, in the next section the private public distinction will be discussed in detail. Because my respondents who

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<sup>485</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usdi\\_KMUs44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usdi_KMUs44)



live their sexuality in their private life and accuse activists who live it publicly of being indecent, immoralist and disgusting also exhibit conservative habitus.

### **5.2.1 Public private distinction:**

Private-public distinction is determinant in the creation of conservative habitus. Because separating private life from public life is also a feature of conservative habitus.

In fact, the distinction of private and public sphere is based on family. Because as Aries indicates, family is not just an economic unit but a shelter in which family members can escape from the gaze and share emotions. (Aries, 2007) As a result, individuals have started to see the private area as the only area where they can express themselves as they wish.

As Zengin asserts, what is displayed within public realm are established in the private realm, which is the site of intimate relations and emotions. “What is displaced from the public is (re)located in the private space and thus becomes part of a site of intimacy.” (Zengin, 2007:21) Zengin indicates that private space has to be considered as a public realm in that it is being regulated by disciplinary mechanisms. Because the state constructs the site of intimacy, intimate relations, what belongs to public and private, and by doing so, through this public private dichotomy, it reproduces traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structure. (Zengin, 2007)

Conservatism, for instance, has shown up as habitus in most of my interviewees. If social agents are determined only to the extent that they determine themselves; but as this self determination is also determined by social and economic conditions; which one are we supposed to look at; the private faces or public faces of the interviewees? Because as asserted above, many of the interviewees act as critical agencies within

their private life but act conservatively towards public visibility. And this is a result of their conservative habitus.

My respondents with conservative habitus accused activists with indecency and condemned associations for exhibiting eroticism. They complained about the aggressiveness of the activists, accused them of scoring points over their pains and being straight fobic. One of my working class transsexual respondent<sup>486</sup>, for instance, describes himself as a modern individual who sings, dances, and who has lovers and occasional sexual partners. As for him, the reason for not being exposed to any violence despite being open to everyone is the fact that he is not degenerated. What he means by degeneration is being political, being an activist, and carrying sexuality into the public sphere. Likewise, my another transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>487</sup> defines activists as fleabags exploiting money coming from Europe, using drugs and partying with this money. She thinks that demonstrations are organized to show off to Europe. As for her, we are not the country to set up LGBTQ as a result of being Muslims.

In fact, what they criticize is not wealth but the manners of the rich. They emphasized culture instead of materiality. My transsexual sex worker respondent, for instance, mentioned of how they did not accept her to a restaurant at Gaziosmanpaşa district of Ankara. Or she accused rich people of being heartless and stated that even though she does not have money she spends it on feeding stray animals. On the other side, while my respondents with a critical habitus mentioned of unjust enrichment; my respondents with a conservative habitus contradictorily rejected the idea of equality and stated that those who work hard deserve wealth.

After all, my conservative interviewees found it meaningless to carry private issues to public. One of them<sup>488</sup>, for instance, referred to marginalized identities when addressing private issues. He claims that activists try to implant what is not in the minds of people,

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<sup>486</sup> P11

<sup>487</sup> P39

<sup>488</sup> P15

and that this is manipulation. He states that political activism has led to the marginalization and LGBTQs have further drawn reaction as a result of this. My respondents who exhibit conservative habitus do not have the belief that they can change people after all.

Some of my conservative, Kemalist, middle class respondents<sup>489</sup> do not have any knowledge about queer anyway. When I explained them, they warned me that this kind of things should not be spoken in public. Private life and ideology are complete separate things for them. While their sexuality is private life, their ideology is Kemalism. My conservative middle class respondents<sup>490</sup> do not have any economic concerns. They are reactive against activists and they think that associations resemble to brothels as they assert that some things should be lived behind closed doors.

This takes us to the next section, in which the political consciousness and political leanings of the LGBTQ subjects with a conservative habitus will be discussed.

### **5.2.2 Political consciousness:**

My working class interviewees who are either Sunnite-Turks<sup>491</sup> or assimilated Kurds<sup>492</sup> approach conservatively to subverting normative intelligible order which is oppressing and restricting them. Those disadvantaged groups do not have political consciousness, even though they are being oppressed as a result of both their social class, gender and sexual identities. Instead, they lean towards religion and nationalism.

In addition, my respondents<sup>493</sup> with conservative habitus emphasized the importance of human potential and individual achievements in opposition to the ideal of equality.

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<sup>489</sup> Such as P2 and P18

<sup>490</sup> Such as P23 and P40

<sup>491</sup> Such as P39, P11 and P1

<sup>492</sup> Such as P13 and P5

<sup>493</sup> Such as P5 and P39

In other words, instead of being in solidarity, they pursue self-interest. In fact, as Özbilgin states, replacement of equality by individuality and competition is a characteristic of neoliberalism. (Özbilgin, 2017) As a matter of fact, in neoliberal times “members of the underclass are blamed for their own circumstances, unwilling to take advantage of educational and occupational opportunities.” (Murray cited in Taylor, 2014:10) One of my conservative middle class respondent<sup>494</sup>, for instance, expressed how much he wants to get rich. He insulted LGBTQ people from the district of Sincan and presented himself as someone who belongs to districts such as Bilkent. On the other hand, paradoxically he also mentioned of how he does not like working at all.

Most of my respondents<sup>495</sup> with conservative habitus emphasized the individual potential of subjects. They do not believe in social transformation. As for them, those who do not inspire confidence are subject to discrimination, and that nobody in business life asks about one’s religion, political view, sexual identity, nor ethnic identity. According to them, while those who were excluded could live a normal life, they make themselves excluded.

One of my conservative middle class apolitical respondent<sup>496</sup>, takes a step further and criticizes those who try to politicize Pride. For her its only purpose is to entertain people. As a matter of fact, for her, the immigrants amuse themselves the most through it. As one of my activist respondent<sup>497</sup> puts it, middle classes attend Pride just to have fun;

You see the labour movement will bring a million people onto the streets on May Day. But the LGBTQ movement, those who attend Pride March, actually come to have fun, and they come because they consider it a pink area. And most of them are apolitical. (P6)

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<sup>494</sup> P36

<sup>495</sup> Such as P15, P5 and P23

<sup>496</sup> P8

<sup>497</sup> P6

Most of my middle class interviewees<sup>498</sup> find both Pride and Gezi uprising amusing. They are after entertainment instead of political achievements by risking their lives. This is always the case for middle-class. The pride march is an entertaining and enjoyable occasion, even a sheer celebration for them. However, one of my middle class respondent<sup>499</sup> also indicated the fact that while refugee groups from Iran shouted “Tililili” during the pride march he participated in, the police only responded to that group and dispersed them, but did not interfere in middle class, white participants.

The knowledge of politics and society of my conservative middle class respondents is very limited. When I asked them if there is a class difference between LGBTQs, they thought I was talking about socialism and told me that if they also mentioned class differences, state of LGBTQ would worsen because socialism was over now and capitalism prevailed.

One of my conservative middle class respondent<sup>500</sup>, for instance, hasn't heard about queer theory before and states that he is against classification. So far so good but he doesn't have any consciousness about queerness at all. Rejecting identification is not on purpose. He mentions about music when I ask him how he identifies himself. He is that apolitical. He wants to support HDP on account of his sexual identity but as he puts it;

But I think that Atatürk could not be associated with any political party, I mean, I think Atatürk is a spirit now. He is the best in Turkey ever, I mean the most, ah, I am so excited now. (P2)

Likewise, my other Sunni Turk and conservative respondents praised Atatürk and CHP by referring to their fathers, which is a direct expression of habitus. As one of them puts it;

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<sup>498</sup> Such as P2, P14 and P27

<sup>499</sup> P23

<sup>500</sup> P2

I can say that my family supports CHP beyond measure. Extremely. I ask my father regarding that issue, he is a little bit, his ideology is a lot like, I mean he is also a CHP-supporter. And I have learned and am still learning politics from my father. At any rate I have learned to tell right from wrong from my father because we always talk about politics at home. My political ideology developed based on them. But there is no family pressure there. My father has given me the chance to choose the ideology I want. I mean he gave me the chance to research and evaluate but of course I believe that I have chosen the logical one, the right one. (P18)

In conclusion, the critical subversive agency of subjects are affected by multiple factors. While an illiterate Kurdish Alevi working class subject exhibits critical habitus as a result of socialising within left environments; an educated middle class Sunni Turk or assimilated Kurd do exhibit conservative habitus. For this reason, in the next section, the intersectional oppression my respondents have been suffering from will be discussed. How they experience the interlocking systems of oppression and the way they resist will be researched.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Intersectionality within the field**

I would like to be a rich spoiled White girl. They get what they want. Whenever they want it. And they dont have to really struggle with finances. And nice things and nice clothes. And they dont have to have that as a problem. (Livingston, 1990)

The systems of oppressions such as racism, patriarchy, heterosexism and economic inequality interlock. Class relations are cut by other categories, such as gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. As Floyd asserts, intersectionality brings together the exploitation suffered by workers with oppression suffered by women, gays, Kurds, Alevis...etc. And that as Floyd indicates, any representation of sexuality without representation of the other dimensions will be a misrepresentation, as all these systems of oppressions are constitutive of each other as well. (Floyd, 2009)

Intersectionality suggests to conceptualize political consciousness in relation to multiple inequalities, instead of holding a singular one, privileging one type of inequality over others. (Greenwood, 2008) It suggests the emergence of multiple consciousness, as systems of oppressions-inequalities are constitutive of each other, and that awareness of one form of inequality is associated with awareness of other forms of inequalities as well, as class consciousness, race and ethnic consciousness, gender and sexual consciousness are not independent of each other. (Morris, 1992) Likewise, within my work ethno-religious identities, gender, education and socialization within left environments are the factors that have impact upon the development of critical habitus. My working class respondents, coming from a working class family, have developed political consciousness as a result of socialising within left environments.

In fact, as multiple identities are not intersecting eclectically but they are already interbedded, so does the conservative nationalist religious heterosexual capitalist bloc. The systems of oppressions such as sexism, homophobia, racism and class inequality interlock. For instance, as for the oral history project of Ahmet Güneş, in the year of 1991, police officers file a criminal complaint against a transsexual sex worker by claiming that she accused Atatürk for being homosexual. (Güneş, 2016) Here nationalism and homophobia intersect. Likewise, due to homonationalism<sup>501</sup> debate going on in Europe, right wing parties accuse immigrants, especially the Muslim ones of being the reason of all homophobic activities within their country. Once again, racism, nationalism and homophobia interlock.

Even though different oppressed groups focus on their own demands; this structure oppressing different identities is a bloc that consists conservatism, nationalism, racism, militarism, patriarchy, capitalism...etc. As one of my working class Kurdish Alevi respondent<sup>502</sup> states;

Well, this comes to mind for instance, Bülent Ersoy says that if she had a child, she would not send him to the military. And she said this in a period, in a period we had lost a lot of male guerillas, and so on. And the reactions were both very racist. They were both very sexist and transphobic. Think about when she wore a veil. It was unbelievable I mean. Look at the transphobia I mean. She is not accepted as a woman. Of course she is transgender not a real woman. And someone with such over-the-top make-up wearing a veil so on. Look at her conservatism. I mean how can I distinguish these from each other you know. And this is an upper class woman. And she was canceled on social media. (P4)

As for my respondents, self has to be dealt with as a whole. If the description of oppressor is Muslim Sunni Turkish heterosexual ruling class man; everything that stand against these become the oppressed class. In spite of being Sunni Turkish, a transsexual sex worker belongs to oppressed class. Or when a Kurdish Alevi display transphobic behavior against a transsexual sex worker, he/she becomes the oppressor.

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<sup>501</sup> The concept is introduced by Jaspir K. Puar (2007) *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, United States: Duke University Press

<sup>502</sup> P4



Whoever oppose the norm of being Turkish nationalist, Sunni religious, heterosexual man belongs to oppressed class. As a result, resistance has to be intersectional as well. It has to be inclusive. Besides, identifying yourself and your practices are different entities. As a result, instead of analyzing based on how people identify themselves; their behaviors and the power they use upon others have to be considered. For instance, when a Kurdish Alevi working class feminist excludes a transsexual from march 8 international women's day, she becomes the oppressor here.

In fact, my transsexual women interviewees were the ones who suffer the most from the intersection of class and identity. As a result of not being able to hide what is apparent, they have no other choice than coming out. When they come out they lose their family and their support. As a result, they do not have a chance to receive education and get a regular job. They can't use public transportation as a result of the discrimination in access to public services. After all, they are forced to live in poverty. Moreover, they need money in order to undergo surgery. Hence, they are forced to sex work. As Begüm Başdaş<sup>503</sup> asserts, from right to live to right to go shopping, their rights are being violated in every field. And that it is essential to decriminalise them in order to report violations and protect their rights because they are even unable to make denunciation as a result of being stigmatised. As Başdaş asserts, the thresholds of sex workers are very high regarding definition of violence. They are both stigmatised as diseased, but at the same time do not have access to health facilities. (Başdaş, 2016) And as Başar (2019)<sup>504</sup> indicates; even though reassignment of sex is legally recognised; it is a process with lots of legal and medical obstacles. There are limited number of centers with limited number of experience. And it is not practically covered by insurance. Even though there isn't any law against LGBTQ people specifically, they are charged with law of misdemeanor. On the other hand, there is no legal regulation on hate crimes, or discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. In other words, class and identity are intermingled.

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<sup>503</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z8reQC96J0>

<sup>504</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFSR\\_byDyTU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFSR_byDyTU)

One of my respondent<sup>505</sup>, for instance, as a Kurdish Alevi working class LGBTQ, describes her biggest wound as the intersection of her class and sexual identity. As she puts it;

So to give an example from my personal experience, I am not exposed to any discrimination in terms of my Kurdish identity. Or in terms of my Alevi identity. But as a result of my bisexual identity, I have been subjected to both discrimination and phobia even within the socialist movement. I mean my social class, which is working class, and my sexual identity come to the forefront. But middle class or bourgeois LGBTQ individuals are not exposed to discrimination as much as I am, because they do not have to appear in public anyway. They solve all their needs with money. They can be isolated from society, and meet their needs. But that's not the case for a working class LGBTQ. (P17)

Likewise, a Kurdish transsexual activist<sup>506</sup> suffers from the intersection of her social class, gender identity and sexual identity. She escapes from her village and comes to Istanbul at the age of sixteen. She sleeps on the streets, picks herself a name to use and learns street language. After being raped by a gang, she begins prostituting. After meeting with feminist organisations, she starts performing the play she has written on the stage and starts selling mussels. Some feminist friends criticize her for selling mussels and not being a vegan. Class difference is revealed here. Because she is forced to sell mussels in order to survive. Likewise, she asserts that while trying to survive on the streets, the feminist discourse claiming to deconstruct the patriarchal language becomes a utopia, because it is replaced by the street slang and the rules of the street. After all, as Fotini Tsibiridou asserts;

Esmeray has constantly experienced the neoliberal condition of precariousness as an impoverished Kurdish immigrant and as transsexual, who has been subjected to multiple exclusion from citizenship virtues, from the right to work (except for engaging in prostitution), as well as from the right to a home and to the use of her mother tongue. (Tsibiridou, 2014:28)

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<sup>505</sup> P17

<sup>506</sup> In the documentary of Melisa Önel 'Me and Nuri Bala', 2009

In a similar vein, another Kurdish transsexual activist<sup>507</sup>, who is also suffering from intersectional oppression, describes the dysphoria she experienced as a result of the transphobia she was exposed to in another cissexist city for cis gay, Berlin;

This lubunya<sup>508</sup> told me, girl wasn't there anywhere else to go, there are much more beautiful places, because I'd gone to Kreuzberg where there are Turks and other ethnic groups. Now wouldn't it be nicer if I had visited cool museums, exhibitions etc. in whiter spaces, taken flashy photos and shared them? But this cis gay does not even realize that all these comfortable spaces are welcoming to him... He does not know why I feel happy and safer when I see people who speak the same language as I do when I go to Kreuzberg. He does not know that I can rehabilitate my soul as it is a more cosmopolitan place and that I feel more equal to other people as a result of that cosmopolitanism. All that cosmopolitanism there... It was good for my dysphoria triggered by the unfortunate transphobia I have experienced. People should first inquire how the furthest other has been living when they question things or experience a place.

As for my working class Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondents, the codes of the sovereign are interlaced. For one to avoid being transphobic, he needs not to act in a racist manner nor refer to Islam. He has to abandon every type of hatred. Because racism involves homophobia, transphobia, hostility towards Kurds and Alevi's as well. But at the last stance, relations of production and class conflict are determinant. Because the cause of hostility is the unfair distribution of income. Turks are hostile towards Kurds as most of them work as cheap labor. And transsexual sex workers are being blackjacked as a result of working in the informal sex industry.

One of my working class Alevi Kurdish transsexual sex worker interviewee<sup>509</sup> explains how at peacetime her Kurdish identity became indistinct while at the moment as a result of the conditions of war it became prominent. But at the last stance, all of these identities are interlaced. For this reason, she finds the fragmentation of the movements legitimate as there would always be one administrative structure in one united movement. She is against single powerful movement and bloc, be it Kurdish state, or

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<sup>507</sup> The owner and dj of Şahika Teras, a well known queer venue in İstanbul

<sup>508</sup> Refers to effeminate gay men and trans women. Twink.

<sup>509</sup> P21

a socialist government. On the other hand, she has been excluded from every movement she has been trying to appear in;

Since I am transgender, this is what it corresponds to within society, but at the same time as a result of my Kurdish identity and the policies I have been producing, they made around forty complaints about me, they notified the police accusing me of being in a terrorist organization. And it was all done by transgender people. For instance if something about me gets published, you will definitely see it in the comments below. She is a terrorist, curse her, on and on. They wanted to have me arrested. The Kurdish Movement does not protect you anyway. They may produce policies centrally, or their principles may include. After all this is reached with the efforts of those with sexual identities who organised within the movement, people with sexual identities who belong to the movement. But writing it down does not mean that it will be reflected you know in the practices. (P21)

She has been restricted by both her transsexual identity, financial in-capabilities, her Kurdish and Alevi identities and political identity. They are all interlaced;

For the last three years there is only one thing that is affecting my daily life, my plans, and everything; not being able to see the future. Because there is uncertainty. There is a persistent uncertainty. Uncertainty about whether will I be arrested or attacked, when will I be picked up, or obstructed, because many of my friends have been arrested and imprisoned. That gives me a sense of uncertainty. That uncertainty then prevents me from shaping the future. I do not want to turn to prostitution for instance. I couldn't find a job. I wanted to open a small place. But then you think, there is an economic crisis going on. You realize it's not clear what is going to happen tomorrow. I mean, right when you get on track, you might be picked up and tried in court for five years or ten years or whatever. You start to think like, if I get arrested and put in prison, my efforts will go down the drain. That's why uncertainty is the only thing that impedes my whole life. That state of uncertainty. Because I can't foresee the next week or ten days from now. (P21)

Kurdish LGBTQ organization Keskesor also indicates the need for an intersectional struggle. Because as they mention, there are multi-faceted power relations in Northern Kurdistan and Diyarbakır that foster homophobia; geopolitical location, oppression on their culture and language. As Keskesor states, demand for money and job security is not enough to create cracks in the system. (Güneş, 2016) On the other hand, Istanbul

LGBTT Solidarity Association was performing an intersectional struggle before it was abrogated. As my working class Kurdish Alevi transsexual respondent<sup>510</sup> puts it;

The Istanbul LGBTT Solidarity Association organizes and calls people to march against the dirty war in Kurdistan, and makes its concern many problems, from Armenian genocide to the Madımak massacre, from work-related homicides to femicides. Because hate culture does not penetrate just one group only. Judgements affect all of society and turn social life into hell. (P21)

As for Çetin, the political alliance of Kurds and queer people results from the intersectionality of nationalism, conservatism and heterosexism. He gives the statement of an independent candidate from “The Thousand Hope Candidates”<sup>511</sup> as an example to intersectional resistance; “Turks will defend Kurds, Kurds will defend Armenians, Armenians will defend Roma, Roma will defend Circassians, Circassians will defend the unemployed, the unemployed will defend women, women will defend Alevis, and the Alevis will defend the homosexuals.” (Çetin, 2016) In fact, People’s Democratic Congress is also an example for intersectional resistance as it aims at bringing the oppressed groups together in order to struggle against all types of discrimination together. (Çetin, 2016)

Likewise, Lewis argues that intersectional oppression causes intersectional resistance. As he puts it; “in the culture of poverty of the American Negro the additional disadvantage of racial discrimination has generated a potential for revolutionary protest and organisation that is absent in the slums of San Juan and Mexico City, and for that matter, among the poor whites in the South.” (Lewis, 1966:24)

Regarding my study as well, it could be asserted that the respondents who experienced intersectional oppression were likely to raise political consciousness. My interviewees who exhibit critical habitus are those who suffer from intersection of multiple marginalised excluded identities. As a result of suffering from the intersection of nationalism, conservatism, heterosexism and economic inequalities; my Alevi Kurdish

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<sup>510</sup> P21

<sup>511</sup> A coalition of independent candidates in 2007 elections

working class transsexual woman respondents are the ones who are most likely to exhibit critical habitus.

One of my Kurdish transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>512</sup>, for instance, mentioned of how she had to struggle with homophobia and transphobia even within the Kurdish movement. Likewise, another Kurdish Alevi transsexual sex worker respondent<sup>513</sup> had to struggle with the transphobia of her comrades within the socialist movement, in addition to her struggle against the nationalism, conservatism, homophobia and transphobia of the society. As a matter of fact, they struggle against the male domination within the LGBTQ movement as well. In other words, the systems of oppressions they face are intertwined. As a result, they have to raise political consciousness at one point in order to survive. Because most of the movements or organizations focus on single issue and exclude others. Yet intersectional analysis and intersectional resistance is a must. Though there are organisations that focus on intersectional struggle, such as Hevi LGBTI Association. Hevi LGBTI Association base their politics on the critique of nationalism, conservatism, homophobia, and class oppression. They develop intersectional analysis and struggle against the interlocking systems of oppression.

In the end, as also told by one of my working class activist interviewee<sup>514</sup>, even in terms of ecological movement, we should focus on why nature is getting polluted rather than protecting nature and planting trees. The way capitalism works in terms of capital accumulation have to be revealed and to do this, instead of focusing on and struggling for single issue, the struggle has to be intersectional based on multiple varied issues that make up the capitalist system. Because, as he puts it, if we move away from the critique of capitalism and the perspective of total emancipation, we might end up supporting oppressors.

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<sup>512</sup> P26

<sup>513</sup> P21

<sup>514</sup> P29

Because of your LGBTQ identity, you are subjected to discrimination. And when other identities of yours are added to this, this oppression intensifies. But as stated by my working class Kurdish Alevi respondents<sup>515</sup>, their political view covers both their sexual orientation, ethnic identity and class. Because social class and other identities intersect. If we do not take social class into consideration, we might end up supporting conservative-nationalist-oppressive power blocs. On the other hand, focusing on only social class would prevent us from observing the injuries of differences. If we ignore differences, such as the ethnic or sexual identities within the working class, then we might end up reiterating the norms.

As has been discussed so far, LGBTQ movement of Turkey address basic rights of LGBTQ subjects from different ideology, religion, ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality. It opens up fields for new articulations, enables exploration of new subjectivities. In contrast to the homophobia of left wing, LGBTQ movement seeks for coalition politics. And the reason for this is the intersectional oppression LGBTQ subjects have been subjected to. As a result, it compulsorily develops strategies to struggle with multiple interlaced power relations.

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<sup>515</sup> Such as P10

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Arguably the most political LGBTQ movement is the one in Turkey, anti-capitalists worldwide travel to Turkey to attend the Pride march. You can not find any non-governmental organisation working in this field debating same-sex marriage here because we are still struggling for our right to live in the Middle East. We describe the LGBTQ Istanbul as a street organisation, the movement emerged from the streets, the highways, places society can not enter. (P21)

This study explored literature based assumptions within the field and discussed critical agency against sexual, gender, class, and ethnic based inequalities, from an intersectional perspective in the case of Turkey. Research questions have been as follows; Are there queer experiences of critical agency against the limiting normative structures? If so, do critical subversive queer agencies subvert the material constraints and other normative constraints just as they subvert gender and sexuality? If so, to what extent they question, challenge and subvert structural constraints and which normative structural constraints they question or subvert? How?

The intersectional approach of the study focused on revealing the power relations, combining capitalism with with identity politics; exploitation with oppression. Instead of focusing on identities, how systems of oppression intersect and work in collaboration have been researched. Within the study, how individuals experience the intersection of inequalities, how they define themselves and others have been discussed in relation to certain forms of habitus which filter them. My respondents expressed themselves in the framework of Sunni Turkish Muslim/ Alevi Kurdish Non-Muslim dichotomy. when asked about social class, most of the interviewees understood Kurdishness or Alevism. They mentioned of religion. In other words, I started the research in order to investigate how class is felt and experienced but I did



not find what I was expecting. The research on social class has unfolded into different categories. I came across different identities. But this proves that culture is a battleground upon which different social positionings and social inequalities are created, in the way Bourdieu states. My respondents also perceived and interpreted social class through cultural terms.

Because, class is not just about material- economic relations but is also about manners, morality and respectability. Class is also based on struggle for recognition, as subjects construct themselves in relation to others, in terms of how they are seen and judged by others. They construct their subjectivity based on how they are recognized or misrecognized by others. Class conflict is based on struggling for dignity and respectability. Within my study, some of my respondents, for instance, have never named social class but expressed it through experiences of inequality they have been subjected to. My interviewees were aware of their classed positionings not just in terms of what they do for living, how much they earn or how educated they are, but also in terms of how respectable they are seen and how does that make them feel. Class is central in their lives but they express the effects of class through emotions and feelings. They are in search of security and emotional affirmation, claiming for respectability. In other words, they do not emphasize the material relations but their relations with other classes in terms of culture and symbolic struggle.

Also self and other dichotomy was of prime importance, in terms of recognition and misrecognition. My working class interviewees were also interpreting and identifying themselves based on middle class subjects and their lifestyle. They strived for respectability. As for my transsexual respondents, for instance, femininity was of great importance as their necessity performances were based upon cisgender women and men. Because as Skeggs indicates, femininity is the gendered and sexualised components of their class capital. (Skeggs, 2002)

After all, I have investigated the critical subversive queer category Butler mentions of within the field. Butler states subjects do not always adopt the structure, but sometimes subvert, challenge and remake the normative intelligible order. In other words, she

assumes that queer subjects exhibit critical queer agency by default. But it did not correspond to reality within the field. My literature based assumptions have changed during the fieldwork. Because instead of social class, respondents defined themselves with different identities. As a result, research of class has unfolded into different categories. Different political-ideological understandings filtered their self-perceptions in the field. I could not find inherent critical agency in queerness. Rather, habitus of the respondents determined their critical subversive agency. On this basis, it could be asserted that my interviewees exhibited two types of habitus; the critical and the conservative one. While some of my respondents exhibited critical subversive agency and developed a critical habitus; others exhibited conservative habitus and rejected being classified by making investments in themselves, replicating middle class dispositions, in order to be recognised as respectable.

Those who chose social class over their sexual identity developed conservative habitus; while those who chose their sexual and other minority identities over social class developed a critical one. Here family backgrounds, educational backgrounds, ethno-religious identities and socialization within left-wing milieus have impact upon the development of the critical habitus. Most of my respondents maintain the social class of their families. Impact of political view on class is remarkable; as socialization within different political environments caused different habitus to develop. Knowledge and cultural capital are significant in identifying themselves and displaying critical subversive queer subjectivity. And most of my Kurdish Alevi respondents displayed critical subversive habitus, except for those who are assimilated and who display conservative habitus. Also those with the intersection of more than one minority identities displayed critical habitus; together with those who are educated, socialized within a leftist milieu or coming from a leftist family.

Besides, as mentioned before, identification with queerness is also a classed act. In order to exhibit critical subversive queer subjectivity of Butler, one needs to display critical habitus. In other words, even the performances are based on social class. My educated respondents reject every type of classification and even embrace sex work. On the other hand, my uneducated conservative respondents who lack cultural capital

replicate the norms. Also they are ashamed of doing sex work. They did not even know what the term LGBT refers to, let alone queer theory. Most of them prefer to stay at the closet in order to avoid homophobic violence. Some of them even marry with the opposite sex either for financial reasons or to hide. Subjects themselves are also involved in this process of othering. They internalize and maintain the boundaries, hierarchies and inequalities. My transsexual sex worker respondents, for instance, defined themselves as nasty, second class, and the marginals.

On the other side, my middle class interviewees who associate themselves with Turkish, Sunni and conservative norms and corresponding forms of identity displayed conservative habitus as well. Although some of them study at university, they talk in a conflicting and insensible manner. Their language is always conflicting, lacking meaning and integrity which resembles the language of conservative working class. The working class respondents, lacking the knowledge and the language, also had a contradictory discourse; either talking nonsense or talking with the language of their organization if they are politically organized. And as a result of lacking the cultural capital and language, they associated class with gender, ethnicity, religion and organization. Some of them referred to gender, some to their Kurdish identity, while some to their professions. In other words, once again displaying conservatism became prominent instead of social class.

But still, the aspects of social class reveal itself as well. Most of my working class respondents chose social class over other identities. For them class comes before anything else, as they need economic and cultural capital in order to be accepted and live their sexual identities. Class comes into prominence before sexual identity because in order to survive, they need money. And most of my working class interviewees were against moving up the social ladder, instead of discrediting middle class values. Most of them give importance to class when choosing a partner or wish an educated partner who will carry them further. Likewise, those who come from working class families but managed to climb the social ladder also chose their social class over other identities. But they also queerify class relations by emphasizing their spiritual wealth. They try to replace the lack of economy with morality, dignity, spirituality. Moreover,

they resent and marginalise those lower than themselves, for instance foreign national sex workers. Also it could be asserted that working class respondents could be discussed in two groups; those who externalise their hatred and become political activists; and those who are ashamed of their classed positions and try to prove their respectability. However, these attempts also reveal class, as they lack the discourse that legitimise dispositions. In other words, even their attempts to disidentify from working classness are classed acts and cause them to remain classed. For this reason, even though they express positive feelings and indicate their moral superiority; resentment and fear stand behind.

On the other side, middle class subjects kept criticizing those staying at the closet and accused them of hypocrisy, while they avoided carrying their sexual identities to public sphere themselves, which comes to the same thing. Their social class, profession and nationality comes before their sexual and gender identities if they can hide; but if they can not hide because of their appearance, their sexual identities and social class intertwine. Even though my middle class butch lesbian interviewee<sup>516</sup>, for instance, emphasized the importance of her profession and social class at first, she mentioned of her discomfort with her appearance as a result of people gazing at her. In other words, she feels oppression regarding her sexual identity as well; “I am neither a man or a woman. That’s why people find me strange. I mean that situation bothers me. The fact that people are so afraid of me.” (P42) Still, the most important thing for middle class subjects is their careers, from which they keep their sexual identity out. For instance, according to one of my middle class interviewee<sup>517</sup>, it is a worse situation if a gay son of a businessman loses his career as a result of coming out; than a gay son of a tribe loses his life as a result of eastern traditions. In addition, my middle class respondents display conservative habitus, getting annoyed of activists. Middle class subjects who have nothing to worry about make their gender and sexual identity a

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<sup>516</sup> P42

<sup>517</sup> P42

matter of pride. As one of my middle class respondent<sup>518</sup> states, if people would offer him a job by pitying him, he would prefer them not. However, on the other hand, there are those who struggle for survival, there are those who have to prostitute, and there are those who barely feed themselves. That is to say, while middle class subjects have trouble with recognition, working class subjects have trouble with survival. This is the indicator of class. While my middle class interviewees claim that gender is a very small problem, and there are more severe problems in life, some of my working class Alevi Kurdish transsexual respondents had to take to sanctuary to survive. This is class difference.

In this respect, it could be asserted that the term queer does not refer to an umbrella term that cover all LGBTQ people. There is a hierarchy within the movement as well, based on both gender, appearance, language, and cultural capital which refer to social class. Even the way they name the movement differ based on social class. In other words, I argue that social class is determinant. But it is not just an economic category. Rather, culture and material-economic aspects interlock.

My leftist and Kurdish respondents who display critical habitus emphasize the significance of collectivism and solidarity regardless of their social class. Most of the respondents with critical habitus give prominence to politics while those with conservative habitus emphasized religion and faith. My respondents who exhibit conservative habitus find activists frightening, excessive, aggressive and degenerated. Political activism is not something they want to identify themselves with. Besides, they do not even know what queer refers to. Most of my respondents opt for socio-economic status as their first choice and political opinion then following, even though they have no concern with politics. I had to explain the meaning of gender and queer to those non-activist respondents. And even though most of the interviewees rejected classification and linked social classes and politics with discrimination and prejudice; actually those that develop conservative habitus did classify people. First based on

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<sup>518</sup> P25

woman/man dichotomy, later on Alevi Kurdish/Sunni Turk dichotomy. They emphasized morality and individuality.

In the end, compared to other disadvantaged, marginalised groups, such as Kurds, Alevis, Armenians; LGBTQ people are the most vulnerable as they do not have a family, community, neighborhood or village to live with. As a result of being exposed to intersectional oppression and becoming oppressed of the oppressed, they have the potential to build intersectional resistance alliances. They suffer a lonely childhood as a result of being socially and emotionally isolated from rest of the society, including their family, in the most cases. But, in addition to this, a Kurdish LGBTQ is not protected within the Kurdish community as well. Each field has its own oppressor and oppressed and these fields intersect. As a result; LGBTQs are the indispensable political subject in a united struggle against the conservative-authoritarian regime.

And LGBTQ movement in Turkey contains the features of both old and new social movements. It brings the features of old and new social movements because it both targets the state and legal institutions, together with the transformation of society and daily life in terms of norms and values. In addition to legal struggle, changing the perception of people and the intelligible normative structure in daily life is equally important and crucial. It both aims to change the hegemonic discourse and the laws.

The movement has been open to new articulations; with Kurdish movement, feminist movement, even with Justice and Development Party<sup>519</sup>. In contrast to the sexism and homophobia of left-wing politics, LGBTQ movement problematise relationship between social class and identity. People with different ideology, religion, ethnicity and social class see the potential of emancipation in LGBTQ movement as a result of its inclusionary character. It opens up space for coalition politics, in terms of doing but not being. It involves all categories, such as ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, sexuality. Because instead of focusing on differences, focusing on similarities has the

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<sup>519</sup> Also known as AK-LGBTİ.

potential of bringing all disadvantaged marginalised subjects together. And when we focus on the identities, differences between subjects become significant. But if we focus on the similarities; the common oppression and suffering, the intersections of homophobia, transphobia, racism, patriarchy, nationalism, religion, and exploitation of labor, a comradeship can be established. In other words, the struggle can be issue based instead of identity or people based.

On the other hand, this thesis focused only on the critical subversive potential of queer movement but does not involve other subversive, revolutionary agencies. The study does not focus on the political articulation of queer and non-queer subjects specifically. And the study does not intend to impose any critical agency to queer subjects by default but states that displaying critical habitus triggers critical subversive agencies of queer subjects.

In the following researches, the movement can be studied from an international perspective. Because on international scale, while the movement in USA focuses on the needs of wealthy white gay such as same sex marriage; in the case of Turkey street activism for right to live is still at stake. LGBTQ movement in Turkey is still at the stage of using its identity as a weapon against the sovereign power. Our movement comes from behind, lacking the fundamental rights the movements in some countries had already obtained. But this is also an advantage in terms of criticizing the capitalist system. Because it is not yet coopted. And examining the case of Turkey from a comparative perspective would be meaningful.

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## APPENDICES

### A. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

**P1:** 38 years old transsexual woman from Zonguldak, Sunni Turk, vocalist at a club, Imam-hatip graduate, her both parents are villiage workers.

**P2:** 26 years old middle class gay from Kayseri, Sunni Turk, studying at university, his mother is housewife and father is accountant.

**P3:** 36 years old middle class gay from Ankara, Sunni Turk, insurer, both parents are insurers.

**P4:** 31 years old working class bisexual woman from Çorum, Alevi Kurd, working at the kitchen of a café, foundation degree graduate, her mother is housewife mother and her father is worker.

**P5:** 31 years old working class gay from Keçiören – Ankara, Alevi Kurd, animal caretaker, his mother is housewife and father is contractor

**P6:** 36 years old white-collar employee gay from Kurtuluş – Istanbul, working at an association, high school graduate, his mother is housewife and his father is shopkeeper.

**P7:** 31 years old transsexual woman from Adana, Sunni Turk, sex worker, university graduate, her mother is housewife her father is retired worker.

**P8:** 23 years old working class pansexual woman from Gönen - Balıkesir, Sunni Turk, studying at university and working at a club, her mother is housewife and her father is retired police

**P9:** 23 years old white-collar gay from Antakya, Nusayri, studying at university, his both parents are retired civil servants.

**P10:** 26 years old working class bisexual woman from Sivas, Alevi Kurd, nail artist, both parents are workers.

**P11:** 54 years old transsexual woman from Bayrampaşa – Istanbul currently living in İzmir, Sunni Turk, telling fortunes at a cafe and dancing at boat tours, primary school graduate, her both parents are workers.

**P12:** 34 years old middle class bisexual woman from Ayrancı – Ankara, Sunni Turk, working at a company, her mother is teacher and father is civil servant.

**P13:** 24 years old working class lesbian from Sivas, Kurdish Alevi, working at the kitchen of a café, high school graduate, her mother is housewife and father is worker.

**P14:** 41 years old working class gay from Ayrancı – Ankara, Sunni Turk, fortune teller, high school graduate, his mother is housewife and father is doctor.

**P15:** 28 years old middle class gay from Keçiören – Ankara, Sunni Turk, veterinarian, both parents are shopkeepers.

**P16:** 22 years old working class transsexual man from Bahçelievler - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, swimming coach, his mother is housewife and father is jeweler.

**P17:** 23 years old working class bisexual woman from Mersin, Alevi Kurd, working at the kitchen of a café, both parents are civil servants.

**P18:** 27 years old middle class gay from Ankara, Sunni Turk, studying at university, his mother is housewife and father is police.

**P19:** 30 years old transsexual man from Mersin, Sunni Turk, unemployed for a long time, high school graduate, his both parents are shopkeepers.

**P20:** 26 years old working class cross dresser from Gaziosmanpaşa - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, working at different jobs (sex work, private lessons, cat caretaker), both parents are unemployed.

**P21:** 31 years old transsexual women from Tunceli, Kurdish Alevi, sex worker, university graduate, both parents are workers.

**P22:** 24 years old working class gay from Şirinevler - Istanbul, Kurd, unemployed, both parents are municipality workers.

**P23:** 31 years old middle class gay from GOP - Ankara, Sunni Turk, artist, university graduate, his mother is housewife and father is retired civil servant.

**P24:** 50 years old educated transsexual women from Kızılay – Ankara, Sunni Turk, sex worker, educated, her mother is housewife and father is dead.

- P25:** 24 years old middle class transsexual man from Erenköy - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, tattoo artist, his mother is housewife his father is shopkeeper.
- P26:** 26 years old refugee transsexual women, Kurd, unemployed, her mother is housewife and her father is worker.
- P27:** 32 years old middle class gay from Bilkent - Ankara, Sunni Turk, opera singer, his mother is teacher and father is banker.
- P28:** 26 years old working class gay from Patnos - Ağrı, Kurd, unemployed, both parents are workers.
- P29:** 26 years old working class gay from Adana, Sunni Turk, unemployed, high school graduate, his mother is cashier his father is accountant.
- P30:** 24 years old working class gay from Diyarbakır, Kurd, foundation degree graduate, victim of the state of emergency decree, working at kitchen of a café, both parents are unemployed.
- P31:** 20 years old middle class cross dresser from Kurtuluş - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, studying at the university, his mother is nurse and father is soldier.
- P32:** 24 years old working class gay from Mersin, Kurd, high school graduate, his mother is housewife, his father is dead.
- P33:** 34 years old middle class gay from Kadıköy - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, teacher, his mother is housewife and father is police.
- P34:** 29 years old working class bisexual from Adana, Alevi Kurd, working at an association, her mother is housewife her father is police.
- P35:** 27 years old working class transsexual man from Kenan Evren - Adana, Sunni Turk, coach, his mother is cleaning lady and his father is worker.
- P36:** 19 years old middle class gay from İncek - Ankara, Sunni Turk, university student, his mother is housewife and father is soldier.
- P37:** 34 years old working class lesbian from Antakya, Sunni Turk, life-guard, university graduate, her mother is housewife and her father is high school graduate paid teacher.
- P38:** 23 years old middle class gay from Istanbul, Sunni Turk, studying at the university, his mother is housewife and his father is car mechanic.
- P39:** 60 years old transsexual woman from Seyranbağları – Ankara, Sunni Turk, sex worker, her mother is housewife and her father is farmer.

- P40:** 34 years old middle class gay from Kavaklıdere – Ankara, Sunni Turk, teacher, university graduate, his mother is nurse and father is engineer.
- P41:** 18 years old working class gay from Tuzla - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, uneducated, his mother is working at a factory and his father is unemployed.
- P42:** 33 years old middle class lesbian from Bağcılar – Ankara, Sunni Turk, musician, university graduate, her mother is accountant and her father is dead.
- P43:** 18 years old working class gay from Yenişehir – Mersin, Alevi Kurd, student, his mother is housewife and father is dead.
- P44:** 40 years old middle class lesbian from Dumlupınar - Antakya, estate agent, university graduate, both parents are teachers.
- P45:** 20 years old working class lesbian from Sincan – Ankara, Sunni Turk, high school student, her mother is dead and father is civil servant.
- P46:** 28 years old working class bisexual from Pozcu - Mersin, Nusayri, fieldworker at an association, university graduate, both parents are shopkeepers.
- P47:** 29 years old middle class bisexual from Beşiktaş - Istanbul, Sunni Turk, assistant director, university graduate, her mother is business administrator and father is sportsman.

## **B. QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Demographic Survey:**

Age:

Birthplace:

The place you have spent most of your life in?

(village-country, town, city)

Where do you live at the moment?

Education:

Income:

Level of education and profession of your mother?

Level of education and profession of your father?

If any, level of education and profession of other members of the family?

Religion?

Ethnicity?

Religious sect?

- 1) May I get to know you? How was your childhood like? And your relations with your parents?
- 2) If you had a chance, can you tell about your educational background? If so, at what point you had to drop out?

- 3) Do you work? Can you tell about your previous work experience?
- 4) Which of the following categories would you prefer to describe yourself with?
- Political view (ideology)
  - Organisation
  - Gender identity & Sexual orientation
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Ethnicity
  - Profession
  - Religion
  - Other (please explain)
- b) Which of these categories would you prefer secondarily?
- c) Explain why you did not choose the other categories.
- 5) Do you consider yourself as poor or rich? What comes to mind when you hear the word social class? Which social class would you describe yourself as?
- 6) In your daily life, do you encounter with people who are poorer or richer? How do you choose your partners? What is the effect of their social class on your decision?
- 7) What are the three most critical problems you see in the society? And how can they be solved?
- 8) Which political view do you lean towards and why?
- 9) Are there any organizations that appeal to you, that gives you a sense of belonging?
- 10) Do you believe every LGBTQ subject has to struggle against discrimination?

- 11) Do you attend Pride parades? Did you participate in the Gezi protests?
- 12) What is your daily routine? What do you do in your spare time? Do you use public transportation? Do you go to the cinema or concerts? Do you attend the activities of the organizations?
- 13) Do ethnicity, religious sect and different life-style matter in your friendships?
- 14) What comes to your mind when you think of the term gender identity?
- 15) What do you think about the queer/ LGBTQ culture and the movement? Where does your gender identity locate you? Do you politicize your gender identity? How would you describe queer subjectivity?
- 16) If you compare queer/ LGBTQ movement with other social movements, what are the similarities and differences?
- 17) What kind of changes does queer/ LGBTQ culture create in daily life?
- 18) Do you consider ethnic, religious and class inequalities as crucial issues as much as the gender based inequalities, and oppression?
- 19) If not, why? If so, do you believe LGBTQ movement should be open to alliances that include these issues?
- 20) Do you believe the discrimination, violence and oppression LGBTQ subjects suffer from differ based on their social classes and economic status?
- 21) How does this differentiation, these different experiences affect political activism and participation in the organizations?
- 22) Do these stratified experiences of discrimination, oppression and violence intersect and increase the effects of inequality?
- 23) If not, why?

- a) Do you believe LGBTQ subjects are not subjected to multiple forms of oppression and inequality?
  - b) Or do you believe that even if LGBTQ subjects are subjected to multiple forms of oppression, these inequalities are not integrated?
  - c) Do you believe that these multiple forms of power contradict and conflict with each other?
  - d) Does your gender identity conflict/contradict with the other categories you choose to describe yourself with?
- 24) What are the things that restrict you, and how do you resist?



## C. TABLE OF INTERVIEWEES

Conservative Habitus	Critical Habitus
<b>P37</b> (Sunni Turk, working class)	<b>P3</b> (Sunni Turk, <b>educated</b> , middle class)
<b>P45</b> (Sunni Turk, working class)	<b>P4</b> (Alevi, with an assimilated Kurd mother, working class)
<b>P1</b> (Sunni Turk, working class)	<b>P6</b> (Sunni Turk, high-school graduate but <b>organised</b> , self educated)
<b>P5</b> (Kurdish Alevi but <b>assimilated, working class*** family</b> )	<b>P7</b> (sex worker but educated, with a Zaza father and Turk mother but assimilated)
<b>P8</b> (Sunni Turk, working class, studying)	<b>P9</b> (Arab Alevi, white-collar, <b>organised</b> )
<b>P11</b> (Sunni Turk, working class)	<b>P10</b> (Kurdish Alevi, working class)
<b>P12</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P17</b> (Kurdish Alevi, working class)
<b>P13</b> (Kurdish Alevi, working class, <b>uneducated***family</b> )	<b>P19</b> (Sunni Turk, working class, <b>educated</b> , <b>organised</b> )
<b>P14</b> (Sunni Turk, working class but educated)	<b>P20</b> (Sunni Turk, working class, <b>educated</b> , <b>organised</b> )
<b>P15</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P21</b> (Kurdish Alevi, working class)
<b>P16</b> (Sunni Turk, working class)	<b>P22</b> (Kurd, working class)
<b>P23</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P24</b> (Sunni Turk, sex worker but <b>educated</b> )
<b>P18</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P26</b> (Kurd, working class)
<b>P25</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P28</b> (Kurd, working class)
<b>P27</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P29</b> (Kurd, working class)
<b>P31</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P30</b> (Kurd, working class)
<b>P33</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P34</b> (Kurdish Alevi, working class, <b>educated</b> )
<b>P36</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P32</b> (Kurd, working class)
<b>P38</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P35</b> (Sunni Turk, working class, <b>educated</b> )
<b>P39</b> (Sunni Turk, working class)	<b>P41</b> (Sunni Turk, working class, uneducated, not organised?)
<b>P40</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P43</b> (Kurdish Alevi, working class, <b>organised</b> )
<b>P42</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P44</b> (Sunni Turk, <b>middle class</b> , <b>educated</b> , <b>organised</b> )
<b>P2</b> (Sunni Turk, middle class)	<b>P46</b> (Arab Alevi, working class)
	<b>P47</b> (Sunni Turk, <b>middle class</b> , <b>educated</b> )

## D. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800  
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY  
T: +90 312 210 22 91  
F: +90 312 210 79 59  
www.iletisim.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 / 490

12 Aralık 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (IAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Kürşad ERTUĞRUL

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Ezgi BORA'nın "Queer Kuramın Bir Limit Olarak Sınıf Karşısındaki Dönüştürücü Potansiyeli" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 470 ODTU 2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız

  
Doç.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY  
Başkan

  
Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN  
Üye

Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL  
Üye

## **E. CURRICULUM VITAE**

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname, Name: Bora, Ezgi

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth: 3 August 1986, Eskişehir

Marital Status: Single

Phone: +90 532 200 50 04

email: ezboragmail.com

### **EDUCATION**

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Year of Graduation</b>
PhD	METU, Political Science and Public Administration	2021
MS	METU, Media and Cultural Studies	2014
BS	Bilkent University, Graphic Design	2007

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
2010-2011	BEG Consultancy Production LTD. CO.	Assistant
2012-	Freelance	Designer

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Advanced English

## **SOFTWARE PROGRAMS**

Mac OS X, Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Freehand, Adobe Illustrator,  
QuarkXpress, Adobe Premiere Pro, Avid Xpress Pro, NVivo

## F. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma en temelde yapı-fail ikiliğini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma toplumsal sınıf, etnisite, din, cinsiyet ve cinsellik gibi faktörlerden oluşan normatif düzeni yapı olarak ele almaktadır. Buna karşılık, yapıya karşı eleştirel yıkıcı eylemler, iktidara karşı direniş de vardır. Ve bu tez, kesişimsel baskıya karşı kuir öznelerin eleştirel yıkıcı failliğini Türkiye örneğinde araştırmaktadır.

Siyasal alanda iki pozisyon vardır; sınıf ve kimlik. Bu iki zıt pozisyon; sınıf siyaseti ve kimlik siyaseti birbirini dışlar. Oysa amaç hem yapısal dönüşüm, hem de toplumsal ilişkilerin, kültürün ve bakış açılarının dönüşümü olmalıdır. Hem sınıf eksenli hem kimlik eksenli siyaset kendi başlarına yetersiz kaldıkları için amaç kesişimsel analiz ve koalisyon siyaseti olmalıdır. Kendi paradigmamız içerisinde kalmamalı, diğer paradigmalara da ilişkilenebilmeli, kendi paradigmamızı da eleştirebilmeliyiz.

Kesişimsellik teorisi bu iki zıt pozisyonu, sınıf eksenini ve kimlik eksenini biraraya getirir. Kesişimsellik kuramı, toplumsal ilişkileri kimliklerden, söylemlerden, güç ilişkilerinden oluşan, iç içe geçmiş, çok yönlü, akışkan ve eklemlenmelere açık bir düzen olarak ele alır. Buna göre özneler, tarihsel olarak inşa edilmiş sınıf, cinsiyet, cinsellik, ırk ve etnik toplumsal ilişkiler içine doğarlar ve sosyal alan içinde sahip oldukları sermaye türüne ve erişebildikleri kaynaklara göre konumlanırlar. Ve eşitsizliklerin yeniden üretildiği bu konumlarını içselleştirirler. Tüm özneler tarihsel ve toplumsal olarak konumlanmıştır ve toplumsal cinsiyet, cinsellik, toplumsal sınıf, etnisite ve dinin kesişimi gibi birden fazla yapısal konumu işgal ederler. Burada kimlik farklılıklarından ziyade eşitsizliklere ve bu eşitsizlikleri meydana getiren içiçe işleyen güç ilişkilerine odaklanmak büyük önem taşır. Bu sebeple bu tezde Hill Collins'in kimliklerden ziyade güç ilişkilerine odaklanan kesişimsellik anlayışı benimsenmiştir.

Queer hareket de eski ve yeni toplumsal hareketler arasında bir köprü kurar. Post-yapısalcı Judith Butler kuir kavramını her türden azınlık ötekinin koalisyonu anlamında önerir. Kuir eleştirel bir kategori olarak işlev görür ve radikal bir siyasi potansiyel anlamına gelir. Butler kuir kavramı ile sadece eşcinselliğe değil, tüm baskı sistemlerine atıfta bulunur. Kavramı kesişimsel siyasi eylem olarak yorumlar. Başka bir deyişle Butler'a göre queer kategorisi, cinsiyet ve cinselliğin yanı sıra ırk, etnisite ve sosyal sınıftan oluşmaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında cinsellik diğer faktörlerden bağımsız olarak analiz edilemez. Kuir siyaset, normatif düzene karşı farklı türdeki dışlanmışlıklar, maruz kalınan baskılar arasında bağlantı kuran siyasi direniş anlamına gelir. Ve Butler, post-yapısalcı bir kuramcı olarak kuir siyasetin yıkıcılık potansiyeline vurgu yapar. Butler'a göre kuir siyaset cinsiyet ve cinselliğe ek olarak toplumsal sınıfı, etnisiteyi ve ırkı da kapsayan, yeni siyasal pratiklere akelemlenmelere açık bir siyasettir.

Bu anlamda kuir siyaset ile kesişimsellik teorisinin birbirini tamamladığı iddia edilebilir. Kuir bireyler cinsiyet, cinsellik, ırk, etnisite, sınıf temelli kesişimsel ayrımcılığa maruz kalırlar. Kesişimsellik kuramı da cinsiyet, ırk, etnisite, cinsellik, sınıf vb. temelli çoklu kesişen ayrımcılığın nasıl işlediğini inceler. Öte yandan, farklılıkları, kimlikleri kutuplaştıran kesişimsellik teorisinin yetersizliğini kuir teori kimlikleri yapıbozuma uğratarak aşar. Dolayısıyla kuir kategorisi bir teori ve hareket olmanın yanı sıra özneleri inşa eden normatif söylemleri, yapıları, pratikleri, iktidar ilişkilerini yapıbozuma uğratan bir yöntemdir de. Sadece cinsellik ve cinsiyet alanındaki güç ilişkilerini değil; sınıf, ırk, etnik köken ve din alanındaki güç ilişkilerini de sorunsallaştırır. Hatta terimin kendisinin bir eleştirisi olarak bile kullanılmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, kuir yöntem ile sadece ayrıcalıklı bir beyaz orta sınıf örneğine odaklanmak yerine LGBTQ hareketinin kendisini eleştirmek ve yıkmak da mümkündür. Özetle Butler'a göre, dışlanmış ötekileştirilmiş kimliklerin kesişimi olan kuir siyaset normatif düzeni yıkarak yeni öznellikler yaratmayı önererek her alanda ötekileştirilmiş azınlıklara özgürleşme fırsatı sunar.

Öte yandan, post-yapısalcı Butler'ın aksine, inşacı yapısalcı olan Pierre Bourdieu'nun eylem kuramı yapıya odaklanır. Bourdieu'ye göre, bireyler yapı tarafından oluşturulur

ve kısıtlanırlar. Bourdieu, toplumsal sınıfı öznenin failliğini sınırlayan bir yapı olarak kavramsallaştırır. Toplumsal sınıf, faillerin sahip oldukları sermayelere göre konumlandığı bir sosyal alandır. Aynı sınıfa mensup olanlar, yani bu sosyal alan içinde benzer konumlarda bulunanlar, benzer eğilimlere sahiptir ve dolayısıyla benzer pratikler geliştirir. Bireylerin sosyal konumları, sahip oldukları sermaye türlerine bağlıdır. Ve Bourdieu'ye göre aynı sınıf konumunu işgal edenler, 'habitus' olarak kavramsallaştırılan benzer eğilimler geliştirirler. Yani failliği yapı ile ilişkilendirir ve failin pratiklerinin onların sınıf konumlarından, habituslarından kaynaklandığını ileri sürer. Oysa Butler iktidar tarafından kurulan öznelerin direnme imkânına işaret eder.

Bu çalışma literatürden yola çıkarak Butler'ın kavramsallaştırdığı eleştirel yıkıcı kuir özneliğin hayatın içinde bir karşılığı olup olmadığını araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Literatürdeki eleştirel yıkıcı kuir özneyi Türkiye örneğinde, alanda araştırmayı hedeflemiştir. Sınıf-kimlik ve yapı-fail ikiliğinden yola çıkarak, literatüre dayalı varsayımlardan yola çıkarak Türkiye örneğini araştıran ve tartışan bu çalışmanın araştırma sorunsalları şunlardır: Hayatın içinde sınırlayıcı normatif yapılara karşı eleştirel yıkıcı faillik sergileyen kuir deneyimler mevcut mu? Bu anlamda, bu çalışma aynı zamanda queer öznelerin failliklerini kısıtlayan ve sınırlayan yapılara karşı eleştirel özneliğini sorgulamaktadır. Bu kısıtlamalar etnik köken, din, cinsiyet ve toplumsal sınıfı içerir. Bu tez, Türkiye'deki kuir bireylerin kesişimselliğin bileşenlerini ne ölçüde gösterdiğini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. İçinde yaşadıkları normatif anlaşılır düzenleri nasıl altüst eder ve yapılarını bozarlar? Arada yeni öznellikler keşfetme ve oluşturma girişimleri var mı? Toplumsal cinsiyeti ve cinselliği yıktıkları gibi, maddi diğer maddi normatif yapıları da altüst ediyor ve onlara meydan okuyorlar mı? Eğer öyleyse, yapısal kısıtlamaları ne ölçüde sorguluyor, meydan okuyor ve yıkıyorlar ve hangi normatif yapısal kısıtlamaları sorguluyorlar veya yıkıyorlar? Nasıl? Yoksa sosyal sınıfı yok edilemez bir sınır-yapı olarak mı algılıyorlar ve Bourdieu'nün habitus teorisine mi uyuyorlar?

Bir başka deyişle, bu çalışma Bourdieu'nun habitus tarafından belirlenen yapıya gömülü öznelerine karşılık Butler'ın eleştirel yıkıcı kuir failer kavramsallaştırmasını tartışmayı amaçlar. İnşacı-yapısalcılık ve post-yapısalcılık karşılaştırmalı tartışılır.

Kimliklerin performatifliğini daha iyi anlamak için sınıf ilişkileri de dâhil olmak üzere çoklu baskı sistemlerinin kesişimselliği incelenir. Çünkü iktidar ve tahakküm ilişkilerini söylemsel olarak meşrulaştırma eğiliminde olan konuşma gücüne yalnızca meşrulaştırılmış geçmişe sahip olanlar sahiptir.

Çünkü queer teori üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, sürdürülebilir çok yönlü direnişin dinamiklerini temsil edip etmediği sorusundan çoğunlukla kaçmaktadır. Queer araştırmalarının çoğu, çoğunlukla toplumsal cinsiyet ve cinselliğe odaklanır ve bireyleri baskılayan diğer maddi kısıtlamaları görmezden gelir. Bu nedenle, tahakküm matrisini oluşturan çok çeşitli baskı sistemleri analiz edilmelidir. Bu tez, Türkiye örneğinde queer öznelerin temsil ettiği siyaseti incelemektedir. Literatür temelli varsayımlardan yola çıkan çalışma, alanda eleştirel yıkıcı queer özneliğin olasılığını araştırıyor.

Ve bu çalışmanın önemi, cinsiyet, cinsellik, toplumsal sınıf, etnisite ve dini normatif yapıların bileşenleri olarak birleştirme girişiminde yatarken, literatürde kesişimselliğe dayalı çalışmaların çoğu göç ve ırk üzerinedir. Çalışmaların çoğunda özellikle toplumsal sınıf göz ardı edilmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, sınıfı yapısal bir sınır olarak, sorgulanamaz bir normatif kısıtlama olarak almak için bu tez, inşacı yapısalcı Bourdieu'ye atıfta bulunur. Ve bu "yapılar"a karşı ve bunlarla ilişkili olarak eleştirel faillik olasılığını tartışmak için normlara karşı eleştirel yıkıcı faillik olasılığının altını çizen postyapısalcı Butler'a atıfta bulunur,

Bu çalışma, queer öznelere eleştirel yıkıcı özneliği atfetmeyi amaçlamamakta, ancak literatüre dayalı varsayımları alanda araştırmaktadır. İlk başta, Butler'ın eleştirel yıkıcı queer öznelik kavramsallaştırmasının sahada bir gerçekliğe sahip olup olmadığını sorgular. Eğer öyleyse, bu yıkıcı eleştirel kuir özeneler sınıf habitusunun kısıtlamalarını da yıkıyorlar mı? Değilse, hangi nedenlerle? Başka bir deyişle, Bourdieu'nün inşacı-yapısalcı sınıf tanımını Butler'ın post-yapısalcı eleştirel faillik anlayışına kesişimsel bir perspektiften yerleştirmeye yönelik teorik tartışmalar, Türkiye'deki LGBTQ öznelere dayalı etnografik araştırmalarla test ediliyor. Sınıf,



cinsiyet, cinsellik, etnisite ve dinin kesişimleri açısından farklı toplumsal konumlanmalara ait queer öznelere deneyimleri kesişimsel bir yaklaşımla tartışılmaktadır. Yapıları nasıl deneyimledikleri ve direndikleri, yeni öznellikler oluşturup oluşturmadıkları analiz edilir.

Sonuçta kartopu örnekleme tekniği ile farklı cinsiyet ve cinsel kimliğe ve politik görüşe sahip, farklı yaştan, meslek grubundan ve sınıftan toplamda 47 kişiyle derinlemesine mülakat yapıldı. Ancak literatüre dayalı varsayımların sahada, gerçek hayatta bir karşılığı bulunamadı. Sahaya sınıfın nasıl hissedildiği ve deneyimlendiğini araştırmak için yola çıkıldı ama başka kimliklerle karşılaşıldı. Alan öncesi hazırlanan sorular daha çok sınıf ve kesişimsellik kavramına dayanıyordu. Ayrıca akademik dil kullanılmıştı. Ancak saha sürecinde değiştiler. Toplumsal sınıfa dayalı sorular siyasete, aktivizme ve örgütlere dönüştü. İdeoloji kelimesinin yerini siyasi kimlik; sınıf kelimesinin yerini de zenginlik ve yoksulluk aldı. Aileyle ilgili sorular erken yaşta ailesinden ayrılmak zorunda bırakılan transseksüel görüşmeciler için anlamını yitirdi. İş hayatı ile ilgili sorularda seks işçiliği ve işyerinde açılmama sorunsallarıyla karşılaşıldı. Kullanılan dil ve kelimeler görüşmecilerin mensubu olduğu sınıfa göre farklılık gösterdi. Alan çalışması sırasında literatüre dayalı varsayımlar değişti. Çünkü katılımcılar toplumsal sınıf yerine kendilerini farklı kimliklerle tanımladılar. Sonuç olarak, sınıf araştırması farklı kategorilere ayrıştı. Görüşmeciler farklı siyasi-ideolojik anlayışlar sonucu kendilerini farklı tanımlamayı tercih ettiler.

Ayrıca LGBTQ hareketinin kendi içinde de hiyerarşi olduğu ortaya çıktı. Bu bağlamda queer teriminin tüm LGBTQ bireyleri kapsayan bir şemsiye terimi ifade etmediği söylenebilir. Hareket içinde de hem cinsiyete, görünüme, dile hem de toplumsal sınıfa atıfta bulunan kültürel sermayeye dayalı bir hiyerarşi var. Hareketi adlandırma biçimleri bile toplumsal sınıfa göre farklılık gösteriyor. Başka bir deyişle, bu çalışma toplumsal sınıfın belirleyici olduğunu savunuyor. Ancak sınıf sadece ekonomik bir kategori değildir. Aksine, kültür ve maddi-ekonomik yönler iç içedir.

Queer öznelere içkin eleştirel yıkıcı öznellik bulunamadı. Ancak LGBTQ öznelere atfedilen eleştirel failliğin eleştirel habitus gerektirdiği ortaya çıktı. Görüşmecilerin

habitus'u, onların eleştirel yıkıcı failliklerini belirledi. Bu temelde, görüşmecilerin iki tür habitus sergiledikleri söylenebilir; eleştirel ve muhafazakâr. Başka bir deyişle, bu çalışma iki tür habitus önermektedir; eleştirel ve muhafazakâr. Alan çalışmasında, tıpkı Butler'ın iki tür performansı ya da Foucault'nun iki tür eyleminin kuramlaştırılması gibi, iki tür habitus ortaya çıkar. Görüşmecilerden bazıları yapısal-normatif kısıtlamalara karşı eleştirel yıkıcı faillik sergileyip eleştirel bir habitus geliştirirken; diğerleri muhafazakâr habitus sergilediler ve saygın olarak tanınmak için kendilerine yatırım yapmayı, orta sınıf yaşam tarzını benimsemeyi tercih ettiler. Bu tez Butler'ın eleştirel queer öznelliği için eleştirel habitusun bir önkoşul olduğunu iddia eder. Başka bir deyişle, LGBTQ konularına atfedilen eleştirel faillik, eleştirel habitus gerektirir. Ve tezin eleştirel habitusa kavramıyla kastettiği, eleştirel yıkıcı öznellik sergilemek iken, muhafazakâr habitus terimi, Butler'ın bahsettiği eleştirel yıkıcı queer öznelliği sergilememek anlamında kullanılır. Bu anlamda görüşmecilerin eleştirel öznellikleri sadece politik aktivist olmaları açısından değil, gündelik yaşam açısından da sorgulanmıştır. Çünkü bu tez eleştirel öznelliği gerçekleştirmenin ön koşulunun eleştirel habitus sergilemek olduğunu savunmaktadır. Habitusların oluşumunu etkileyen faktörler tezde ayrıntılı olarak tartışılmıştır.

Tezdeki bölümleri özetlersek, birinci bölüm çalışmanın önemini ve kapsamını özetlemektedir. İkinci bölümde saha çalışması tartışılmaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm kapsamlı bir şekilde teorik çerçeveye odaklanmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm, toplumsal sınıf, cinsiyet ve cinsellik, etnisite ve dinin queer özneler tarafından nasıl deneyimlendiğini ve bunlara karşı eleştirel yıkıcı öznellik olasılığını tartışmaktadır. Beşinci bölümde, görüşmecilerin sergiledikleri habitus türleri detaylı bir şekilde tartışılmaktadır. Altıncı bölüm görüşmecilerin deneyimlediği kişisimsel baskılara karşı kişisimsel direniş olasılığının izini sürmektedir. Son olarak yedinci bölüm, cinsiyet, cinsellik, toplumsal sınıf, etnisite ve dinin kişisimlerine karşı queer öznelerin eleştirel yıkıcı faillikleri üzerine bir sonuç çıkarmaya çalışır.

Çalışmadaki temel örneklem işçi sınıfı olmasına rağmen, sınıfın nasıl deneyimlendiği ve yorumlandığı sadece işçi sınıfı üzerinden değil, bütün ötekileştirilmiş gruplar üzerinden tartışılmaktadır. Çalışmada kapitalizm, ataerkillik, heteroseksizm,

muhafazakârlık ve milliyetçilik ile şekillenen queer öznelerin özgün toplumsal konumları; aileleri, eğitim durumları, iş yaşamları, etnik kökenleri, dini inançları ve siyasi bilinçleri üzerinden tartışılmıştır. Kuir bireylerin aile ve topluluk, eğitim, iş hayatı, görünüm, coğrafya, dil, yakın ilişkiler, din ve etnik köken alanlarında sınıfı nasıl deneyimlediği ve yorumladığı incelenmiştir. Bahsi geçen her alanda kimlerin ayrıcalıklı, kimlerin dışlanmış olarak konumlandığı incelenmiştir. Bahsi geçen her alanda öznelerin yapı tarafından belirlenmişliği ve bu yapıya iktidar ilişkilerine karşı meydan okuma girişimleri, eleştirel yıkıcı faillikleri araştırılmıştır. Ayrıca uğradıkları kesişimsel baskıya karşı kesişimsel direniş sergilemenin olasılığı tartışılmıştır.

Öncelikle görüşmeciler hangi sınıfa mensup olduklarını dile getirmeseler de, sınıf sorularına kimi zaman farklı kimliklerle cevap verseler de hangi sınıfa mensup olduklarının bilincindeydiler. Açıkça dile getirmeseler de sınıf anlatılarında, aktardıkları duygularda belirgindi. Ve sınıfı saygınlık, ahlak üzerinden ifade ettiler.

Görüşmeciler kendilerini Sünni Türk Müslüman/Alevi Kürt Gayrimüslim ayrımı çerçevesinde tanımlamayı tercih ettiler. Mensubu oldukları sınıf sorulduğunda birçoğu etnik kimliklerden veya mezheplerden bahsetti. Yani sınıfın nasıl deneyimlendiğini araştırmak için yola çıkıldı ancak farklı kimliklerle karşı karşıya gelindi. Ancak bu Bourdieu'nun da iddia ettiği gibi kültürün bireylerin konumlandığı ve eşitsizliklerin tekrar yaratıldığı bir alan olduğunu kanıtlar niteliktedir. Görüşmeciler sınıfı kültürel terimlerle yorumladı ve algıladı.

Sınıf onlar için sadece maddiyatla, ekonomik ilişkilerle ilgili değil; saygınlık, görgü ve ahlak ile ilgiliydi. Sınıf mücadelesini saygın olarak tanınma mücadelesi olarak algıladılar ve ifade ettiler. Birebir sınıfı dile getirmedi ancak maruz kaldıkları eşitsizlik deneyimleri aracılığıyla ifade ettiler. Görüşmeciler sadece ne iş yaptıkları, ne kadar kazandıkları veya ne kadar eğitilmiş oldukları bakımından değil, aynı zamanda ne kadar saygın görüldükleri ve bunun kendilerini nasıl hissettirdiği açısından da sınıflandırılmış konumlarının farkındaydılar. Sınıf aslında hayatlarının merkezinde yer almaktadır ama bunu duygular ve hisler yoluyla ifade ederler. Kendilerinin de saygın bireyler olduklarına dikkat çekerek güven ve onay arayışına girerler. Yani maddi

ilişkilere değil, kültür ve sembolik mücadele açısından diğer sınıflarla olan ilişkilerine vurgu yaparlar. Örnek aldıkları, kendilerini kıyasladıkları da orta sınıf değerleri ve yaşam tarzıdır. Kendilerini hem kendilerinden daha yukarıda hem de daha aşağıda konumlanan sınıflarla kıyaslamayı sürdürürler. Örneğin bu transseksüel görüşmeciler için cis-kadın ve erkeklerdir. Transseksüel görüşmeciler için zorunluluk performansları cis-kadın ve erkeklere dayanıyor. Bu anlamda normatif kadınlık ve erkeklik öne çıkar. Çünkü Skeggs'in de belirttiği gibi kadınlık onların sınıf sermayelerinin cinsiyetlendirilmiş ve cinselleştirilmiş bileşenidir. (Skeggs, 2002)

Görüşmecilerin çoğu ailesinin habitusunu sürdürmektedir. Ayrıca ailenin maddi desteği bireyleri eğitimlerini sürdürmeye ve bunun sonucunda siyasi bilinç geliştirmeye yöneltmektedir. Ancak ailesinin desteğinden yoksun olan görüşmeciler yalnızdır ve eğitimlerine devam edemezler. İşçi sınıfı görüşmecilerden bazıları, ailelerinin desteğini kaybetmemek için cinsel kimliklerini saklamayı tercih ediyorlar. Çünkü açılırlarsa ailelerinin desteğini kaybetmek eğitim imkânlarından yoksun kalmak ve yoksullaşmak tehlikesiyle karşılaşacaklar. Ailenin desteği olmadan hayatta kalamayabilirler. Buna karşılık çözüm olarak çoğu kendi alternatif ailelerini oluşturuyor.

İşçi sınıfından görüşmecilerin birçoğu ya okula ilgisiz ya da kendilerini orta sınıf akranlarından daha az değerli gördükleri için okula hiç gitmemeyi tercih ediyor. Aile desteğinden ve eğitim imkânından yoksun görüşmeciler güvencesiz geçici işlerde çalışmaya mahkûm oluyorlar. Transseksüeller ise sigortasız sek işçiliği yapmaya mecbur bırakılıyorlar. Birçok görüşmeci derneklerde gönüllü çalışıyor. Öte yandan kültürel sermayesi olanlar derneklerde çalışarak bazen sınıf atlayabiliyorlar. Alt sınıf görüşmeciler ise bu duruma itiraz ediyor. Derneklerde yürütülen projeler bu anlamda hareket içinde büyük çatışmaların çıkmasına da neden oluyor. Yani sermaye tarafından belirlenen aktivizm de sınıf farklılıkları yaratıyor. Ayrıca orta sınıflar için örgütlü olmak, hayata anlam katmak ve saygınlık kazanmak demek iken alt sınıf dayanışma için veya bir iş kapısı açılır umuduyla derneklere gidiyor. Örgütlenme konusunda daha eğitilmiş ve deneyimli olanlar derneklerde öne çıkıyor. Ve dayanışmadan çok kendini ifade etme ve sembolik sermayeye atıfta bulunuyor.

Sınıf farklılıkları üzerinde etkisi olan bir diğerkonu ise beden ve görünüş. Görünüş de dışlama mekanizmalarına hizmet eder. Örneğın çoğugörüşmeci transseksüelleri alt sınıf olarak tanımladı. Transseksüel görüşmecilerin kendileri de etnik kimliklerinden veya mensubu oldukları sınıftan önce görünüşleri sebebiyle, trans oldukları için öldürüldüklerini belirttiler. Öte yandan transseksüel görüşmecilerden bazıları etnik kimlikleri sebebiyle okuldan atıldıklarını veya eğitim hayatında, içinde buldukları topluluklarda ayrımcılığa maruz kaldıklarını belirtti. Yani baskı ve ayrımcılık her koşulda kesişimsel işliyor.

Coğrafya da görüşmecilerin sınıfı deneyimleyiş ve yorumlayışları üzerinde etkili bir diğerk faktör. Örneğın hem aynı sınıfa mensup hem de aynı azınlık etnik kimliğe sahip görüşmecilerin siyasi görüşleri ve kuir öznellikleri yaşadıkları şehire veya doğdukları şehire göre farklılık gösterdi. Derneklerde görüşülen aktivistlerin sınıfları da hangi şehirde yaşadıklarına bağlı olarak farklılık gösterdi. Benzer koşullarda yaşayan görüşmecilerin aktivizm yapmaları da yaşadıkları şehir tarafından belirleniyordu. Ayrıca kimi ghettoya yaşayan alt sınıf görüşmeciler kendileri de yaşadıkları semti ve orada ikamet eden kimse olarak kendilerini ötekileştirdiler.

Görüşmecilerin dili de mensubu oldukları sınıf doğrultusunda değişiklik gösterdi. Kültürel sermayeden yoksun, alt sınıf görüşmeciler sınıf sorusuna cinsiyetle, etnik kimlikle veya dinle cevap verdi. Bir örgütte örgütlü olanlar ise ezberlemişçesine örgütün diliyle konuştular. Ancak detaylı sorulara yanıt veremediler. Çelişkili anlamdan yoksun cevaplar verdiler. Görüşmeciler LGBTQ hareketi için bile mensubu oldukları sınıf doğrultusunda farklı kelimeler kullandılar. Kimisi lubunya, kimisi LGBT, kimisi queer demeyi tercih etti. Orta sınıf görüşmeciler kuir atölyelerinden bahsederken, alt sınıf görüşmeciler anadilini öğrenmek veya temel ihtiyaçları konusunda destek almak için derneklere gidiyordu. Öte yandan trans görüşmeciler polis ve müşteri şiddetinden kaçınmak için oluşturdukları kendi dilleri olan lubuncayı konuşuyorlardı. Lubunca çevrelerindeki hiç kimsenin, ne müşterilerinin ne de polislerin anlayamayacağı kadar gizli bir şekilde kendilerini koruyarak birbirleriyle iletişim kurmak için oluşturdukları bir dildir.

Alt sınıfa mensup görüşmecilerin siyasetle ilişkilene güçleri olmadığı için siyasete inançları yok. Ayrıca siyasete karışirlarsa başlarının belaya gireceğine inanıyorlar ve zarar görmekten korkuyorlar. İşçi sınıfı görüşmeciler aktivistlerden ve aktivizmden korkuyorlar çünkü dışlanmaktan, işlerini kaybetmekten korkuyorlar. Bunun yerine çaresizlikten dine yöneliyorlar. Aile desteğinden, eğitsel ve kültürel sermayeden yoksun kaldıkları için kendilerini küçümsüyor, siyaset yerine dine ve inanca tutunuyorlar. Öte yandan, kurumsal dini reddedip dini kendi özel alanlarında kendi bireysel yorumlarıyla yaşamayı tercih ediyorlar. Bu şekilde aslında kendilerini dışlayan bir normatif yapı olan dine meydan okuyor, kendilerine farklı yollar buluyor yeni öznellikler keşfediyorlar.

Sonuçta çalışmanın kesişimsel yaklaşımı iktidar ilişkilerini ortaya çıkarmayı, sınıf eksenli ve kimlik eksenli siyaseti biraraya getirmeyi, sömürü ve baskıyı biraraya getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kimliklere odaklanmak yerine baskı sistemlerinin nasıl kesiştiği ve işbirliği içinde çalıştığı araştırılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında bireylerin eşitsizliklerin kesişimini nasıl deneyimledikleri, kendilerini ve başkalarını nasıl tanımladıkları, onları süzgeçten geçiren belirli habitus biçimleriyle bağlantılı olarak tartışılmıştır.

Görüşmecilerden cinsel kimlikleri yerine sınıfı seçenler muhafazakâr habitus geliştirirken; cinsel ve diğer azınlık kimliklerini sosyal sınıfa tercih edenler ise eleştirel habitus sergilediler. Burada aile geçmişi, eğitim geçmişi, etnik-dini kimlikler ve sol çevrelerde sosyalleşme, eleştirel habitusun gelişimi üzerinde etkili faktörlerdir. Katılımcıların çoğu ailelerinin sosyal sınıfını sürdürmektedir. Siyasi görüşün sınıf üzerindeki etkisi dikkat çekicidir; çünkü farklı siyasi ortamlarda sosyalleşme farklı habitusların gelişmesine neden olmuştur. Bilgi ve kültürel sermayeler, kendilerini tanımlamada ve eleştirel yıkıcı queer öznelliğini sergilemede önemlidir. Asimile olanlar ve muhafazakâr habitus sergileyenler dışında, Kürt Alevi görüşmecilerin çoğu eleştirel habitus sergiledi. Ayrıca, birden fazla azınlık kimliğinin kesiştiği kişiler eleştirel habitus sergilemiştir; eğitilmiş, sol siyasetin içinden gelen çevrede sosyalleşen veya solcu bir aileden gelenler de eleştirel habitus sergilediler.

Ayrıca, daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, kuir öznellik sergilemek de sınıfsal bir eylemdir. Butler'ın eleştirel yıkıcı queer öznelliğini sergilemek için eleştirel habitus sergilemek gerekir. Başka bir deyişle, performanslar bile toplumsal sınıfa dayanmaktadır. Eğitimli görüşmeciler her türlü sınıflandırmayı reddedip, seks işçiliğinin bile anlamını tersyüz edip seks işçiliğine pozitif anlam yüklerken; kültürel sermayeden yoksun eğitimsiz muhafazakâr görüşmeciler normları tekrarlamayı otoriter normatif sisteme uyum sağlamayı tercih ettiler. Ayrıca seks işçiliğini utanç verici olarak tanımladılar. Bırakın queer teorisini, LGBT teriminin ne anlama geldiğini bile bilmiyorlardı. Çoğu homofobik şiddetten kaçınmak için cinsel kimliğini saklamayı tercih ediyor. Hatta bazıları maddi nedenlerle ya da cinsel kimliğini saklayabilmek için karşı cinsle evlenmeyi tercih ediyor.

Sonuç olarak eleştirel habitusu oluşturan etmenler şu şekildedir. Yoksulluk sınırının altında yaşamak pahasına kendilerini cinsiyet kimliğiyle tanımlayanlar eleştirel habitus sergilediler. Birçoğu alt sınıftan gelmeseler dahi cinsel kimliklerini sınıfa tercih etmelerinin bir sonucu olarak alt sınıfa dönüşüyorlar. Birden fazla azınlık kimliğe sahip olan görüşmeciler, bir başka deyişle kesişimsel ayrımcılığa ve baskıya maruz kalan görüşmeciler eleştirel habitus sergiledi. Görüşmecilerden Kürt ve Alevi kimliğe sahip olanlar çoğunlukla eleştirel habitus sergiledi. Alevilik ile Kürtlüğün kesişimi ise siyasi bilinci ve failliği arttıran bir başka etmendi. Çünkü görüşmecilerden Alevi Kürt olanlar, Kürt ve Şafii olanlara kıyasla aktivizm anlamında daha öne çıkıyordu. Kendileri Kürt veya Alevi olmasalar dahi eleştirel habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler için Kürt sorunu demokratikleşme ve diğer sorunların çözümü açısından bir eşik olarak ortaya çıktı. Eğitimli olmak, sol görüşlü aileden gelmek, sol görüşlü çevrelerde sosyalleşmek, örgütlü olmak ve devletle ilişkilerin eksik olması eleştirel habitusu oluşturan diğer etmenler.

Gezi Hareketi LGBTQ hareketi için bir dönüm noktasıdır. Çünkü sadece sağ ideolojilerin değil, sol ideolojilerin de gündemine homofobi ve transfobiyi alması Gezi ayaklanması sayesinde oldu. Gezi ayaklanmasında farklı gruplar biraraya geldiler. Antikapitalist Müslümanlar, sosyalistler, Kürtler, milliyetçiler, taraftar grupları bir

araya geldi. Hatta LGBTQ'lar ilk kez İslami gruplar ve Kemalistler ile bir araya geldi. Ayaklanma sonrası AK-LGBTİ diye bir oluşum bile meydana geldi. Farklı sorunsallara sahip gruplar özgürleşme potansiyelini LGBTQ hareketinde gördüler. Aslında bu, hareketin kapsayıcı karakterini kanıtladı. Artikülasyonlar için alanlar açtı. Her türlü azınlığa kurtuluş fırsatı sundu. Direniş boyunca LGBTQ'lar cesaretleriyle öne çıktılar. Daha önce küçümsenen ve dışlanan LGBTQ bireylerin toplum içerisinde cesaretleriyle ve saygınlıklarıyla öne çıkması, daha önce cinsel kimliklerini saklayan LGBTQların da açılmasıyla sonuçlandı. Başka bir deyişle muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen öznelerin bir kısmı Gezi Direnişi sonrası eleştirel habitus sergilemeye başladılar.

Muhafazakâr habitusu oluşturan etmenler ise şu şekildedir; kurumsallaşmış milliyetçi ve dinci çerçeveler, Sünni-muhafazakâr refleksler, eğitim eksikliği, aile geçmişi, muhafazakâr dini milliyetçi ortamda sosyalleşmek. Aile desteğini, eğitim olanaklarını kaybetmek istemedikleri için cinsel kimliklerinden ziyade sınıflarını seçenler, sınıf atlamak hedefinde olanlar muhafazakâr habitus sergilediler. Seks işçiliğine yüklenen negatif anlamı ters yüz edip seks işçiliğini normalleştiren eleştirel habitusa sahip görüşmecilerin aksine, muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler namus ve gurur adına seks işçiliğini reddettiler. Toplum içerisinde saygın kabul edilmek adına kuir özneliği de reddettiler. Normları tekrarlamayı, biyolojik cinsiyete atıfta bulunmayı tercih ettiler. Bazıları kendi ailelerinin dindarlığından şikâyetçi olmalarına rağmen aynı muhafazakâr tavırla hareket ederek hem kendilerini hem de diğer LGBTQ öznelerini ötekileştirdiler. Muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler Kürt ve Alevi kökenlerini de reddettiler. Asimile olmayı tercih ettiler. Toplumsal eşitsizliklerden ve yoksulluktan şikâyet eden ve siyasete yönelen eleştirel habitus sergileyen görüşmecilerin aksine, muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler eşitliğe inanmadıklarını dile getirip ve dine yöneldiler. Cinselliğini kamusal alana taşıyan, cinsel kimliği için mücadele veren aktivist LGBTQları küçümseyip, ahlaksızlıkla itham ettiler. Muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler sınıflarını, mesleklerini ve milliyetlerini ön plana çıkardılar. Bireyin kendi potansiyelinden, kişiliğinden, statüsünün öneminden bahsettiler. Ayrıca milliyetçi ve dini söylemleri benimseyip, ahlak, namus, milliyetçilik ve dine vurgu yaptılar. Cinsellikliğin özel hayatta gizli



yaşanması gerektiğini, kamusal taşınmaması gerektiğini belirttiler. Kendilerini özel alanda eleştirel yıkıcı özneler olarak sunup, kamusal alanda muhafazakâr refleks gösterdiler.

Öznelerin kendileri de ötekileştirme sürecine dâhil oldular. Sınırları, hiyerarşileri ve eşitsizlikleri içselleştirip ve sürdürdüler. Bu anlamda da habitus kavramı çalışma için çok anlamlıdır. Örneğin transseksüel seks işçisi görüşmeciler kendilerini ikinci sınıf ve marjinal olarak tanımladılar.

Kendilerini Türk, Sünni ve muhafazakâr normlarla ve buna uygun kimlik biçimleriyle ilişkilendiren orta sınıf görüşmeciler de muhafazakâr habitus sergilediler. Bazıları üniversitede okumalarına rağmen dilleri anlamdan yoksun ve çelişkili idi. Muhafazakâr işçi sınıfının diline benzer biçimde anlamdan ve bütünlükten yoksundu. Kültürel sermayeden ve dilden yoksun işçi sınıfı görüşmecilerin de çelişkili bir söylemi vardı; ya anlamdan yoksun konuşuyorlar ya da örgütlülere örgütlerinin diliyle konuşuyorlardı. Kültürel sermaye ve dilden yoksun olmalarının bir sonucu olarak da sınıfı cinsiyet, etnisite, din ve örgütlenme ile ilişkilendirdiler. Bazıları cinsiyete, bazıları Kürt kimliğine, bazıları ise mesleklerine atıfta bulundu. Başka bir deyişle, toplumsal sınıf yerine bir kez daha muhafazakârlık öne çıktı.

Muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler yürüyüşlere de siyasi kazanımlar yerine eğlenmek amaçlı katıldıklarını belirttiler. Özellikle hayatlarını riske atacak hiçbir eyleme katılmadıklarını vurguladılar. Dernekleri de ahlaksızlıkla, hırsızlıkla itham ettiler. Düzenlenen yürüyüşlerin Müslüman oldukları için kendilerine uygun olmadığını belirttiler. Dayanışmaktansa kendi çıkarlarının peşinden gitmeyi tercih ettiler.

Muhafazakâr orta sınıf görüşmeciler cinsel kimliklerini kamusal alana taşımayıp, bunu yapan aktivistleri ahlaksızlıkla suçladılar. Sınıflarını, statülerini, mesleklerini, milliyetlerini öne çıkardılar. En çok mesleklerini vurguladılar ve hayatlarında en önemli şey olduğu için cinsel kimliklerini mesleklerinden uzak tuttuklarını belirttiler. Örneğin orta sınıf bir görüşmeci, bir iş adamının çocuğunun cinsel kimliğini ifşa edip

babasının kariyerini tehlikeye atmasını, Doğu'da bir eşcinselin cinsel kimliğini ifşa edip ailesi tarafından öldürülmesinden daha trajik bulduğunu belirtti. Endişelenecek hiçbir şeyi olmayan orta sınıf görüşmeciler, cinsiyetlerini ve cinsel kimliklerini gurur meselesi haline getirdiler. Kendilerine acındığını farkederlerse iş teklifini reddedeceklerini belirttiler. Öte yandan alt sınıf görüşmeciler cinsel kimlikleri uğruna hayatta kalmak savaşı veriyorlar. Seks işçiliği yapmak zorunda kalıyorlar. Yani orta sınıf görüşmeciler için toplum tarafından nasıl algılandıkları önemliyken, alt sınıf görüşmecilerin hayatta kalmak savaşı verdiği ortaya çıktı. Orta sınıf görüşmeciler cinsiyet ve cinsel kimliğin çok küçük bir sorun olduğunu ve hayatta daha ciddi sorunlar olduğunu iddia ederken, alt sınıf görüşmecilerden bazıları hayatta kalmak için iltica etmek zorunda kaldığını anlattı.

Eleştirel habitus sergileyen sol görüşlü, Alevi, Kürt görüşmeciler hangi sınıfa mensup olurlarsa olsunlar dayanışmanın önemini vurguladılar. Eleştirel habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler siyasete başvururken, muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler dine ve inanca sığındılar. Ayrıca muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler aktivistleri korkutucu, saldırgan ve yozlaşmış bulduklarını belirttiler. Siyasi aktivizm, kendilerini özdeşleştirmek istedikleri bir şey değildi. Zaten kuirin ne anlama geldiğini bile bilmiyorlardı.

Görüşmecilerin çoğu, siyasetle hiçbir ilgileri olmamasına rağmen önem sırasında sosyo-ekonomik statüden sonra siyasi görüşlerinin olduğunu belirttiler. Aktivist olmayan görüşmecilere toplumsal cinsiyetin ve kuirin anlamını açıklamak zorunda kaldım. Görüşmecilerin birçoğu insanları sınıflandırmamayı tercih ettiğini, siyaset ve sınıftan toplumda ayrımcılığa ve önyargıya sebep olduğu için uzak durmaya çalıştıklarını belirtse de, muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler insanları ayrıştırdılar, sınıflandırdılar. Önce kadın ve erkek olarak, daha sonra Alevi Kürt ve Sünni Türk olarak. Muhafazakâr habitus sergileyen görüşmeciler ahlakı ve bireyselliği ön plana çıkardılar.

Ama yine de çalışmada sınıf başat roldedir. Sınıfın suretleri her alanda öne çıkmaktadır. İşçi sınıfı görüşmecilerin çoğu, diğer kimlikler yerine sınıfı tercih ettiler.

Onlar için sınıf her şeyden önce gelmekteydi, çünkü cinsel kimliklerini kabul ettirmek ve hayatta kalmak için ekonomik ve kültürel sermayeye ihtiyaçları vardı. Alt sınıf görüşmeciler için cinsel kimliktense sınıf öne çıktı çünkü hayatta kalabilmek için paraya ihtiyaçları vardı. Ve alt sınıftan görüşmecilerin çoğu, orta sınıf değerlerini itibarsızlaştırmaktansa kendileri de sınıf atlamak arzusundaydı. Birçoğu partner seçiminde bile sınıfı öne çıkarıp kendilerini daha ileriye taşıyacak eğitilmiş partner tercih ediyordu. Öte yandan, ekonomik sermayeden yoksun oldukları için sınıfa dâhil olabilmek adına manevi zenginliklerini vurguladılar. Ekonomik sermayenin yerini haysiyet, maneviyat, ahlak ile doldurmaya çalıştılar. Sınıfı saygınlık ve ahlak üzerinden yorumladıkları için saygın olduklarını bu sebeple alt sınıf olmadıklarını kanıtlamaya çalıştılar. Bu şekilde aslında bir nevi sınıf ilişkilerini ters yüz ettiler, yapıbozumuna uğrattılar. Ayrıca işçi sınıfı görüşmeciler iki grupta ele alınabilir; nefretlerini dışa vuranlar ve aktivist olanlar ile sınıftan utanıp saygınlığını kanıtlamaya çalışanlar, maneviyatlarını ön plana çıkaranlar. Ancak bu girişimleri de kültürel sermayeden ve meşru söylemden yoksun oldukları için sonuçsuz kaldı. Başka bir deyişle, sınıf kimliğini gizleme girişimleri bile sınıflarını ifşa etti. Bu nedenle her ne kadar saygınlıklarını kanıtlamaya çalışsalar, maneviyatlarını ön plana çıkarsalar da, arka plandaki öfke, kin ve korku da ifşa oldu.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışmada hem maddi ekonomik ilişkiler, hem de sembolik ilişkiler ve kültür eşit oranda ön plana çıkmıştır. Yapısal kısıtlamalarla sembolik ilişkiler içiçe geçmiştir. Görüşmeciler kesişimsel baskı ve sömürüye maruz kalmaktadır. Ayrıca Kürtler, Aleviler, Ermeniler gibi diğer dezavantajlı, marjinalleştirilmiş gruplara kıyasla; LGBTQ bireyler, birlikte yaşayacakları bir aileleri, toplulukları, mahalleleri veya köyleri olmadığı için en savunmasız kişilerdir. Kesişimsel baskıya ve sömürüye maruz kalmanın ve ötekinin ötekisi olmanın bir sonucu olarak, kesişimsel direniş ittifakları kurma potansiyeline sahiptirler. Muhafazakâr-otoriter rejime karşı birleşik bir mücadelede vazgeçilmez siyasi özne olarak karşımıza çıkarlar.

Türkiye'deki LGBTQ hareketi ise hem eski hem de yeni toplumsal hareketlerin özelliklerini barındırıyor. Hem devleti, hukuk kurumlarını, hem de toplumun ve gündelik hayattaki normlar ve değerlerin adönüşümünü hedef alıyor. Hukuki

mücadelenin yanı sıra, insanların algısının ve gündelik hayattaki normatif yapının değiştirilmesine de bir o kadar önem veriyor. Hem hegemonik söylemi hem de yasaları değiştirmeyi amaçlıyor. Queer hareket, hem istihdam hakları, sosyal politikalar, ekonomik yeniden dağıtım için, hem de hegemonik normatif değerler söylemler adına mücadele ediyor. Bu şekilde sınıf eksenli ve kimlik eksenli toplumsal hareketler arasında bir köprü kurmaya çalışıyor.

Hareket koalisyon siyasetine alan açıyor. Kürt hareketiyle, feminist hareketle, hatta İslamcılarla bile yeni eklemlenmelere açık. Sol siyasetin cinsiyetçiliği ve yetersizliğinin aksine, LGBTQ hareketi sınıf ve kimlik arasındaki ilişkiyi sorunsallaştırıyor. Farklı ideoloji, din, etnik köken ve toplumsal sınıfa mensup insanlar, kapsayıcı karakterinin bir sonucu olarak LGBTQ hareketinde özgürleşme potansiyeli görüyorlar. Etnik köken, din, sınıf, cinsiyet, cinsellik gibi tüm kategorileri içerek, farklılıklara kimliklere odaklanmak yerine, maruz kalınan benzer baskılara odaklanarak, homofobi, transfobi, ırkçılık, ataerkillik, milliyetçilik, din ve emek sömürsününun kesişimine odaklanarak tüm ötekileri bir araya getirme potansiyeli taşıyor.

Öte yandan, bu tez yalnızca queer hareketin eleştirel yıkıcı potansiyeline odaklandı. Diğer devrimci özneleri ve olası farklı siyasi eklemlenmeleri sorunsallaştırmadı. Ve çalışmada queer öznelere herhangi bir eleştirel faillik dayatmak amaçlanmamıştır. Literatürden yola çıkarak queer kategorisinin önerdiği eleştirel yıkıcı öznel sahada aranmıştır. Sonuçta queer öznelliğe içkin bir yıkıcılık, eleştirel faillik olmadığını, queer öznelerin içinde buldukları habitusa içkin eleştirelilik ve yıkıcılık sergilediklerini savunmaktadır.

Çalışma süresince en çok görüşmeci bulmakta zorlanıldı. Görüşmeci adaylarında güven tesis etmekte zorlanıldı. Ayrıca sahanın belirli bir zamanla ve mekânla tanımlanamaması karşılaşılan bir diğer zorluktu. Görüşmecilerin çelişkili beyanları güvenilirliği sorgulattı. Ayrıca çalışmanın yapıldığı süreçte ülkedeki siyasi baskı ve istikrarsızlık karşılaşılan bir diğer engel oldu. LGBTQ eylemleri yasaklandığı, bilinen

aktivizm türleri gitgide kriminalize edildiği için topluluk eylemlerine daha çok sanat alanında devam ediyor. Bu da çalışmanın seyrini olumsuz yönde etkiledi.

Gelecekte LGBTQ hareketini uluslararası perspektife yerleştiren bir çalışma anlamlı olacaktır. Çünkü Türkiye örneğinde hareket hala sokak aktivizmi yaparken, temel yaşam hakları için mücadele ederken, uluslararası ölçekte kimi ülkelerde hareket zengin beyaz gaylerin haklarına odaklanıyor. Bu anlamda Türkiye'deki hareket geriden geliyor. Ancak bu aynı zamanda da bir avantaj. Çünkü en anti-kapitalist hareketin Türkiye'deki LGBTQ hareketi olduğu da iddia ediliyor. Bu sebeple Türkiye örneğini karşılaştırmalı bir perspektiften incelemek anlamlı olacaktır.

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### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

**Soyadı / Surname** : Bora  
**Adı / Name** : Ezgi  
**Bölümü / Department** : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi / Political Science and Public Administration

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English):** Intersectional Analysis of Critical Queer Subjectivities in the case of Turkey

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** **Yüksek Lisans / Master**  **Doktora / PhD**

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