

74. Significance of localities, attraction of globalization, finding the way in-between: Hybrid cultural identities of gay men in Turkey¹

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Abstract

This article aims to find out how gay men in Turkey construct their cultural identities under the impact of globalization, global gay culture, and global gay identity. In accordance with this aim, this study questions whether they stick to their local culture, acknowledge the cultural flows enabled by globalization and global gay culture as the way they are, or find a way between these two forming a hybrid cultural identity. Thus, by focusing on the three possible cultural identity formations; cultural differentialism, cultural convergence, and cultural hybridity, that occur as a result of the interplay between cultural identity and global flows, this study conducts semi-structured interviews with fifteen Turkish gay men. The open-ended questions are formed in order to figure out the ways they interpret globalization and global gay culture & identity, whether they are affected by it, and where they situate themselves considering the circumstances of the local and the global culture they experience. Depending on the interviews, this study concludes that gay men in Turkey embrace global gay culture as it generates positive outcomes. However, attaching a great deal of importance to their local and regarding as a way of identifying themselves, they not turn their backs on their local culture. Accordingly, making use of both the local and global while constructing their cultural identities, they regard cultural hybridization as the most plausible way out of such a dilemma.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Globalization, Local Identity, Hybridity, Gay Men in Turkey

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Yerelin önemi, küreselleşmenin cazibesi, aradaki yolu bulmak: Türkiye'deki eşcinsel erkeklerin melez kültürel kimlikleri³

Öz

Bu makale, Türkiye'deki gey erkeklerin küreselleşmenin, küresel gey kültürünün ve küresel gey kimliğinin etkisi altında kültürel kimliklerini nasıl inşa ettiklerini bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki geylerin yerel kültürlerine bağlı kalıp kalmadıklarını, küreselleşmenin ve küresel gey kültürünün sunduğu kültürel akımları kabul edip etmediklerini ya da bu ikisi arasında bir orta yol olarak melez bir kültürel kimlik oluşturup oluşturmadıklarını sorgulamaktadır. Bu nedenle, kültürel kimlik ve küresel akımlar arasındaki etkileşimin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan üç olası kültürel kimlik oluşumuna; kültürel farklılaşma, kültürel yakınsama ve kültürel melezliğe odaklanan bu çalışma, on beş Türk gey erkekle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirmektedir. Açık uçlu sorular, küreselleşmeyi ve küresel gey kültürünü nasıl yorumladıklarını, bundan etkilenip etkilenmediklerini ve yerel ve küresel kültürün koşullarını göz önünde bulundurdıklarında kendilerini nereye konumlandıklarını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Görüşmeler doğrultusunda, bu çalışma Türkiye'deki gey erkeklerin küresel gey kültürünü, olumlu sonuçlar doğurduğu için benimsedikleri sonucuna varmaktadır. Ancak, kendilerini tanımlamanın bir yolu olarak yerele büyük önem attıkları için yerel kültürlerine de sırtlarını dönmemektedirler. Bu doğrultuda, kültürel kimliklerini inşa ederken hem yerel hem de küresel olandan beslenerek, kültürel melezleşmeyi bu ikilemden çıkmanın en makul yolu olarak görmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürel Kimlik, Küreselleşme, Yerel Kimlik, Melezlik, Türkiye'deki Gey Erkekler

1. Introduction

It could clearly be suggested that globalization, with all its pros and cons, has a deep impact upon our lives. It is simply defined as the shrinking of the world (Pieterse, 2009). Considering Appadurai's (1999) technoscape, financescape, mediascape, ideoscape, and ethnoscape, all of which stand for the idea that nothing is intact or pure but in a constant interaction and exchange with others all over the world, it seems difficult to talk about homogeneity as it brings along heterogeneity. Due to the positive outcomes of globalization, people are now able to reduce and even remove barriers, travel, communicate, cooperate, learn, defend their rights, increase their standards of living and so on in a much more effective way. Accordingly, with a globally effective interaction, changes in transportation, communication, use of technology, education, civil rights movements, social awareness and so on seem to be a natural outcome. As in many areas of life, among those that are affected by globalization, are also sexualities and same-sex sexualities as well. Altman (1997; 2001; 1996), Martel (2018), Adam et al. (1999), Binnie

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(2004), Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan (2002), Weeks (2000), Weiss and Bosia (2013), and Hawley (2001) are only a few of the scholars who studied the relation between globalization and same-sex sexualities. That is, either positively or negatively, same-sex sexualities and individuals with same-sex sexualities are within the grip of the power of globalization.

Focusing on culture, it could simply be defined as a structure that keeps certain groups of people together and allows those groups to be identified in certain ways (Hall, 1992a). In other words, culture is a means through which individuals of a given group or society generate meanings & messages and interpret them in quite the same ways (Hall, 1997b). On the other hand, cultural identity is a form of identity to which individuals feel attached or belonged to and through which they identify themselves (Baubock, 1996; Horowitz, 2000). Depending on these definitions, culture and cultural identity turn out to be the means of identification that not only define and make us predictable but also differ us from other groups and societies. However, sticking on such structural definitions of culture and cultural identity would mislead us as it should be borne in mind that they are already flexible terms in the first place. Culture should not and cannot be named fixed, stable, or never-changing (Barker, 2004). Namely, all individuals are born into a culture. Their culture and cultural identities are given at first. However, through a post-structuralist and an anti-essentialist perspective, it could be argued that these two, with the help of individuality, subjectivity, autonomy, and the enabled possibilities, could be questioned, challenged, and changed. On top of that, despite acknowledging the impact of globalization upon almost anything in our lives, it would be odd to consider that culture or cultural identity would abstain from its impact and remain intact. For sure, there exists a strong relation between the terms of culture and globalization by which the latter could infiltrate into and transform the former.

The interaction between globalization and culture generates three possible outcomes upon the cultural identities of individuals (Ritzer, 2011; Hall, 1992a):

- i) Cultural differentialism which stands for the idea that each culture remains intact.
- ii) Cultural convergence which supports the idea that there occurs a growing sameness and homogeneity among societies, cultures, and individuals.
- iii) Cultural hybridity which suggests that societies, cultures, and individuals stand on an in-between position where things are mixed.

Öztürk and Baykan (2022) indicate that gays in Turkey embrace the possibilities and chances enabled by global gay culture suggesting that gay men in Turkey fail to experience, consume, and reflect their local culture. To them, acknowledging global gay culture generates a reformation in the way they construct their cultural identities leading them to be diasporic for global gay culture and to feel as the strangers of Turkish culture. Such a conclusion indicates that the ways gay men in Turkey construct their cultural identities stand as an example for cultural convergence. However, even though they complain about the way Turkish culture operates against them, it does not necessarily mean that they have completely broken their connections or they are disassociated with it. Accordingly, this study aims to find out which of the three identity formations gay men in Turkey exemplify the most in the construction of their cultural identities.

2. Theoretical framework: Turkish culture in terms of gender, global gay culture, and the relation between globalization and the formation of cultural identity

Turkish society is given as a patriarchal one where male is regarded as the authoritative or superior over female (Kandiyoti, 1995). Moreover, patriarchy is viciously protected and reproduced through cultural norms, values, and, institutions, which is how their strength, impact, and consistency are continued (Boratav, Fişek, & Ziya, 2014). In addition to the influence of patriarchy, for the formation of Turkish

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culture within the framework of gender, heteronormativity, which acknowledges and appreciates only male and female as the gender roles, stands a highly influential force in Turkey (Herek, 1990; Çakırlar & Delice, 2012). Heteronormativity in Turkey is so strong that it disregards and excludes those who fail to situate themselves within the borders of male and female, presents them sick and sinful, and alleges that they fail to be recognized as “normal” citizens (Çakırlar & Delice, 2012; Bolat, 2016; Ataman H. , 2011). Accordingly, it could be suggested that discourses of patriarchy and heteronormativity are two dominant ingredients that shape the formation of Turkish society in terms of gender.

Hall (1992b) states that discourses are meaning making processes through which knowledge, certain ways of understanding, interpreting, and acting are produced. Even though they pay a great deal of attention to singularity, individuality, and heterogeneity claiming that culture is the “multiplicity of dispersed wills” that are “welded together with a single aim” Laclau and Mouffe (1985, pp. 67-68) present discourses as the building blocks of a given society or culture. They regard them as significant actors for the formation of a society and culture stating that collective acts of collective man, i.e., historical bloc represent a certain society or a culture. Likewise, discourses are known to be neither ideology-free nor innocent (Hall, 1992b). That is, as certain discourses are acknowledged, appreciated, consumed, performed, and articulated by the majority, they are constantly reproduced and regarded as the “norm” generating hegemony. In other words, the way a culture is formed, directed, articulated, and performed in a collective or a taken for granted way is shaped with the hegemony created by dominant discourses. Accordingly, depending on the significant impacts of dominant discourses like patriarchy and heteronormativity, to define Turkish culture in terms of gender, it could be alleged that Turkish culture is not that gay friendly which is exemplified by the fact that same-sex sexualities has always been ignored, overlooked, left alone, excluded, and not allowed space (Özbay, 2015).

That being the case global gay culture, introduced by Altman (1997; 2001; 1996) seems to be a useful way out for gays in Turkey. He asserts that the arrival of globalization has managed to transform same-sex sexualities and individuals with same-sex sexualities. That is, thanks to the global gay culture that operates worldwide after the globalization, gays do not need to remain within the borders of their localities as many more useful opportunities in a global scale are available for them. In other words, gay men who are not satisfied with their own culture and society, by means of global gay culture, are able to possess a worldwide-acknowledged collective identity as it enables them to experience and express their sexual identity and a true sense of subjectivity (D’Emilio, 1993). Besides, global gay culture harbors them (2011), supports and helps them to defend their rights by encouraging activism (Phillips, 2000; King, 2002), and generates visibility and recognition (Young, 1990; Massad, 2002). Under these circumstances, those who are subordinated within and by their own culture could grow apart from their own culture and tend to acknowledge what global opportunities enable them with. Accordingly, gay men in Turkey, as they are “well-integrated” (2018, p. 848) to global gay culture, happen to acknowledge global flows more than the local ones, feel diasporic for it, alienate themselves from their own culture and feel like strangers to it (Öztürk & Baykan, 2022).

As given earlier, the relation between globalization and cultural identity ends up with three possible outcomes (Ritzer, 2011; Hall, 1992a) .

Cultural Differentialism: It stands for the idea that each culture is unique, should be intact, and different from each other. By creating boundaries, it disables the flow of identities, ideas, or cultures. According to this approach, nations, national identities, and cultures remain stable without any interference from globalization. Billig’s (1995) idea of banal nationalism might stand as an example to cultural differentialism as he suggests that individuals’ feeling that they belong to a nation and supporting the values of their nation is a social construction produced by each one of us with the use of

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national symbols such as flag, currency, sport events, songs, or anthems. By applying such things, individuals create their own spaces, create barriers between themselves and others, and aim to remain intact. Similar to Billig, Tomlinson (2003) expresses that cultural differentialism as a consequence of globalization is productive as it supports identities and cultures. For him, identity and culture are not that fragile to break down before globalization because when they meet other identities and cultures through globalization, they become something that matters. Confronting globalization, local culture and identity come to the fore, as they are the basic tools for individuals to define themselves. He exemplifies his point with Qipau, a Chinese traditional dress whose reproduction began after 10-15 years of a break. It has begun to be reproduced because culture and national identity matter in a global world. Briefly speaking, for cultural differentialism, there is not an interaction between nations, cultures, and identities. They remain on their own way creating lasting differences between each other.

ii) Cultural Convergence: It stresses homogeneity and growing sameness between nations, identities, and cultures. It proposes that individuals all around the world, no matter what national or cultural identities they possess, tend to think, act, or behave in similar ways as the world becomes more and more permeable with the impact of globalization. In order to emphasize the growing sameness, the name 'global village' is produced. Besides that, this approach is also explained through terms like cultural imperialism, McDonaldization, or westernization. Cultural imperialism suggests "the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm" (Young I. M., 1990, p. 59). As the dominant one imposes its values and the dominated one is subjected to them, there comes a standardization, a sameness. McDonaldization seems to be quite the same as cultural imperialism. It is, simply, "worldwide homogenization of societies through the impact of multinational corporations" (Pieterse, 2009, p. 51). McDonaldization argues that fast food restaurants dominate many sectors not only in USA but also in the rest of the world. This process has five significant dimensions; efficiency, calculability, predictability, substitution of technology for people, and irrationality of rationality. These are all acknowledged and applied creating the same way of operation for corporations around the world (Ritzer, 2011, p. 584). Number one agent for both cultural imperialism and McDonaldization is thought to be transnational capitalist corporations (Barker, 2004, p. 38). By means of the impact of transnational corporations in movie, television, music, textile, or food industry, cultural convergence has the chance to operate. Hollywood movies seem to be a good example for the cultural imperialism imposed by the US. In sum, for cultural convergence, people around the world tend to possess similar identities and cultures as a result of globalization.

iii) Cultural Hybridity: Compared to earlier given two options, it stands in-between stating that neither localization nor globalization operates on their own. None of them is dominant as there occurs a mutual relation in which they affect each other. Hence, identity or culture cannot be reduced to either one. Accordingly, unlike cultural convergence pointing out homogeneity, cultural mixture or hybridization points out heterogeneity. In addition, unlike cultural differentialism and cultural convergence which overlook human agency (individuals seem to accept whatever they are given for those approaches), cultural hybridization gives priority to human agency as it suggests that individuals have the consciousness, capacity, and power to pick, accept, disagree with, or adapt to whatever they are given.

Thanks to globalization, people, ideas, beliefs, identities, or cultures have the chance to encounter and mingle in a much easier way. Thus, "erosion of boundaries is one of the most common accounts of contemporary times" (Pieterse, 2009, p. 102). For Beck (2000), globalization is a process that is both indifferent to national boundaries and able to change internal qualities of individuals, i.e., societies by underscoring that nothing remains within local but effects the whole world including cultures and cultural identities. Similar to Beck's approach, Gordon (2000) asserts that individuals create their own

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culture and identity by mixing both the local they have and the global they are exposed to. In other words, individuals fashion themselves from the cultural supermarket. They pick, possess, and dress what they wish. The cultural supermarket Gordon presents is expanded by Melucci (2015) with the assertion that as a result of the impact of globalization, life is more dynamic than ever that the rhythm changes with an immense speed, and that we experience great deal of possibilities and messages. Thus, ordinary understanding of identity of family, religion, race, or class weakens, loses its significance. Furthermore, for Clifford (2008), cultures and cultural experiences are neither one nor the other but the combinations of local and global, primitive and modern, theirs and ours, i.e., hybrid, as they are translational and transnational.

All these approaches lead us to the term glocalization or hybridity which is bringing together “the global, in the sense of the macroscopic aspect of contemporary life, into conjunction with the local, in the sense of the microscopic side of life” (Robertson, 1998). In other words, as individuals combine their national, ethnical, cultural values with the global ones and create new forms out of these two, they glocalize, i.e., generate globally hybrid forms.

3. Methodological framework

In order to collect data to figure out whether gay men in Turkey construct their cultural identities through cultural differentialism, cultural convergence, or cultural hybridity, this study employed semi-structured interviews. The conducted fifteen interviews with fifteen gay men had open-ended questions aiming to find out whether the local culture mattered for gay men in Turkey, to what extent they make use of the local or the global gay culture, and whether they situate themselves in-between these two cultures hybridizing their cultural identities or not. In order to find out the way the participants construct their cultural identities within the interplay between the local and the global culture, they were asked

- whether globalization is influential upon the gay community in Turkey or not,
- whether globalization affect their cultural identities or not,
- what they think of global gay culture,
- where they culturally position themselves considering the local and global culture on same-sex sexualities.

The participants were between the ages of 22-48. Even though the number of the participants are limited to fifteen as reaching out to gay community seems to be a significant challenge, the range of age enables us to recognize the perception of both the young and middle-aged adults. All of the participants were born and raised in Turkey. Except for three of the participants who lived in Germany, the U.S., and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, they all dwelled in Turkey. As it could be a significant point for their interaction with globalization, it should be stated that eight of them had been abroad for various purposes. Only one of them did not have a university education. When it comes to their profession, eleven of them had white-collar jobs, three of them did not want to share their profession, and there was a student. In addition to these, while six of them preferred pseudonyms, the rest wanted to use their own names.

Out of fifteen interviews, only two of them were conducted face to face. The other thirteen interviews were conducted through phone calls and online meetings on Skype, Zoom, and WhatsApp. Each participants allowed me to record the meetings. However, for privacy matters, four participants made me to promise to delete the recording after transcription which I did.

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As stated earlier, the number of the participants are limited to fifteen as contacting gay community as an “outsider researcher” was highly challenging (Mercer, 2007). At first, through my acquaintances, I was able to reach out to four participants. Then, by means of snowball technique which allows the researcher to contact new participants with the help of the initial ones, I was able to interview four more (Heckathorn, 1997). Following that, I visited employees in multiple branches of a chain store in İstanbul introducing myself and my research hoping to find more participants as that chain store identifies itself gay friendly with the policy of employing LGBTI+ individuals. Two of the employees accepted to participate. Finally, I spent a great deal of time in gay chat rooms and Instagram accounts to contact more participants which ended up with five more.

4. Interpretation of globalization by gay men in Turkey

Globalization, without a doubt, has led to various advancements, ease, and possibilities to individuals and societies all around the world. By means of the progress in science, technology, communication, production, or transportation, things have been easy to reach, interact, and make use of. This enables people, things, cultures, meanings, and ideas all around the world to go beyond their limits and boundaries. Therefore, nothing is expected to remain where it is. To put it differently, as everything is close to each other and continuously mingled, globalization could be considered as a process that shrinks the world (Pieterse, 2009). For sure, this does not necessarily mean that what globalization creates or enables should be considered only in positive terms as it has negative effects like threatening and transforming things, individuals, and societies. Therefore, Giddens (1990) names modernity and globalization a juggernaut that moves very strongly and rapidly that could annihilate things before it.

As on many areas, globalization has impact upon gay communities all over the world as well. It has transformed the way homosexuality is perceived and experienced. It is possible to observe that with the rights that are granted and gained, homosexuality is acknowledged and embraced in many parts of the world. Its position is upgraded from a sin or a crime to sexual identity (Altman, 2001; 1997; D’Emilio, 1993; Weeks, 2011). Other than these, with Plummer’s definition, with a transition from traditional to modern principles, global times have generated the term “modern homosexual” (2003).

In order to grasp how gay men interpret the interaction between globalization and gay community, the interviewees are asked whether globalization has an impact upon gay community in Turkey.

In contrast to Yılmaz and Devran, two participants who believe that globalization has not had much of an impact upon Turkish society and culture, the majority of the interviewees believe that it is forceful and is able to transform Turkish culture. They explicitly state that the steps that are taken on global platforms have been useful for gay communities both worldwide and in Turkey. In accordance with that, Mehmet’s answer goes as follows.

Globalization has been useful for gays in Turkey. In the past, it was much more difficult. We are living in better conditions. No matter how phobic people are, I am not afraid any more. They need to accept me the way I am. Compared to the past, now they have to accept me. Now we can talk about normalization even if it is a weak one. We owe it to them⁴. It is all thanks to other countries who enabled the global gay culture. We have no role in it. They have enabled a little comfort for us. The more homosexuality is acknowledged and presented as ‘normal’, the more people normalize it.

Mehmet makes a comparison between present and earlier times. He states that in the past, it was more difficult to be a gay. To him, due to globalization, Turkey has made a significant progress in terms of gay rights, social visibility, and acceptance through which he indicates homonormalization. Moreover, he stresses that as a result of the progress, unlike earlier times, society has to accept him the way he is. In

⁴ When Mehmet is asked who they are, he points the western countries.

addition to these, the one crucial point he makes is that Turkish gay community owes such a progress to other societies, especially to Western ones. For him, the more globalization and Western societies have normalized homosexuality, the more Turkey has been affected by it. In other words, he presents Western societies as the ones who have enabled homonormalization for Turkey, even if it is a weak one. Accordingly, for him, being exposed to global steps has led to better conditions for gay community in Turkey.

One of the most frequently stated points made by the interviewees about how globalization operates for the good of gay communities is the internet and the global broadcasting platforms, i.e., mediascape (Appadurai, 1999). The significance of media for gay community is discussed by Serkan and Ayhan as follows.

Globalization has an impact. There is too much impact. Internet, especially the foreign productions, not national televisions but platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime study homosexuality in a great deal, present or try to present it as a norm. This leads gays in Turkey to be more comfortable. When I talk to youngsters, they easily express that they or their friends are gays. People are informed, which is a good thing. Compared to my youth, we grew up hiding it under a great pressure. Today's generation is more conscious. Interaction with the world, having internet access is obviously a great thing (Serkan).

I believe that globalization has an impact. I believe it injects many things to Turkey, enables certain flexibilities. Be it cinema, internet, or certain platforms like Netflix. There is not a single place where the theme of homosexuality is not studied. It is like the whole world is trying to do its PR (public relations). This being the case, people see, learn, and raise their awareness (Ayhan).

Basing their arguments on the internet and media, they inform us that the impact of globalization upon gay men, gay community, and the perception about homosexuality is apparent and positive. However, when Serkan introduces the internet and media as meaningful and useful sources, he makes an obvious distinction between the local and the global platforms. That is, he excludes national broadcasting services and dedicates the progress to global ones. Besides, in accordance with Mehmet, he makes a comparison between present and past suggesting that by means of globalization, perception about homosexuality is reconfigured and transformed positively. Regarding this issue, Beck (2000) asserts that considering the role and the impact of globalization, almost all the concepts should be reconsidered. Accordingly, both Serkan and Ayhan let us know that through globalization and the positive transformations that it enables, perception about homosexuality in Turkey has changed and many flexibilities have been available. Unlike past times, with the possibilities enabled by globalization, especially through the internet and media as the sources of information and transformation, gays are not expected to hide their sexual identities or live under pressure. On the contrary, they are now free to express themselves in a much more conscious way.

Another significant point that the interviewees make in terms of globalization is age. Ayhan (46-year-old) and Emre (25-year-old) assert that those who are considered to be young are able to embrace and acknowledge globalization and consume what it enables in a much better way. Accordingly, they state that

It feels like, what globalization enables is consumed by youngsters unlike by those who are at my age. For those who are at my age, things could be considered to have settled. However, if we talk about the gay community in Turkey, without a doubt, it has positive consequences (Ayhan).

Considering the age for gays, for old generations, it could be said that they are more introverted. They are adapted or forced to be adapted to Turkish culture. As a result of not having social media, Instagram, Twitter, or other applications that are specific for gays, they happen to remain out of globalization. Age difference is crucial in terms of globalization. Youngsters are more adapted to global gay culture. They have their own language, jargon. They post things online within this framework. Be it a way of dance. Netflix, series, or movies indicate that we youngsters are supposed to be adapted to globalization (Emre).

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Ayhan, a middle-aged person, and Emre, a young adult, specifically stress the age factor for embracing globalization. They both inform us that the younger an individual is the more s/he is able to make use of globalization. Bearing in mind that culture is not an innate thing but acquired and learned meanings and practices, it could be suggested that youngsters are able to make use of various sources while constructing their membership to a culture and their cultural identities. That is, as youngsters have easier access to the internet, social media, and gay-specific applications and as middle age ones did not have them back in their times; and as they are considered to consume them less, both of the interviewees assume that the extend of the interaction with globalization for youngsters and middle age ones differ in a great deal. These assertions could lead us to the idea that those who have had more time to interact with culture consume it as the way it is given. In other words, the unitary aspect of culture is more vivid for them. However, youngsters are able to construct their understanding of culture and cultural identities through various sources rather than consuming it the way it is. In addition to these, the significant point that both of the interviewees make is that globalization has been and is useful, helpful, and productive for gay community in general. They believe that by means of globalization, gay community in Turkey has made a significant progress.

Atakan's answer goes as follows.

Of course, globalization has an impact. See how we met⁵. We meet on social applications, meeting platforms. What happens there, abroad, arrives in Turkey. People see what happens there. Besides, travelling is not that difficult anymore. So many gays have migrated. But they come back, visit, and whatsoever. They, in a way, transfer the culture over there to here. Nevertheless, there is a gay culture specific to Turkey. That is, there is a culture that exists in Turkey but not anywhere else.

Like the other interviewees, Atakan emphasizes the role of the internet and social media and sees them as significant means in order to demonstrate how globalization operates for the good of gay community in Turkey. As he suggests that through the internet and online social platforms, gay men in Turkey interact with others, get to know about what is happening in other countries, and become aware of their rights, he stresses Appadurai's ideoscape (1999). He means that an idea occurring elsewhere does not remain where it is born. It is disseminated to other countries and societies through such means which is how gay community in Turkey aims and tries to bring those ideas to their own countries. Even though Atakan's statement is similar to the other interviewees so far, he makes a different contribution by emphasizing travelling cultures (Clifford, 2008). He informs us that Turkey has its own gay culture as well as there is one abroad. He specifically distinguishes the two. However, by mentioning the travelling aspect of culture, he combines them. He states that as gays migrate or travel to different countries, they bring back what they see, learn, and experience. He does not see this travelling as a one-way action. According to him, the culture over there comes to Turkey as well as the culture in Turkey goes there. In other words, as culture travels from one society to another, it does not have the chance to remain intact. It becomes both transnational and translational. Accordingly, he approaches culture through the interaction of local and global.

Yunus Emre considers globalization as a force with positive outcomes. For him, globalization and global means of communication increase the chance of visibility and recognition for gay communities not only in Turkey but also in any country. His statement is as follows.

For sure, it is influential. At the end of the day, there comes publicity and visibility about homosexuality. There are gay singers, fashion designers, and public figures. There are people who live their homosexuality in an open way. People who have a voice have things to say. Thus, it is definitely influential. Somehow, it goes into people's minds. In positive terms, I mean.

⁵ Atakan emphasizes that I contacted him through a chat website.

So far, the interviewees focus on the positive outcomes of globalization. Unlike those who regard globalization in positive terms, Soner questions its impacts. However, his way of questioning is not concerned with whether the impact of globalization has been weak in Turkey. He questions globalization as he significantly cares about his local culture. His statement goes as follows.

Of course. These terms have been imported from the West. Well, it should not be considered that the West has brought LGBT+ here. The ways we define ourselves and attribute meanings to things are done through their terms. You could call it either globalization or colonialization. Cultural colonialism. There are also the things that we dream of. Those dreams, sense of freedom etc. are built via the West. This also disconnects us from the terms that we used to use to define LGBT+ in the past. We do not know those terms. In Ottoman times, 100 or 200 years ago, what they were called? What were their names? There is a term Erkek Fatma . So, it disconnects us, it erases our memories. Therefore, I feel indebted to these lands. Globalization has such a bad side.

In contrast to the earlier interviewees, Soner presents the consequences of globalization that affect the local culture negatively. He informs us that the terms that are used for LGBT+ are taken from the West. As a result, LGBT+ community in Turkey makes sense of and interprets LGBT+ issues and individuals through that channel. In other words, the meaning making processes for LGBT+ community are conducted through the language and discourses of others not through their own. It seems like a significant point for Soner because he believes that such a process generates disconnection with both the present and past for the local culture. Accordingly, he complains about not knowing the details about how non-heterosexuality was experienced in the past. He exemplifies his complaint with the assertion that although he constantly uses terms like lesbian, gay, bisexual and so on, he is not able to have knowledge on the history of Erkek Fatma. Therefore, what he names this process does not matter for him. It could be either globalization or cultural colonialism. That is, instead of its title, he focuses on its negative consequences.

In sum, it could be suggested that the interviewees mainly regard globalization as noteworthy for the betterment of gay communities not only all around the world but also in Turkey. At this point, the internet and social media are given as the prominent sources or means for globalization to operate for the good of gay communities. They suggest that through such sources, people get to know about what occurs in different societies and are able transfer them to their own societies. Furthermore, travelling culture is also emphasized by interviewees with the suggestion that as individuals, ideas, cultures, and cultural meanings and practices are able to travel easily in global times, nothing is supposed to remain where it is. On the contrary, things, individuals, societies, ideas, cultures, and practices constantly travel and interact which is how they help each other to (re)shape themselves. Finally, it could also be asserted that interviewees embrace globalization believing that it is going to generate many more advantages for gay communities not only in Turkey but all around the world.

5. How gay men in Turkey are culturally affected by globalization

Consuming culture as the way it is given means that culture turns out to be a matter of chance. However, as Bhabha informs us, it is also a matter of choice (Bhabha, 2000). As individuals are born into a culture, they acquire it. Nevertheless, as an ethical and a political right, individuals are able to choose and construct their own cultural identities as autonomous, conscious, and free agents. Even though, individuals feel belonging to and similarities with their groups and fellow members, due to various causes, they might need to deviate and construct their cultural sense of belonging on their own. That is, as their ethical and political rights, they might feel the urge to question, challenge, or break up with their habitus and find themselves new ones that are more suitable, acceptable, or satisfactory (Bhabha, 2000; Bourdieu, 1977). These subjective and constructive aspects of culture and cultural identity mean that cultural identity is not about “being” but also “becoming” (Hall, 1994, p. 394).

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As an otherized minority group, gay community in Turkey suffers a great deal of difficulties and handicaps in many areas of life (Özbay, 2015; Öztürk M. B., 2011; Çakırlar & Delice, 2012) which leads them to dissociate from their local culture. Such a circumstance reminds us Castell's (2010) statement emphasizing that the more minority groups lack their humanitarian needs the more they are likely to act as global citizens interacting with global platforms. This means that as the needs, expectations, wants, and needs of otherized groups are not met or satisfied by the local culture, they could tend to embrace what they are provided with on global platforms. As they observe, experience, and believe that what they see on global scale is more acceptable, reasonable, and rightful, they could go through a process in which they feel the need to reshape the cultural identity they are given. Likewise, Wesling suggests that since non-heterosexual individuals are generally not able to fit within the national norms and values and regarded as those who harm national harmony, they have a close relation to globalization and make use of it in a great deal. Therefore, they "are always already extra-national" (2008, p. 31). Her assertion could lead us to the idea that with the impact of globalization, gays could reconstruct their cultural identities rather than sticking to what they are already given.

Depending on these approaches and the positive responses of the participants regarding the relation between globalization and gay communities, the second question focused on whether globalization affected the cultural identities of the participants; and if yes how.

Eren's response is as follows.

There is definitely an impact. I believe that I deviate from my family. As a person who has lived abroad for a long time, I differ a lot from my family in terms of mindset no matter how liberal they are. I definitely think that globalization is forceful. It is not a detachment but comparing myself to the society in general, as a frame of mind, there are differences.

Eren informs us that he has been abroad, in Germany, experienced both the local and the global. Therefore, he has the necessary means to compare them in the first hand. His comparison indicates that even if he has grown in a liberal family, he is still not pleased with what his local culture offers. Since the one in the global platforms seems better, more appealing, and reasonable, he considers himself as one who does not exactly fit into the Turkish culture. In other words, he is not able to present himself as one who consumes Turkish cultural identity as given. He explicitly states that his being unfit to Turkish culture does not necessarily mean that he is completely detached from it. Depending on this statement, it could be inferred that as one who is born and raised in Turkey, he possesses the characteristics of Turkish culture. However, his cultural identity goes through a process of reconstruction fed by globalization.

The condition of not absorbing the culture as given due to globalization is also mentioned by Mete who states that

As I said before, everyone is global now. How one could not be affected after seeing what goes on in the world. We are affected by it be it culturally, psychologically, from way of dressing to anything. If you are asking this question about how much I am attached to my culture, how much I love it or embrace it, for sure, I am not like an ordinary person who has grown here, never left his hometown, is married, has kids and grandkids. Unavoidably, I cannot be like him. I naturally step back and take a look at it. I tell what is right and wrong about it.

Mete indicates that globalization is extremely powerful and anyone is inevitably exposed to it. For him, the impact of globalization is so strong that it affects individuals in almost any spheres. That is, at first, he presents a general approach to the impact of globalization regardless of paying attention to being gay. However, as he answers to the question through gay perspective, he states that as he is aware of the things happening on global scale, he is not supposed to consume his given culture as the way it is. He

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suggests that it is highly natural for him to question and reconstruct his cultural identity as a result of the significant differences between the local and global.

Serkan's answer goes as follows.

Globalization pushes one to be freer. You want to be freer. The comfort over there, way of expression, acceptance by family, and being able to get married, naturally, attract you. It moves you away from Turkish culture. You reject what is here and want to take what is in the West in order to live easily.

As in the previous section, Serkan's statement favors globalization. He informs us that a gay man is supposed to embrace what globalization provides him with, as it is more satisfactory than his local culture. After observing what happens on global and local at the same time, as a free agent, he makes a comparison between the two. Since what he observes on global platforms is able to meet his needs much better than what he experiences in local, he, culturally, feels closer to the first one. He challenges, questions, and moves away from the latter and wishes to identify and fashion himself culturally with what he is enabled by the global one.

Ayhan's answer is similar to what Serkan suggests.

Youngsters, those who are conscious of what is going on in the world, could highly be affected. They might have to complain and scrutinize the culture they are in. They might naturally ask why we are like this and they are like that because they are always in a need to hide and deny. There are people who are forced to live by denying his homosexuality and hating themselves. I believe that youngsters try to live like those they see in the West but that could be possible in a limited way because Turkey, our country does not allow that kind of a lifestyle.

As in the previous section, Ayhan assumes that youngsters are able to make use of globalization more than middle aged ones which is why he suggests that youngsters are supposed to question their given cultural identities. The reason for questioning their cultural identity is that gay men in Turkey are not able to do what they see out there. Just like Serkan, Ayhan too believes that it is a natural consequence for gay men in Turkey to envy what others in Western societies experience. For him, the impact of the local culture is so strong that it not only forces them to remain in the closet but also makes them hate themselves. Moreover, he asserts that even if they envy and try to embrace the culture they observe in the West, they will not be able to follow it as the way it is due to the dominance of the local one.

The dissatisfaction with the available circumstances in Turkey is so strong for Soner that even though he does not wish to embrace globalization as a whole, he is still in favor of it. His statement is as follows.

Things like İstanbul Sözleşmesi are based on human rights. It is not about being European or Western but about being human. Does globalization change cultural codes? For sure, it does. It changes what you base your ideas on. Even if things are Western products, even if human rights are based on Western hegemony and integrated into capitalism, I guess, I still prefer them.

In the previous section, Soner explicitly made his complaint about the dominance and the impact of globalization and Western flows as they colonialize the local meaning making processes. Similar to his previous opinions, he once again complains about how Western or global flows dominate and create a hegemony over how gay men in Turkey make meanings and what they base their ideas on. However, even though he has such negative opinions about globalization, he still gives priority to the global culture on same-sex sexualities as it is based on human rights and as the local culture is not able to meet such needs. This means that he is in favor with what globalization presents even though he has a strong attachment to his local culture.

Atakan presents a little more detailed answer to explain why he questions the local culture and how he constructs his cultural identity. His answer goes as follows.

Globalization is inevitable. I have been abroad. We are affected by it in terms of expressing ourselves. We learn our rights being inspired by those in different countries. It is hard to read, learn, and express

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them in Turkey. However, people abroad claim that this or that is our right. For example, globalization led me to question my religion and helped me to accept my sexual identity easily. In the past, I felt uncomfortable about my sexual identity. I said to myself why I was like this, I should not be this way, or I will go to hell. Globalization, scientific progress, reading, learning; they all come to Turkey as well. Then I thought that I was hard on myself in vain. There was no such thing. Globalization helped me to eliminate those harmful parts of my culture. Our society is not superb. I find out its bad sides and eliminate them.

Atakan identifies globalization as an inevitable force and regards being exposed to it as a natural consequence. He suggests that what happens on global platforms is more useful and constructive for gay communities around the world while he asserts that things in Turkey are behind it. He presents global platforms as a source from which Turkish gay community learns. He informs us that by means of the possibilities enabled by globalization, he became conscious of the pros and cons of his culture, society, and religion. His statement lets us know that as a free agent, after making a comparison between the local and global, he is dissatisfied by what he is given. Then, he has the need to reconstruct his cultural identity. He abandons those harming aspects of his culture and acknowledges what he learns from different societies. Depending on Atakan's response, it could be suggested that as his cultural identity goes through a transformation and reconstruction, his cultural identity is not just about "being" but "also becoming" because he consciously constructs it (Hall, 1994).

Young (1990) suggests that as dominant groups introduce their norms and values as 'true, reasonable, and acceptable', the ones who do not fit become minorities or outsiders. Furthermore, depending on Hall's suggestion that "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference", Serkan, Ayhan, Cenk, and Atakan could be asserted to reconstruct their cultural identities with the help of globalization (1996c, p. 4). They have the need to reconstruct their cultural identities because they are pushed out of the cultural circle, as they stand different or outsiders for the needs, requirements, and expectations of the local culture. In other words, they question and reconstruct their cultural identities by observing and culturally fashioning themselves through the global market as it seems more positive than the local one (Gordon, 2000). The way they reconstruct their cultural identity making use of globalization matches with the idea that "globalization proliferates rather than destroy identities" (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 271). They do not simply abandon or give up the local culture they possess in the first place. They simply construct, enrich, expand, or proliferate a new one by making use of both the global and local. In other words, they glocalize their cultural identities and generate a hybrid one.

Furthermore, for the construction of cultural identity, globalization plays quite a different role for Emre. That is, with the help of the possibilities globalization enables, his belonging to the local culture gets stronger. His answer goes as follows.

I think, globalization affects me positively in terms of cultural identity. With globalization, we observe that Turkish culture gets to know more about LGBTI+ and begins to talk about it. This is something enabled by globalization only. Because such an issue is not only for Turkey. As I said before, it is in Hungary, Poland, in other Middle East countries. It is discussed all around the world. As society gets to know about us and starts to accept us, I feel like, there is no need to go abroad. Having positive reactions and acceptance affects me positively. Such progress makes me feel more belonged. I believe that I can live here, I can make friends, and I can be at ease.

According to Emre, non-heterosexuality is a hot topic that is discussed all around the world. By means of globalization, the discourse of non-heterosexuality is given voice which is how it generates progress not only for gays but also for other non-heterosexual individuals. Then, according to him, the more non-heterosexuality is discussed, normalized, and given rights on global scale the more his society acknowledges it. Depending on the assumption and expectation that the progress achieved in different societies will be in Turkey as well, he feels a stronger sense of belonging to his own culture.

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Just like Emre, the way a given culture approaches to or acknowledges the discourse of homosexuality for one to embrace or question his cultural identity seems to be significant for Savaş too. He suggests that the level of being attached to his own culture depends on how much 'progress' a culture has achieved in terms of acknowledging homosexuality. Accordingly, his answer is as follows.

Once you take a look at others, you see that they have achieved much. They have made it to a certain level. It does not mean that they have no problem. For sure, they have many but they are obviously better than we are. Once you see them, you ask why they are this way but we are not. You naturally compare your society to others. Then you say that there is something wrong with my culture. The problem is that they do not want me. Then you wish to live abroad. However, as you observe Iran, Afghanistan, you say that my culture is fine. Then, you embrace it. At least, we are not like them. God forbid. You run between loving and hating your culture. It all depends on how you look at it.

Savaş clearly complains about his culture, as he does not find it satisfactory in terms of its way of approaching the discourse of homosexuality. In order to support and explain his complaint, he compares it to others, especially to the Western ones. For his assertion that his local culture falls behind the Western ones in terms of being gay friendly, he indicates what he observes in different cultures and societies, i.e., global culture. However, as he makes the same comparison through Eastern societies and cultures like Iran and Afghanistan, he feels satisfied with what he has in the first place. Accordingly, the level of being gay friendly stands as a benchmark for him to question his cultural identity.

Moreover, through Savaş and Emre's statements, it could be observed that they favor their local culture as long as it possesses the characteristics provided by globalization. That is, they form a glocalised culture and a cultural identity involving the aspects of both.

Accordingly, the responses of the interviewees indicate that as their needs, expectations, wants, and needs are not met or satisfied by the local culture, they tend to embrace what they are provided with on global platforms. As they observe, experience, and believe that what they see on global scale is more acceptable, reasonable, and rightful, they go through a process in which they feel the need to reshape the cultural identity they are given. However, while going through this process, they do not simply leave their given cultural identities behind and adopt the global one. In other words, they experience neither cultural differentialism nor cultural convergence. They reconstruct their cultural identities with the use of both the local and global. In other words, they hybridize it.

6. Interpretation of global gay culture & identity

As it is stated earlier in the study that global gay, put forward by Altman (2001; 1997) and studied by many others, is an image or an identity that presents gays in a single identity by suggesting that they wish to be a part of and identify themselves with a global and a collective community. As global gay identity takes any gay man from any society and unites them under a single identity, it disregards social, political, cultural, religious, or geographical dynamics and characteristics, and factors of various localities. This means that as gays are not satisfied with what they have in their localities, they tend to overlook them and to acknowledge the possibilities and chances enabled or granted by global flows.

However, being oriented by the West, especially by the U.S. could be given as one of the most fundamental cons of global gay culture & identity. As global gay identity places Western societies in the center and enables them with the power of domination, it generates an atmosphere where terms like cultural imperialism and cultural colonialism could be mentioned. Accordingly, this identity turns out to be one that overlooks and disregards localities except for the Western societies. Moreover, under such circumstances there occurs a hierarchy where certain societies are taken as favorable while others are not. Then, because of such a hierarchy, the dominant ones create their own discourses where things, individuals, ideas, and approaches are defined and explained within certain languages. In addition to

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these, as global gay identity unites gay men under a single identity, it robs their individuality, subjectivity, and agency and presents them as one who follows its directions, instructions, and requirements.

In order to find out the reactions to the term global gay, the interviewees are asked how they interpret it. Surprisingly, even though the interviewees are in favor of globalization and what it enables for gay communities all over the world, they do not appreciate global gay culture & identity as they significantly care about their local culture.

For Rüzgar, global gay exists in Turkey. He thinks that global gay is the one with feminine characteristics and attitudes and stands as a stereotype for gay identity. In short, it is first the image of a gay man that comes to people's mind when they think of it. Moreover, it is the existence of global gay in Turkey that makes him a stereotype in the first place. His answer is as follows.

It definitely exists in Turkey. What does our society think of a gay? First of all, he is feminine. That is how he acts. They assume he is a passive gay. He makes up, wears earrings and colorful clothes that straight men would not wear. We have a stereotype like that is because it is real.

Unlike Rüzgar who emphasizes the stereotypical existence of global gay, Ayhan has different ideas as he states that

Yes, we could say that this term exists in Turkey. However, it would be wrong to suggest that all gays in Turkey are like this. You cannot find a global gay in an Anatolian village. It is impossible. You could find it at best in İstanbul, in a limited number. In addition, you cannot place gayness in Turkey under one term. For that, you should write numerous dissertations because the scale is so wide. Considering the circumstances of Turkey, very few gays could experience that. They do not have such chances or possibilities and I do not think they will for a long time.

For Ayhan, gay men having the characteristics of global gay could be found only in İstanbul. However, he believes that even though İstanbul is the biggest and a global city of Turkey, global gays could barely exist there. He supports his assertion with the statement that it is impossible for a global gay to exist in Anatolia. In this way, Ayhan pays attention to the unitary characteristics of culture. For him, since people in Turkey significantly follow Turkish culture in terms of its gender structure, those who deviate from its requirements would not have a chance. Moreover, he assumes that the way Turkish culture and society operate in terms of gender will remain the same for a very long time and it will not enable space for global gay. Besides, he is not in much of a favor with the term as it unites any gay man under a single term. He believes that the identity of gay is so wide that different and various subjectivities and individualities could not fit within one term only.

Eren claims that those with feminine attitudes consider themselves as global gays and they are the minority of gay community in Turkey. As he is against the idea of stereotyping all gay men in a single term, he calls it nonsense as he expresses that being gay does not equal performing the characteristics of feminine looking gay. His answer is as follows.

I believe it is so shallow because it could stand only for 20% of gays. The other 80% cannot be placed within that term. Therefore, it feels nonsense. As a matter of fact, I take it as a bad thing for gays. This 80% is not those who want to wear shiny clothes, walk coquettishly and to show that they are gays.

Misconception about global gay seems to be a common opinion for the interviewees. Many of them suggest that gay men in Turkey believe that being feminine is being global. Likewise, Cenk's response goes as follows.

There is a group of people like that and they are degenerated. They reveal themselves or have the need to reveal themselves. I am talking about those who are feminine. They are like women but they could even be lynched. There are those who obviously manifest themselves. I think it is an extremely degenerated version of gay. For sure, there are publicly known figures who are like that and appreciated. It is the same society but there are two different results. The real gay image is not that. I

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am not that kind of a profile. I believe that global gay actually harms the gay identity. It certainly exists in Turkey, there is a potential for that but it cannot be dominant.

For Cenk, global gay exists in Turkey in small numbers. He asserts that those who have the need to let others know that they are gays with their feminine attitudes believe that they are global gays. For Cenk, this is a misconception. Different in terms but similar in meaning, Cenk suggests that those gays are degenerated and even harm the identity of gay. The reason for him to suggest so is that it is not and cannot be the actual reflection or the embodiment of gay identity. That is because society would not approve such an image and could even lynch it. As he states that there is a potential for global gay, he could mean that people aspire to do so. However, they are not able to.

In a similar manner with Cenk and Eren, Serkan emphasizes the role of feminine attitudes for the formation of global gay identity. In addition to that, he contributes to the subject with a wider perspective as he says that

In Turkey, there exists such an image but very very few. I guess, it almost does not exist. In Turkey, after 2000, those who reflect the characteristics of global gay are confused about being out and being a faggot. Ours try to reveal out their gayness through being feminine, their clothes, and behavior but not through their ideas and opinions. Thus, it annoys people in Turkey. Those in other societies could be a global gay while looking like a straight man but ours try to do it through feminine appearance and make up. They believe that being like this is being global gay. To be honest, I do not approve that.

Serkan believes that a global gay image exists in Turkey but in a very limited way. For him, being global gay requires having globally appreciated human rights-based ideas and opinions rather than wearing shiny clothes or acting in feminine ways which could irritate society. He suggests that gays in Turkey perform the characteristics of the term only by acting femininely. By stating so, he means that the more gays embody the feminine character that appears in people's minds at first thought the more irritated the society gets. Accordingly, sticking to the reality of his society, which does not approve man with feminine attitudes, although he is a gay himself, even he states that those who act like a stereotypical gay by neglecting the circumstances and the possibilities of his locality are faggots. This means that for Serkan, it is highly important to be a global gay through ideas rather than attitudes. Depending on his answer, it could be concluded that Serkan is in favor with global gay image. He is not against it. However, for him, the mentality of global gay should be imported and applied in Turkey while considering the circumstances, needs, and requirements of the local.

Savaş agrees with Serkan by stating that

It feels like it is the image that comes to people's mind when the term gay is said. There is such a type but very few in Turkey. Being gay is not just that. There are various types. You look at a man, he is a truck driver, a construction worker, or a mechanic with moustache but he is a gay. Being gay is not just that. You cannot stereotype gayness. Why is it so few in Turkey? As I said, first, that is not being gay. It is not right to stereotype gayness. And secondly, that profile would not be allowed. He would not have a chance. He cannot. At best, that could be done in the most elite parts of İstanbul. People wish to be like that because they are not free. That is why I just said that I wanted to live abroad. It is not just about wearing skinny clothes, having make up, or behaving coquettishly. When it comes to being free and breaking up with the taboos of society, everyone wants to be a global gay.

Savaş believes that one with the characteristics of global gay would not be able to live in Turkey because of the available negative circumstances of Turkish culture and society. That is, assuming the existence of a gay who stripped himself off the boundaries of Turkish society is not possible in the first place. Turkish culture would not allow him. However, he gives a slight chance for global gay to exist only in certain privileged parts of İstanbul. Like Serkan, Savaş is against the idea that acting femininely, wearing skinny clothes, or having make up does not make one a global gay. For him, in order to be a global gay, one needs to free his mindset off the society and culture. That is, global gay is not about formalism but about content and meaning. In addition, agreeing with Ayhan, he is against the idea of limiting the

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identity of gay with a single term. To him, gayness is not just about being feminine which is why he emphasizes the existence of masculine gays. Accordingly, he believes that gays in Turkey misunderstand the term, takes it as a stereotypical feminine looking gay image, and forgets about the others.

Another dissatisfaction with the term global gay comes from Mete who focuses on the role of local culture and emphasizes how significant it is. His response goes as follows.

I personally do not think that such a term exists in Turkey. He can hardly survive in Turkey. Maybe those social media celebrities could be like that. There are already a few. If it is not a celebrity, only those who have a certain economic power and live in certain parts of İstanbul can be that way. Otherwise, I do not think that it is possible for an ordinary gay. On the contrary, the more visible a gay is the more he is harmed. If you stick it into people's eyes, it will be for your own disadvantage. Moreover, such a profile would harm not only himself but also the whole gay community. As I just said, people are already irritated and when they see a profile like that, they take him as a symbol. That would represent what people think of a gay. I believe it is more useful to go along with the society. It is better not to stand out.

For Mete, such a profile cannot exist or survive in Turkey. He presents İstanbul, not as a whole but its certain parts, as the only possible location for a global gay to live in. He claims that in order to count as a global gay, one needs to be either a celebrity or one with economic power so that people would not be able to interfere in his life easily. Otherwise, he does not give a chance for an ordinary gay to be that way. Moreover, Mete warns us that while shaping gay identity, one should not disregard the reality he lives in. As Turkish culture suppresses homosexuality, he believes that it is for the good of gay men to keep a low profile, not to stand out, and to go along with its requirements. He claims that the image of global gay which breaks free off the society would be a standing out profile and be considered as the representation of the whole gay community. By becoming a representation of the term gay, it would remind people kind of a person that they would not approve. Consequently, global gay would turn out to be a disadvantage not only for the individual himself but also for the whole gay community.

Going along with the other interviewees, Yılmaz argues that the idea of global gay could slightly be experienced in cosmopolitan cities like Ankara and İstanbul. The reason for it to be experienced slightly is the society. Moreover, to him, it is the stereotyping of gay identity that could cause gays to be otherized in the first place. He states that

I have friends living in Ankara and İstanbul. In my opinion, they have that image. They try to be like that but they cannot manage it completely. We should not reduce it to a stereotype. Maybe, we are excluded just for that. We are otherized. I think, by doing so, we make ourselves otherized. Being labeled that way makes us otherized.

Devran has different ideas about the impact of global gay image. His answer is as follows.

I definitely believe that it does not exist in Turkey. It is very few in Turkey. It could be in İstanbul, İzmir, or Antalya where economy runs faster. I believe it has an impact for gays in Turkey. People experience things secretly here. They cannot express themselves which is why they psychologically lose themselves. That is, they want to be out like a global gay but since they cannot do it, there occurs problems. Most of the times, people live their lives at nights. There are clubs and bars where gays go to and interact with each other. These spaces must be the same with those abroad but the mentality of people are different. We can do what they (gays abroad) do only at nights.

For Devran, global gay is an identity that gay men in Turkey are not able to possess even though they aspire for it. That is, they want to be independent, free from the restrictions of society and culture, and live their lives the way they wish to and the way they observe in other societies. However, because of the influence of society and culture, they are not able to do so. As a result of such a conflict, he asserts that there occurs depression and psychological problems. In addition, he informs us that gay men in Turkey experience global gay identity slightly, only at nights within their gay spaces where individuals with

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same-sex sexualities could feel themselves at home. This means that gay men in Turkey are provided with a limited global gay identity and space.

Yunus Emre has similar ideas with the other interviewees as he is against stereotypical gay identity which is formed with feminine attitudes only. Like the others, he informs us that such a stereotypical gay identity would harm both himself and the gay community. He also adds that such a profile would be excluded not only in the society but also in gay community. However, Yunus Emre does not present global gay identity as a completely negative one. He points its pros by discussing that it could foster visibility for gay community. That is, for him, the more society and culture is exposed to a gay image and identity the more they would be accustomed to them. Bearing this in mind, he argues both the pros and the cons of global gay. His statement is as follows.

It could exist in Turkey. There are examples of it. There are people living as out gays in social media. They stereotype gayness and influence the opinions of people. I believe this is a negative impact. There are many masculine gays as well. That is a majority as well. There are people who do not act, talk, or wear like that. I do not like stereotyping. However, it is positive in terms of visibility. This stereotype gay would be excluded even in gay community.

Emre's opinions about global gay seem to be quite similar with what others say in terms of emphasis on the local culture. However, he believes that it could also create positive outcomes depending on the condition that the local culture should be integrated into the global one, in other words, they should be hybridized. His answer is as follows.

Definitely, this term exists in Turkey. There are many people like that in the world but not that much in Turkey. In Turkey, very few people could meet the needs to be a global gay because we are subjected to a very different culture. Those in Turkey try to imitate the global gay image but it does not feel natural. One should act and talk the way he wants. He should create his own culture. Especially the youngsters copy that image and it is askew. It is not intimate. However, instead of just copying, if they act by integrating it to their own culture, maybe then it would be more natural and intimate. One cannot integrate himself to that because he has a belonging to this culture as well. You are subjected to culture in here. I think, it is not possible for us to be integrated to that shared culture as a whole.

Like most of the interviewees, Emre believes that there are limited or very few people with the characteristics of global gay in Turkey. So far, his opinions are the same with the others. What makes his answer different is that like the others, he does not believe that global gay can exist in Turkey just because culture would not allow it. He believes that gay men in Turkey would not be able to and should not possess the characteristics of that identity and perform it just because they come from a different culture. This means that, it is the gays in the first place who is not supposed to welcome global gay identity as the way it is because of the culture they have been exposed to throughout their lives. By doing so, Emre emphasizes the significance or the inevitability of the impact of local culture. Therefore, he does not sympathize with those who try to act like a global gay that they observe in other societies. He thinks that pretending to be a global gay does not fit gays in Turkey as they are supposed to act in accordance with the culture they come from. However, Emre's opinions are not just about focusing on the local culture and objecting to the global gay identity. He still assumes that such an identity would be useful for gay community in Turkey on the condition that it is employed in proper ways. He suggests that the proper way to consume the global gay identity is not just importing it the way it is but it should be merged with the local culture. He asks for a combination and integration of the two. In other words, he believes that global gay identity and culture could be made use of as long as it is hybridized with the local one. Accordingly, he thinks that copying global gay identity without considering the role of local culture seems to be unnatural, superficial, and unproductive.

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7. Finding the way in-between, hybridizing cultural identity

Up to this point, the participants clearly expressed their opinions on globalization, its pros and cons, and the reformation it generates upon their cultural identities. Generally speaking, it could be asserted that the participants are significantly in favor with what globalization provides them with as it opens up new opportunities for gay communities both in Turkey and other countries. By this way, they are led to reconstruct their cultural identities with the touch of globalization. However, depending on what they state, it should be emphasized that it does not necessarily mean that they turn their backs on their local culture, leave it behind, or acknowledge global flows as the way they are. Even if they complain about and are not satisfied with the local culture, they explicitly stress that their cultural codes are local. They never deny where they come from or feel hatred for the circumstances available in Turkey. That is, on one hand, they emphasize the significance and the role of their local culture; on the other, they embrace global flows basing their ideas on terms like freedom and human rights. Considering the local and global at the same time, they neither acknowledge nor abandon any of them. As a result of the circumstances and possibilities they have in local; and what they observe on global platforms, they happen to make use of both sides. In other words, they culturally place themselves somewhere in between the two which could be called the process of hybridization. In accordance with this assertion, bearing in mind both the local and the global, the interviewees are asked where they culturally position themselves.

Devran's answer is as follows.

Turkey is really such a great place but I place myself away from here. If I were given the chance, I would do what I wish to do in Turkey, in my own country. I do not want to seek these things in another country. I guess, that is because I interiorize Turkey.

In his statement, at first, Devran seems to place himself culturally in other societies rather than Turkey. The reason for feeling closer to the global is that although there are things he wishes to experience, he is not able to because of the way culture operates. That is, according to his statement, Turkish culture is not in favor with homosexuality and he is not able to realize himself as the way he wishes to. He believes that other societies or global platforms could be a way of solution for such a problem. However, Devran does not easily give up on his society and culture. He explicitly states that Turkey is his first choice for experiencing the things he wishes to. Moreover, he explains the reason why he feels this way by stating that he has already interiorized Turkish culture. By stating so, he indicates his connection to his local culture. To sum up, for Devran, it could be asserted that he has a strong attachment to his own local culture. However, he wishes to be a part of the global gay culture in order to feel happier. As a result, he happens to be stuck in the middle of local and global culture. He is not able to identify himself through neither the former nor the latter, as he possesses the characteristics and qualities of both sides.

Mete's answer is as follows.

I am a person of this nation. No matter what they say, I am Turkish and a person of this culture. Yes, I conflict with the society in terms of certain norms. Yes, I am a homosexual but it does not necessarily mean that I go against my own culture. Once they push me so much, as I say 'me' I mean the whole gay community, once they push us so much, for sure, we complain. I fall out of love with my own people and country. We have talked about how much they (gays in Western societies) gained in terms of their rights. Then, it is not true that I do not envy. Then you tell yourself, I wish I were there. To put it short, I am both Turkish, a person of Turkish culture and a world citizen. This is much better. I shall not prefer either this or that.

Just like Devran, Mete constructs his cultural identity depending on both the local and the global. He is aware that he conflicts with the characteristics of Turkish culture. He knows that his sexual identity is not the one that Turkish culture favors. However, he does not mind it; and on the contrary, highlights his identification with it. He acknowledges Turkish culture and presents himself as a member of it.

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However, like Devran, his dissatisfaction with the culture is derived from the way he is approached. He prefers a different, especially a Western society and culture because of the negativities he experiences in the local. In addition to identifying himself as a Turkish possessing the characteristics of Turkish culture, he informs us that he is also a global citizen who is aware of what happens in the world, follows and acknowledges the global flows, and integrates them to his identity. In short, he could be asserted to have a hybrid cultural identity that has the characteristics of both the local and the global.

Berk's short but significant answer is as follows.

We want to be like Europeans. But why cannot we live like them? It is more of ideas than in practice. If we divide the world into two halves, we are somewhere in between. Right on the division line.

For Berk, gay men in Turkey try to define themselves or to be like those that they observe in European societies. Turkish culture, in terms of same-sex sexualities, is so strict that neither he nor any other gay men in Turkey are able to experience the culture those in Europe are able to. He believes that such a desire is possible in ideas but not in practice. He makes a distinction between Turkey and other societies by dividing the world into two halves. What is significant in his statement is that he does not position Turkish culture into any of the halves. He places it right on the division line that is connected to the both sides. This means that he regards Turkish culture as the in-between one. It is neither on the right nor on the left side. It is both disconnected from and connected to each half. With a balance, in terms of same-sex sexualities, he places Turkish culture between the two camps where it could interact with both; create a new formulation, i.e., a hybrid one.

Serkan's answer is as follows.

I feel closer to the global but I think I am caught in the middle most of the times. Because of my mentality, the people I interact with, and the work I do, I feel closer to the global. However, we can still talk much about being caught in the middle. Actually, it is completely that way. Because, every country has its own culture and way of life. But here, the boundaries are off. Things are slowly melting.

Serkan explicitly informs us that he is closer to the global gay culture because of the people he socializes with and the work he does. That is, considering his work and the people around him as means, it could be suggested that he has his own tools which could help him to be aware of what happens around the world and go beyond the boundaries of his society and culture. As a result of such an awareness, and with the belief that global gay culture could be more satisfying for him, he culturally identifies himself closer to the global. However, he explicitly indicates the hybrid position he has. As he states that every country and society has their own culture, he emphasizes the role of local culture in Turkey and his attachment to it. By assessing both of the sides and after going through a process of negotiation between the two, he directly indicates the Third Space (Bhabha H. K., 1994) he experiences and suggests that he is caught in the middle most of the times. Hence, his cultural identity could be suggested to be hybrid. It is global, because of his way of life; and local, because of his connection to his own culture. Moreover, he corrects himself and states that it is not most of the times but all the time that he completely feels stuck in the middle.

Ayhan's response is similar with Serkan's and it goes as follows.

I do not see myself away from the local. It is not that possible to isolate myself from here or disregard it. Besides, I have worked abroad and met different people. However, it is not likely for me to separate myself from here. But, if I answer to the question considering my mentality, way of life, and people around me, I feel closer to the global.

Ayhan's answer is similar with Serkan's as he explicitly expresses his attachment to his local culture. He does not regard himself away from the local culture and believes that it is not possible to suggest so. Besides, his connection is so strong that he cannot even assume to separate himself from his local

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culture. Such a response by both Serkan and Ayhan reminds us Tomlinson's (2003) statement that local identities are not that fragile to break down when they face other identities and cultures through globalization. On the contrary, for individuals, they become significant means for identification. Once they face global platforms, they wish to emphasize their connection to their local culture. However, even though he has a strong connection, like Serkan, Ayhan acknowledges global culture where he feels more satisfied. He informs us that his mindset, friends, and job lead him to embrace global culture. By expressing so, he makes use of both sides again. Culturally, he is both local and global. Accordingly, the way he constructs his cultural identity could count as a process of hybridization.

Emre, in his long response, gives a detailed explanation of the process of hybridization he goes through.

I guess, I place myself right in the middle because I am not a global person. I have been and lived abroad but I can call myself neither global nor local. I definitely am not. I am in the middle. I say so because I have experienced them both. As I just said, I am not global because I have nationalist feelings as well. As you meet different people from different nationalities, you recognize it. I am not global but I am not completely local either. Wherever I go, I can socialize and express myself. I mean, I can state that I am in the middle of local and global.

I believe that there is not a balance. It is some of this and some of that. Because of the culture, you need to fit in a pattern of behaviors or sexual identity. However, once you go abroad, you observe that you do not have to do so. You see that there exists a society where such things are not even discussed. Then you say, yes. That reflects my opinion. It fits my mentality. However, once you consider it through your own culture, it feels so detached from you. I mean, you feel attracted to that and you say yes, I can live there. But certain things over there could also push you off. Therefore, what you desire for makes a balance between the local and the global.

In the first part of his answer, Emre informs us about how significant his local culture is for him. Even though he is an individual who has been, studied, and experienced abroad, he is not able to identify himself as a global individual. He calls himself a nationalist who is deeply attached to his own society and nation. Furthermore, he states that he becomes aware of his nationalist feelings especially when he meets individuals from different societies. At this point, we see a strong attachment to the local culture. However, he also informs us that even though he does not call himself a complete global individual, he acknowledges and is able to consume the global culture. That is, he is able to blend in with different societies and individuals from different countries because he has the necessary means for it. He states that he speaks a foreign language, has been abroad, works in an international company, has foreign friends, and follows global platforms by means of his education and the activism he did before. In other words, he could be considered as an individual who makes use of Appadurai's –scapes (1999). Moreover, by such tools, he has a cultural identity that is constructed both transnationally and translationally (Clifford, 2008). Accordingly, being in such a condition, Emre, culturally, presents himself as one who is in the middle. He calls himself neither local nor global but both. He is able to make use of, experience, and identify himself with both sides which could be considered a hybrid cultural identity.

In the second part of his answer, Emre explains why he feels this way; that he is in the middle of local and global. Following his statement that justifies his connection to his local culture, he narrates why he also favors global culture. He claims that global culture and the other societies out there are able to meet his needs. They enable so many opportunities and circumstances that the handicaps he experiences in his local culture are not even regarded as subject matters to be discussed. He is attracted to them for the reason that the nature of the global culture fits his mindset. However, even though global culture seems to be appealing for him, he still feels pushed off by it at certain points because he is influenced by his local culture as well. As a result, he believes that he needs to have a balance between the two. Emre's making use of both the local and the global culture while constructing his cultural identity and creating a hybrid one could be justified with Acheraiou's (2012) statement that individuals are able to employ concepts as the way they wish to for their own goals.

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Rüzgar's statement is different for the reason that he does not talk about his own cultural identity but about the activism he follows. In other words, he does not simply talk about his hybrid cultural identity but explains in details why and how he and other individuals interacting with gay movement are supposed to have a hybrid cultural identity. His answer is as follows.

Since the activism I follow is human rights based, it has a global infrastructure. For sure, we defend human rights locally but human rights are global. Hence, I am close to the global. I feed myself with local codes. I interact with the global but I am also related to the local. When you do activism, you discuss the circumstances here. However, as you approach them through human rights perspective, you recognize the significance of the global. As they are globally produced terms, you try to transfer them here. For example, Turkey glorifies the institution of family. It builds its social order on family. It states that it is your child; you can do with him/her whatever you wish. On the other hand, what do human rights say? Children have rights, you cannot intervene their rights. It is a violation and abuse. Therefore, we bring the things that do not exist here. Once you neglect here and begin to speak with their terms, it gets meaningless.

Rüzgar, as in his statements to the previous questions, explains his attachment to his local culture. He explicitly informs us that his cultural codes are local. Besides, the activism he does is focused on the local; and it is all about changing the cultural codes of Turkey which are against non-heterosexuality. However, he does not identify himself as local only. He maintains that in order to change the local cultural codes, he needs the norms and values that are globally favored and appreciated. He presents such a case through following activism locally while making use of global sources. He makes a distinction between the ways local and global culture operate by exemplifying through the assertion that Turkish culture approaches children as if they belong to their parents; while global culture is human based and emphasizes their rights. To put it differently, he concentrates on the local culture and the way it operates; and aims to change it. However, while doing so, he makes use of the global culture as well. That is, although, he constantly emphasizes the significance of the local, he imports the global values by paying attention to their significance. Besides, he is against the idea of simply taking the global values and trying to apply them to the local as the way they are. Depending on his response, it could be inferred that he aims to combine the two sides creating a hybrid one.

Among all the interviewees, Murat could be presented as the one who gives the most detailed answer. One contribution he makes is that in addition to talking individually and presenting his cultural identity as a hybrid one, he speaks on behalf of the whole society and gay movement; and suggests that they all should be hybrid for their own good. His answer is as follows.

I feel belonging to this culture. Even though I am an educated global citizen facing the West and Western norms, I like being in this culture. I love the turmoil here. Once you import something occurring on global platforms and stick it into the norms here, it does not work. It could have a meaning only when people take those global cultures and norms; and create their own variations here. No matter what you bring here, they will not match up with the essence of the society.

Like almost all of the interviewees, Murat begins his response with an emphasis on his attachment to the local culture. He presents himself as an ordinary member or a consumer of Turkish culture who does not experience any difficulty with it. In addition, he states that he enjoys the handicaps that he and other gay men experience in Turkish culture. However, he introduces himself as a well-educated individual and a global citizen who acknowledges and embraces Western norms and values. That is, besides having a strong local cultural identity, he also possesses global characteristics. His identification clearly indicates that he constructs his cultural identity by employing both the local and global culture which leads us to the idea of hybridity. Such an assertion is justified in his response where he objects to importing the global norms and values and applying them in Turkey as the way they are. At this point, his answer could count as the same with Rüzgar's. He believes that the characteristics and requirements of the local culture should not be neglected. Otherwise, importing the global ones as the way they are

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would fail and not work in Turkey. Furthermore, he supports the idea that individuals should import them on the condition that they integrate them to the way local culture operates. They should create their own variations made of both local and the global. For him, only then, they could be meaningful and useful. At this point, Murat's response matches with Pieterse's (2009) suggestion. In his work titled *Hybridity, so what?*, Pieterse is not interested in how hybridity occurs but focuses on the end result of the process. He takes our attention to the meanings and the end results of hybridization for individuals, societies, and cultures. He questions whether it turns out to be helpful or not. Like Pieterse, Murat stresses that individuals should make use of both the local and the global; and go through hybridization in order to generate their own variations which are meaningful, helpful, productive, and constructive for individuals and societies.

Murat continues his answer as follows.

I understand having a single language in terms of basic human rights such as housing or health rights. I understand and approve that countries impose sanctions to others for these rights. However, I find it wrong to take a prototypical gay from London streets, to place and adapt it here. What is this? In London, during gay pride, you can walk around completely naked. That is normal for London. We are talking about a place where nakedness is normal in the first place. However, once you try to do the same thing in İstiklal Street, you present a negative image that is not accepted here. Therefore, the image that is normal in New York would not be the same in İstanbul. As a result, I defend the idea that such things should be approached by considering the social and cultural life in here.

Murat holds on to the idea that there should be a stable, a worldwide-accepted single language that enables and protects human rights. At this point, he concentrates on global gay culture that aims to do so. Hence, Murat shows us how he feeds his cultural identity globally. However, with an example of an imaginary gay pride in London or New York, he objects to the assumption that what is done over there should or could be done in Turkey in the same way. He stands against the idea of neglecting the local culture. Therefore, he believes that what individuals observe in global platforms, in -scapes, or in travelling cultures should be implemented only by integrating them to the local culture. They should be mixed and combined, in other words, hybridized.

8. Conclusion

As stated earlier in the study, individuals are born into a culture, grow in it, and eventually end up with possessing its characteristics. In this way, culture is given to us. It becomes such a significant subject matter for identification that Sedgwick (1993) presents cultural codes that are available to us as the primary sources of survival. In other words, the cultural codes we are given in the first place are regarded as necessary and essential tools and means for individuals to identify themselves with. However, Sedgwick, continues with the assertion that as the meanings given to us by our own culture do not "line up", individuals tend to invest themselves to other sources and sites (1993, p. 3). Muñoz (1999) calls this process disidentification and states that as queers are not able to line up their meanings with the cultural codes they are given, they search for new sites where they can. He parallels disidentification with postcolonial hybrid subjects; and suggests that as non-heterosexuals search for new meanings where things line up, they generate hybrid identities. Accordingly, he proposes that hybridity turns out to be an end result and allows us to have a better understanding for those who have fragmented, complementary, and antagonistic identities.

Hence, gay men in Turkey are born into Turkish culture. They acquire its characteristics, requirements, norms, and values. However, as certain meanings of Turkish culture do not add up or seem meaningful for them, they could go through disidentification; and search for new sites where things 'line up'. At this point, globalization with its transnationality, translationality, travelling cultures, and -scapes could provide them with answers and solutions. As the opportunities enabled by globalization seem more

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favorable for the interviewees, cultural differentialism, which is given as the first option for the construction of cultural identity in this study, fails. In other words, cultural differentialism does not stand as an option that the participants favor.

Moreover, depending on the responses of the interviewees, it could also be asserted that since local culture does not seem to be an easy prey for globalization as it turns out to be a significant subject matter for identification when they face different ones and is not easily given up, cultural convergence; the second option for the construction of cultural identity, fails as well. That is because; individuals do not disregard or neglect the norms and values of their own local culture or prefer to consume the characteristics of global gay culture as the way they are. In other words, they resist being a stereotypical individuals consuming the global gay culture as is.

However, the responses of the interviewees combine these two approaches and present them as one. As they experience difficulties within their local culture, they search for new possibilities where they can line their meanings up. For such a problem of theirs, globalization stands as a productive way. However, even if they complain about their own local culture, they still feel attachment to it strongly. They simply do not turn their backs on Turkish culture consuming the global gay culture only. In such a dilemma, they find cultural hybridity, the third option for the construction of cultural identity, as the most meaningful, productive, and reasonable one. That is, while constructing their cultural identities, the interviewees make use of both the local and the global culture. They try to generate their own meanings out of the combination of the two with the assumption that none of them would work out singularly. They do not limit themselves within their boundaries and subvert the culture they are given with the global one. In Robertson's (1998) terms, they glocalize their culture. With the combination of the two, they create their own hybrid meanings, culture, and cultural identity.

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