Queer Podcasting as a Medium of Visibility in Türkiye's Media Ecosystem: A Content Analysis on Episodes

FIRAT TUFAN[*]
İstanbul University, Türkiye

BILGE ŞENYÜZ
Marmara University, Türkiye

This study examines the content of queer podcasts' episodes, which have evolved into an alternative media and visibility tool for queer people, beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic in the Turkish media ecosystem. We analyzed all episodes of the 6 queer podcasts that regularly produce content and have uploaded at least 10 episodes, by using a codebook we created. The results of this study indicate that queer podcasts provide an essential and dynamic platform for queer voices and experiences. They are practical and promising channels for queer representation and communication. Besides, by providing a private and intimate listening experience, these podcasts offer in-depth talks and storytelling, information, and entertainment that can aid in promoting an understanding of queer issues. Our results are encouraging and should be validated by studies on queer podcast experiences from other countries.

Keywords: podcasting, queer podcast, queer media, queer visibility, content analysis

Queer podcasting is an emerging medium of communication that has been gaining popularity among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and other (LGBTIQ+) people worldwide as a tool for self-expression and visibility. Audio-based visibility through podcasts, which we have at times used metaphorically in this article, highlights a new medium through which LGBTIQ+ people can potentially make their voices heard. In Türkiye, where the LGBTIQ+ community has faced significant challenges, including invisibility and marginalization, queer podcasting has emerged as a platform for LGBTIQ+ people to share their experiences and perspectives. By exploring the potential of queer podcasting as a means of social change and the challenges it faces in a social context, this study seeks to contribute to the academic understanding of LGBTIQ+ issues in Türkiye.

Before the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye in the Ottoman Empire, homosexuality was acknowledged as a known reality although not prevalent in daily life. While the establishment of a secular and modern Türkiye brought promising advances in equal civil rights, the focus of laws and social norms

Fırat Tufan: firat.tufan@istanbul.edu.tr
Bilge Şenyüz: bilge.senyuz@marmara.edu.tr

was primarily on women's rights and visibility (Engin, 2015). The visibility of queer people remained severely restricted until the early 1990s. Despite certain historical changes in the societal perception of homosexuality in Türkiye, there has been limited progress over an extended period. While no laws prohibit homosexuality in Türkiye, the term "sexual orientation" is not included in civil law. Although homosexuality is not criminalized, some political authorities have ignored its presence in public spaces or demonstrated hostile attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ community (Erdoğan & Köten, 2014).

One of the significant turning points in discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in Türkiye was the military coup of September 12, 1980. The military government attempted to redesign public morality. The escalating hostility between the nationalist Far Right and Leftist factions justified the Turkish military's coup. Türkiye was ruled by the military for the next three years, which significantly affected many facets of daily life, including sexual and gender norms. In the 1980s, repressive measures were implemented against LGBTIQ+ people, including increased police violence against trans women in particular, the forced relocation of trans women from large cities to rural areas, torture in detention, public shaming of trans women and gays, and a law that forbade "homosexual performers" from performing on stage in the name of public morality (Bayramoğlu, 2021; Öz, 2009).

Nearly 40 years later, Türkiye's current government strives to control public life, including sexual and gender norms, as in the 1980s. The crackdown on the LGBTIQ+ movement echoes past tactics, often justified by vague reasons like public security or sensibilities. The ban on the Istanbul Pride March in 2015 marked the beginning of increased restrictions (Bayramoğlu, 2021), while the arrest of Ali Erol, a founder of Chaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Studies and Solidarity Association (KAOS GL, Türkiye's first nongovernmental organization [NGO] fighting against LGBTIQ+ discrimination) underscored mounting pressures on LGBTIQ+ rights (Tahaoğlu, 2018).

A study on religiosity, political conservatism, and patriarchal attitudes in Türkiye from 1990 to 2011 revealed unique dynamics challenging gender equality theories linked to modernization and economic growth. Despite economic advancement, Türkiye has grown more patriarchal since the 1990s. Religion's influence on these attitudes has decreased over time, but political conservatism's impact remains constant (Engin & Pals, 2018). Positive changes were observed during periods of European integration, improving news coverage of LGBTIQ+ issues in Türkiye between 2005 and 2010. While visibility has increased and discriminatory frameworks have reduced, most coverage still portrays LGBTIQ+ people negatively (Neo, 2020).

Another study, which attempted to define the discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+ people in Türkiye from a historical perspective and examined 21 articles directly addressing the issue, found that the main pillars of discrimination in Türkiye are based on legal frameworks, social institutions, and norms. The articles analyzed mainly addressed discrimination in employment, workplace, health, and public policies, such as public services (Ince Yenilmez, 2020).

Since the 1990s, LGBTIQ+ activists in Türkiye have gained visibility and registered associations. However, the country still experiences psychological and physical attacks against LGBTIQ+ people (Szulc, 2015). Recent harsh policies, especially in the last decade, opposed to the community have been silencing

queer people and eroding their visibility. Prominent political figures in Türkiye employ hate speech against LGBTIQ+ people, endangering progress and rendering them invisible in the fight for their rights, often demonized in the media (Muedini, 2021).

Accordingly, the visibility of queer people continues to increase in podcasts, where they can hide their identities if they wish to anonymously exist only with their voices. A podcast is a unique medium for LGBTIQ+ people to make their voices heard, come out, act with solidarity, and struggle. For this reason, we aimed to reveal the content of queer-oriented audio broadcasting by focusing on podcasts produced in Türkiye, with queer culture and experience at the center of our research. Although our study mainly focused on the visibility of LGBTIQ+ people through podcasts, we preferred to use the queer in a broader context. LGBTIQ+ is often used as a descriptive term for sexual orientation and gender identity issues. However, this term may not provide sufficient coverage for some individuals and communities and may continue to adhere tightly to binary gender norms. Therefore, queer people prefer to express a wider rebellion against heteronormative and cis-normative structures and promote social awareness. Queer is a term that expresses ambiguity and constant change in gender and sexual orientation, encompassing various identities and experiences that are not limited by gender and sexual orientation categories (Jagose, 1996). Ahmed (2006) posits, in queer theory, that conventional labels such as "heterosexual" or "gay" are not inherent or immutable categories but, instead, are socially constructed and contingent. She argues that these designations are produced by discourses and power relations that shape our perceptions and comprehension of corporealities and desires. As Warner (1991) anticipated, the queer political movement aims to dismantle the societal framework that sanctifies heterosexuality as the norm rather than creating a safe haven for a marginalized and sheltered subculture. Based on these reasons, we found that the podcast content we examined was more suitable for queer inclusiveness.

In today's Türkiye, the representation of LGBTIQ+ people in traditional media, as in many countries, is deficient and problematic (Akser, 2016; Aşçı, 2013; Beirne, 2008; Depeli, 2013; Gross, 2001; McInroy & Craig, 2017; Padva, 2007; Pullen, 2012a). In addition, queer people, whose social visibility has already been limited and problematic, became even more invisible during the COVID-19 pandemic period (Banerjee & Nair, 2020; Konnoth, 2020). In this context, we analyzed the content of queer podcasts in the Turkish media ecosystem, which have become an alternative media and visibility tool for queer people in the country, specifically starting from the time of the pandemic. For this purpose, we analyzed all the content of six queer podcast channels that regularly produce content and have at least 10 episodes uploaded. We mainly focused on the topics and targets of criticism in these episodes and victims of inequalities addressed in the content and examined the guests invited to the episodes to show that their voices were potentially heard.

Background

Struggles for Visibility and Queer Media

In recent years, the struggle for queer visibility has gained increasing attention in academia (Carrasco & Kerne, 2018; Clawson, 2014; Cockayne & Gieseking, 2021; Gamson, 2013; Kerrigan, 2021; Thomsen, 2021). Queer people, who do not conform to traditional heterosexual norms, have historically

been marginalized and oppressed. Thus, the struggle for queer visibility is closely tied to the broader fight for LGBTIQ+ rights and social justice. An essential battleground for the queer visibility struggle is growing queer media.

One of the critical reasons for the growth of queer media is the increased visibility of LGBTIQ+ people in society. Visibility has been a crucial tactic in contemporary LGBTIQ+ activism. The assertion of existence—coming out of the closet—has been considered the first step toward receiving protection, understanding, and equal treatment. Contrary to their Internet counterparts, LGBTIQ+ media and public spaces continuously carry out this effort (Scott, 2010). As more people openly express their sexual and gender identities, the demand for representation in the media has also increased. These developments have led to the creation of a wide range of queer-themed media, from drama series that explore the lives and relationships of LGBTIQ+ characters to documentaries that shed light on the struggles and triumphs of the community. Drawing on the representations of popular culture in the media, Pullen (2012b) reminds us that these representations also have a guiding effect on queer peoples' demands for a new life, with numerous references and discussions. Gray (2009) examines queer visibility beyond urban contexts, highlighting creative media experiences and strategies of young queer communities in rural areas.

Media play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes toward marginalized communities, including LGBTIQ+ communities. In recent years, there has been an increase in the representation of queer characters in mainstream media (Campbell & Carilli, 2013; Copeland, 2018; Gray, 2009; Himberg, 2018; Kerrigan & O'Brien, 2018; Nölke, 2018; Pullen, 2012b). However, this representation is not always nuanced or accurate (McInroy & Craig, 2017; Padva, 2007). In the past, these characters were often depicted in a negative light, and their sexuality was used as a source of humor or punchline. More recently, there has been a shift toward more positive and nuanced portrayals of queer characters. Despite this progress, there is still a long way to go to promote the positive and diverse portrayals of queer people. Transgender people face a more disrespectful picture of representation and portrayal. Although Cavalcante (2018) affirmed the social empathy that has resulted from transgender people's increased media visibility in recent years, another study (Osborn, 2022) found that transgender people are portrayed negatively or stereotypically in mainstream media far more often than they are represented favorably.

Furthermore, there is a lack of intersectionality in the representation of queer people in media. For instance, the experiences of queer people of color are often erased or ignored, and the media tend to focus on the experiences of White cisgender gay men. These tendencies not only reinforce harmful stereotypes but also fail to accurately depict the diversity of the LGBTIQ+ community (McInroy & Craig, 2017; Meyer, 2012). Besides, Muñoz (1999, 2015) emphasized the importance of intersectionality in understanding the experiences of marginalized communities, highlighting how different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and homophobia, create a unique form of resistance to queer struggles. While it is essential for queer media creators to strive for more inclusive and accurate representations of the LGBTIQ+ community and ensure that the experiences of all members of the community are recognized and valued, it is vital that queer people are represented from their perspective, not what others show. We assert that it is essential to define queer media at this point.

We define queer media as any form of media that portrays or represents LGBTIQ+ people, themes, and issues. However, we also consider the inclusivity of queer media as part of the process of queer world-making and world-building, which can be described as creating and imagining alternative ways of living and existing that challenge the dominant norms and assumptions about gender, sexuality, and identity. This process involves breaking away from traditional norms and limitations, celebrating diversity, and imagining societies that are more liberated to create alternative realities. It also involves exploring and experimenting with different ways of being in the world that do not fit into traditional or binary categories and creating spaces and communities that prioritize inclusivity and acceptance (Otis & Dunn, 2021; Richter, 2021). In this context, we frequently use the term "queer" as an umbrella term that encompasses a range of nonnormative identities and experiences. The technical tools used to create this queer vision include newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, films, podcasts, and other forms of creative expression.

In countries where queer identities are legally accepted and socially embraced, queer media examples thrive. However, in regimes such as Türkiye, where queer identities are marginalized and suppressed, queer media often finds their place in alternative digital platforms (Engebretsen, Schroeder, & Bao, 2015; Selen, 2020; Szulc, 2015). In Türkiye's struggle for visibility, LGBTIQ+ people are exposed to far harsher counter-discourses. Despite this adversity, LGBTIQ+ activism has been growing in Türkiye since the 1990s. After a period of increased oppression, the post-oppression era was marked by hopeful movements (Bayramoğlu, 2021). Notably, the 2013 protests against the removal of protesters from Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park led to a surge of opposition, including the largest Pride march in Türkiye's history (Kramer, 2018). Opposition parties also began prioritizing LGBTIQ+ rights in their political agendas, starting around the 2015 general elections (Bayramoğlu, 2021). In the 2023 elections, a left-wing opposition party, the Türkiye İşçi Partisi (the Worker's Party of Türkiye), even nominated trans-women activists as parliamentary candidates, highlighting the growing visibility of LGBTIQ+ voices in Türkiye.

According to Bayramoğlu (2021), queer activism in Türkiye has increasingly shifted toward digital media, allowing for more space and opportunities for resistance and activism against oppression. Bianet, a Leftist online news portal, is an example of a media outlet that provides more coverage of queer issues than mainstream media. The growing queer digital visibility in Türkiye, including platforms such as Pembe Hayat's YouTube channel (Pembe Hayat, n.d.), online platforms such as GMag, and individual Instagram accounts, offers hope despite the political pressure.

On the other hand, having their own media is often not an adequate solution for queer people in the struggle for their visibility. According to Berliner (2018), many LGBTIQ+ teens set boundaries for themselves when producing their own media; they carefully control their online personas out of concern for safety. Being seen and heard should be encouraged in queer media production processes because hiding one's real identity can be discouraging.

Queer media can potentially serve as a platform for queer activism, a political movement that challenges societal norms and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals. With a history dating back to the late 19th century, queer activism has achieved substantial progress in obtaining legal rights and recognition for the LGBTIQ+ community (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014; Çağatay, Liinason, & Sasunkevich, 2022; Erol,

2021; Goh, 2018; Grundy & Smith, 2007; Thoreson, 2014; Wang, 2021; Ward, 2008). The primary aim of queer activism is to challenge cis-heteronormativity, which assumes that everyone is heterosexual and cisgender. This belief influences laws, cultural norms, and more. By resisting cis-heteronormativity, activists aim to allow individuals to express their identities without facing discrimination or violence.

Today, LGBTIQ+ people also use digital media to fight for their rights. The concept of digital activism in this context, means that LGBTIQ+ people use digital media and technology to defend their rights, and it has become increasingly meaningful in recent years. Social media platforms and other online tools have provided new ways for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies to organize, communicate, and mobilize for change (Kılıç, 2021; Steinbock, 2019; Vivienne & Burgess, 2012). In the 1990s, the Internet and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube revolutionized LGBTIQ+ digital activism. They enabled virtual communities to share experiences, seek support, and organize for change.

Over the past two decades, queer individuals have increasingly used digital media for communication and socialization. Dating apps like Grindr, Tinder, Hornet, HER, and OkCupid have gained popularity as platforms for connecting with potential partners, friends, and community members (Byron, Albury, & Pym, 2021; Gudelunas, 2012). However, these applications primarily facilitate interpersonal connections rather than actively supporting LGBTIQ+ visibility and activism.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr provide spaces for queer individuals to share experiences, connect, and advocate for their rights (Cavalcante, 2019; Craig, Eaton, McInroy, Leung, & Krishnan, 2021; Lucero, 2017). Online forums, chat rooms, and virtual communities are also used by queer people to form supportive networks and discuss topics ranging from coming out to health (Berger, Taba, Marino, Lim, & Skinner, 2022; Hawkins & Watson, 2017; Krueger & Young, 2015). The rise of digital media has enabled new ways for queer people to build connections and communities though concerns about privacy, safety, and discrimination persist (Hanckel, Vivienne, Byron, Robards, & Churchill, 2019; Talbot, Talbot, Roe, & Briggs, 2022). As digital media's role in shaping queer experiences evolves, further research is necessary to understand its impact on identities, relationships, and communities. The flexibility of podcasts to create a solidarity network for activism (Krishnan & Wallis, 2020; Yang, 2022) makes it even more critical to conduct research in this field.

Podcasts as a Queer Media

Podcasts are popular and accessible audio broadcasts that can be enjoyed on various devices anytime, anywhere. They offer diverse content for niche audiences, providing in-depth and unique topics not found elsewhere. Their flexibility in length allows creators to thoroughly examine subjects beyond other media forms.

Podcasts offer a level of intimacy and personal connections that are difficult to reproduce in other types of media. They frequently have a more casual and personable tone because they are mostly produced and distributed directly by creators, which makes them seem more relatable and engaging to listeners (Lindgren, 2023; Swiatek, 2018).

The growth of podcasting is driven by the emergence of hosting and distribution platforms, with RSS technology playing a pioneering role in enabling easy and fast distribution. Podcast platforms serve as central hubs for listeners to discover and access podcasts, offering various features and tools to support podcast creators in expanding their shows and generating revenue. However, the use of podcast platforms has raised concerns regarding biased algorithms, interruptions in cultural content, autonomy, and monetization policies (Sullivan, 2019).

Queer podcasts, as a subgenre, cover diverse topics, including sexuality, gender, relationships, health, politics, culture, and history, featuring LGBTIQ+ hosts, guests, or themes. These podcasts use sound creatively to challenge norms and uplift marginalized voices. They go beyond LGBTIQ+ subjects, employing techniques like narrative deconstruction and alternative soundscapes to offer a range of informative, educational, humorous, dramatic, and personal perspectives.

In her thesis on queer audio media, Copeland (2022) examines what defines a podcast or radio show as "queer." Our research aligns with Copeland's work, leading us to propose the following assertion: Queerness in audio media transcends the sexual orientation or gender identity of hosts or guests and instead focuses on using sound to challenge and disrupt normative ideas and structures. A queer podcast or radio show employs strategies such as deconstructing dominant narratives, creating alternative realities through sound, and amplifying the voices and experiences of marginalized communities. Thus, queerness in audio media extends beyond explicit LGBTIQ+ content, encompassing diverse topics and approaches.

Podcasts can provide a sense of community, solidarity, and empowerment (Yang, 2022) for queer people, as well as the visibility, representation, and understanding of non-queers. Being visible, which is acknowledged as a frequent paradigm in queer studies, is substituted by Bao (2015) with "making sounds" or "queer audibility." Although Bao (2015) supports this strategy with queer films, his projection of sound and audibility makes one think about how queer podcasts might work as a primary media format. Additionally, this medium is less censored (Sellas & Solà, 2019) and more secluded (Cho, 2018) than other media and supports queer people. This situation raises questions about what queer people talk about in the podcast environment and what issues they address.

Queer podcasts are an essential resource for the LGBTIQ+ community, providing a platform for discussing personal stories and broader cultural and political issues. Notable examples include *Nancy* (Low & Tu, 2017–2020), *Getting Curious With Jonathan Van Ness* (Van Ness, 2016–present), *Queery With Cameron Esposito* (Esposito, 2017–present), *Homo Sapiens* (Sweeney, 2017–present), *Queer as Fact* (Anderson, Best, Farrow, & McInnes, 2017–present), and *Making Gay History* (Marcus, 2016–present). These podcasts feature interviews with diverse individuals, exploring topics such as queer history, culture, and activism.

While encountering podcasts as queer media is becoming increasingly common, few scholarly studies have addressed queer podcasting (Copeland, 2022; Ziebell, 2022). A significant portion of the academic research on this topic has been conducted in the field of radio broadcasting (Barnhurst, 2003; Copeland, 2018; DeShazor, 2018; Johnson, 2008; Kerrigan & O'Brien, 2018; Linfoot, 2018; Martin, 2018).

Queer representation in radio broadcasting is limited in Türkiye; however, Açık Radyo is a notable exception. Açık Radyo provides programming for the LGBTIQ+ community and covers Pride Week events and various concerns specific to the community (Açık Radyo, 2013).

Considering the prevailing prejudices, restrictions, and hate speech against the LGBTIQ+ community in Türkiye, the growing presence and visibility of queer podcasts hold significant relevance for our research.

Methodology, Research Questions, and Sampling

We proceeded with content analysis in the present study. Content analysis is "a research technique used for the systematic, objective, and quantitative explanation of the explicit content of communication" (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). It is widely used in various disciplines, including communication, and can be applied in a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approach using a variety of techniques (White & Marsh, 2006).

The results of content analyses conducted with categories created without clearly defined questions will be of low quality or inadequate (Berelson, 1952; Merten, 2013). Therefore, we used the following research questions to guide the coding scheme of the queer podcast episodes. According to queer podcast episodes:

RQ1:   *Who are the actors or what are the institutions that circulate discourses against queer people in the podcasts?*

RQ2:   *Who do queer podcasts give voice to make queer discrimination audible?*

RQ3:   *What other disadvantaged groups do queer podcasts bring to the agenda?*

By first conducting independent analyses of the episodes and then collaborating to define and further define each category when themes emerged (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008), we improved both internal and construct validity. We endeavored to agree on categories that accurately reflected our joint evaluations of the text while adhering to the constant comparison procedure.

Through a preliminary search of podcast platforms, related websites, and mobile apps, we identified six podcast channels that featured conversations and content focused on queer culture and theories, with at least 10 episodes recorded and distributed regularly in Türkiye. From the first episodes of the podcasts (September 17, 2019) to the start of the study (December 31, 2021), we listened to a total of 216 episodes and subjected the content to qualitative content analysis according to the created codebook. The podcast channels and number of episodes included in the study are as follows: *Kaos GL* (Alpar et al., 2020–2022; *n* = 42), *K'nın Sesi* (Albayrak, Dalyanoğlu, & Sarıaltun, 2020–2022; *n* = 21), *GZone* (Bell, Özdaş, & Piyancı, 2021–2022; *n* = 46), *Queer Troublemakers* (Armut & Mantar, 2019–2022; *n* = 46), *Velvele* (Büyüktaş & Murmur, 2020–present; *n* = 10), and *Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar* (İnceel & Hepkaner, 2019–present; *n* = 51).

While *Gzone* (Bell et al., 2021–2022), *Kaos GL* (Alpar et al., 2020–2022), and *K'nın Sesi* (Albayrak et al., 2020–2022) podcasts represent an institutional structure, *Velvele* (Büyüktaş & Murmur, 2020–present), *Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar* (İnceel & Hepkaner, 2019–present), and *Queer Troublemakers* (Armut & Mantar, 2019–2022) are podcasts created by individuals. *K'nın Sesi* (Albayrak et al., 2020–2022) is funded by organizations such as the York University Centre for Applied Human Rights and the Google Podcast Creators' Program. Besides, *K'nın Sesi* consists of radio dramas prepared with three-dimensional sound design, followed by conversations about the topics covered in these radio dramas. It focuses on diverse women and queer experiences during the pandemic. The *Velvele* podcast (Büyüktaş & Murmur, 2020–present) is coedited by translator–writer Ari P. Büyüktaş (Istanbul) and journalist–writer Bawer Murmur (Barcelona). The main question of *Velvele* is how queer people are affected by the quarantine and the pandemic. *Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar* (İnceel & Hepkaner, 2019–present) is a podcast that explores Turkish pop music of the 1990s from cultural studies and music perspectives. The podcast tries to find an answer to the question "Who, and what kinds of views remain in the shadows?" Sezgin İnceel, one of the program's presenters, is an LGBTIQ+ individual living in Germany, where he is pursuing a PhD in music. The second presenter, İlker Hepkaner, is an LGBTIQ+ individual PhD student living in the United States, pursuing a degree in cultural studies. Kaos GL is an LGBTIQ+ association founded in 1994 by LGBTIQ+ people in Türkiye to unite and fight against discrimination with the idea that liberating homosexuals will also liberate heterosexuals. The *Kaos GL* podcast (Alpar et al., 2020–2022) represents the ideas and activities of this association. The other queer podcast channel we chose as a sample is *Gzone*, the first magazine published in Türkiye for LGBTIQ+ people, which still exists today on many digital platforms. The *Gzone* (Bell et al., 2021–2022) podcast represents the *Gzone* content and brand. *Queer Troublemakers* (Armut & Mantar, 2019–2022) is a talk show podcast focusing on queer culture and lifestyles. The podcasters use the pseudonyms Armut (Barcelona) and Mantar (Istanbul).

Findings

In our qualitative content analysis of 216 podcast episodes, we examined the podcasts' structural characteristics, topics, and interaction elements. Our exploration encompassed individual queer experiences, political, social, and cultural criticism from a queer perspective, the identities of hosts and guests, the criticized targets in the content, and inequalities mentioned in the episodes.

Thirty-two of the podcast episodes analyzed are shorter than 10 minutes, 36 are of 10–30 minutes, 140 are of 30–60 minutes, and eight are longer than one hour. We found that the podcast episodes could be rated in more than one genre category, thus we performed multiple coding. The episodes shorter than 10 minutes were news programs ($n = 23$) and radio dramas ($n = 10$). A significant part ($n = 184$) was based on conversations. In support of these data, the preferred form of presentation was mainly dialogue ($n = 183$). Eighteen episodes had educational/informative features; 23 episodes had monologue features, and 10 did not fall into any category because they were radio dramas.

Social media are an effective channel for reaching and interacting with podcast audiences (Balls-Berry et al., 2018). In this regard, 74 episodes quoted a reference to the podcast's social media accounts. There is a limited listener contribution ($n = 44$) to the content of the podcasts. These contributions consist

of correcting errors in the information mentioned in the episodes, suggestions for future episodes, congratulations and appreciation for past episodes, and questions for the guests.

A significant portion of the episodes dealt with general political, social, and cultural criticism. This result is consistent with the findings of former studies (Banerjee & Nair, 2020; Konnoth, 2020); the issues discussed are observed worldwide, especially in the family, school, and social life but were particularly exacerbated during the pandemic.

While 177 podcast episodes had LGBTIQ+ content, 169 of these represented LGBTIQ+ rights. Ninety-six pieces of content mentioned advocacy for women's rights, which is meaningful in that they place value on women as another disadvantaged gender identity. Moreover, this content contributes to feminist theory and the tradition of intersectional feminism through discussions on the need for more inclusive feminism going beyond the voices of heterosexual women and lesbians and the extension of gender inequalities to homophobia and transphobia (Crenshaw, 1991; Heyes, 2003).

According to queer theory, which emphasizes the experiential nature of subjectivity over artificial identities with carefully drawn boundaries, the concept of gender, shaped by each experience, is also fluid (De Lauretis, 1991; Doan, 2015). In this context, subjective experiences are unique and valuable. Thus, 81 episodes include personal LGBTIQ+ experiences.

Table 1. Topics of Podcast Episodes (Multiple Selections Allowed).

Topic of Podcast Episodes	Podcasts						
	GZone (*n*)	*Kaos GL* (*n*)	*K'nın Sesi* (*n*)	*Queer Troublemakers* (*n*)	*Velvele* (*n*)	*Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar* (*n*)	Total (*N*)
Problems queer people experience, rights violations, and being queer	57	49	6	29	8	6	155
Popular culture	28	4	1	11	1	51	96
Unequal practices and discourses toward queer people in state policies	30	39	4	10	6	4	93
Problematic representations in the media	23	27	5	7	2	23	87
Queer solidarity	19	28	1	22	5	9	84

Queer people and women's movement solidarity	14	12	2	20	3	6	57
Rights-based NGOs	8	33	1	11	3	—	56
Being queer or being a woman during the pandemic	8	15	8	6	8	—	45
Proud Month/Pride Parade	13	8	1	9	4	3	38
Latest news about LGBTIQ+ people (newsletter)	2	20	—	8	3	—	33
Anti-solidarity discourses and actions in the feminist movement	3	2	—	3	1	—	9
Sexuality during the pandemic	—	—	—	—	3	—	3
Vegan eco-activism	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Other	1	1	—	—	—	—	2

We found that the topics of the podcast episodes were generally queer-oriented but varied (Table 1). While issues experienced by queer people and rights violations ($N = 155$) were the most popular content, unequal practices, and discourses against queer people in public policy ($N = 93$) were frequently featured. Issues such as the disruption of treatment and gender-matching processes under the pretext of the pandemic, being forced to work in precarious jobs, and not having the right to raise a legal family are examples in this category. Incomplete representations and misrepresentations of queer people in the media ($N = 87$) are among the issues cited as further discrimination. Another purpose of queer-oriented podcasts is to ensure and emphasize solidarity among community members by making queer people feel that they are not alone (Krishnan & Wallis, 2020; Yang, 2022). The data emphasizing queer solidarity ($N = 84$) underscore this function. While some podcast content ($N = 57$) focuses on solidarity between queer people and women's movements, including intersectional feminism, a few pieces of content ($N = 9$) were found to address queer opposition in the radical feminist movement, both in Türkiye and around the world.

Table 2. Targets of Criticism in the Podcast Episodes (Multiple Selections Allowed).

Targets of Criticism in the Podcast Episodes	Podcasts						
	GZone (*n*)	*Kaos GL* (*n*)	*K'nın Sesi* (*n*)	*Queer Troublemaker s* (*n*)	*Velvele* (*n*)	*Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar* (*n*)	Total (*N*)
Society	36	39	13	35	8	13	144
Politicians/ruling party	32	32	12	12	7	4	99
Problematic representations in the media	22	26	4	12	1	23	88
Patriarchy/masculinity	23	12	11	26	2	9	83
Public officers	15	35	2	14	2	1	69
LGBTIQ+ community members	9	8	—	15	—	1	33
Family	10	8	6	6	—	3	33
Capitalist system	2	2	1	7	2	2	16
Head of Religious Affairs	5	3	2	—	2	—	12
Trans-exclusionary radical feminists / Some other feminists	4	2	—	5	1	—	12
Head of the Supreme Board of Radio and Television	6	2	1	—	—	1	10
The president	5	2	—	—	—	—	7
Some singers/celebrities	1	2	—	—	—	4	7
Social media	1	—	1	2	—	—	4
Other	—	1	—	1	1	—	3

In this category, which was created to answer RQ1, we detected that the queer podcasters criticize institutions, organizations, individuals, media, and social structures that LGBTIQ+ people see as the cause of their problems (Table 2). Society emerges as the first of the targets seen and criticized as the cause of queer peoples' problems (*N* = 144). The discriminatory nature of Turkish society toward the queer community (Selen, 2020; Szulc, 2015) has often been emphasized as a whole rather than individualized. Politicians and the ruling party (*N* = 99) were also identified as a major target for criticism. This finding is a logical outcome of the current hostile political climate against LGBTIQ+ people (Bayramoğlu, 2021; Erdoğan & Köten, 2014). Furthermore, conventional media were criticized as another major fuel for discrimination against the queer community through the incomplete and false representations they publish and the hate

speech they use (*N* = 87). In the period under study, the negative discourses by the head of religious affairs and the head of the Supreme Board of Radio and Television directed against queer people necessitated the opening of separate categories for these two designations. The fact that some members of the LGBTIQ+ community were also criticized for their negative and inappropriate role-model behavior (*N* = 33) is significant to show that efforts are made to have an objective discussion without community favoritism or advocacy.

Table 3. Guest(s) of the Podcast Episodes.

Guest participation	Podcasts						
	GZone (n)	*Kaos GL (n)*	*K'nın Sesi (n)*	*Queer Troublemakers (n)*	*Velvele (n)*	*Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar (n)*	Total (*N*)
Named	43	20	10	11	1	6	91
Anonymous	2	2	—	—	—	—	4
Professional identity of the guest/s (multiple selections allowed)							
Community member	20	14	—	11	1	—	46
NGO worker/activist	13	17	1	11	—	1	43
Famous person/celebrity	17	—	2	—	—	5	24
Subject-matter expert	3	7	6	2	—	—	18
Other	3	1	3	—	—	—	7

Research question 2 inquires about who is being heard on queer podcasts. In this context, 91 named and four anonymous guests participated in the podcasts (Table 3). When evaluating the identities of the guests, we found that they were community members (*N* = 46), NGO activists (*N* = 43), famous people or celebrities (*N* = 24), and subject-matter experts such as lawyers, psychologists, and academics (*N* = 18). This allows the episodes in question to make the voice of the queer community heard potentially. Besides, it shows that the episodes also facilitate the building of solidarity networks by sharing contact details of aid organizations and advocacy NGOs and providing information on how to seek legal redress. The presence of anonymous guests, even if they were only a few, shows that queer people who have not yet been able to come out also find a way to express themselves.

Table 4. Victims and Bases of Inequalities Addressed in the Podcast Episodes (Multiple Selections Allowed).

Victims/Bases of Inequalities	Podcasts						
	GZone (n)	*Kaos GL (n)*	*K'nın Sesi (n)*	*Queer Troublemakers (n)*	*Velvele (n)*	*Yine Yeni Yeniden 90'lar (n)*	Total (*N*)
LGBTIQ+	40	40	8	32	10	34	164

Women	26	15	17	26	5	28	117
Minority/ethnic groups	10	10	5	5	4	12	46
Children	3	3	1	3	2	1	13
Journalists	7	1	—	2	—	—	10
Animals	3	2	—	—	1	2	8
Poverty/class discrimination	2	—	1	—	2	2	7
Elderly people/age discrimination	—	—	4	—	2	1	7
Fat people/fatphobia	—	—	—	1	—	2	3
Disability	—	—	1	1	—		2
Left/leftists	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
People living with human immunodeficiency virus	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Pleasure-oriented sexuality (bondage, discipline (or domination), sadism, and masochism, etc.)	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Religious discrimination	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Musicians	1	—	—	—	—	—	1

Queer podcasts should give a voice to other marginalized communities (Copeland, 2022). In support of this view, RQ3 inquires about other disadvantaged groups highlighted in the episodes. Although the victimization of LGBTIQ+ people was mentioned most frequently (N = 164) in the podcast episodes studied, it was found that other victims, particularly women (N = 117), minority or ethnic groups (N = 46), and children (N = 13), were also mentioned (Table 4). This finding is valuable in terms of the potential for solidarity between disadvantaged groups and for enabling them to be heard. The podcast episodes also emphasize that the struggle for LGBTIQ+ rights is a movement that shares common ground with other inequalities such as animal rights, disability, and ageism, especially in feminism and class struggle.

Discussion and Conclusion

The queer podcast episodes we examined have the potential to make queer people's problems visible, offer solutions, and announce channels of solidarity in Türkiye. In that regard, queer podcasting can be accepted as an alternative channel that allows LGBTIQ+ people to increase their visibility by sharing personal experiences and announcing the violation of their rights. According to the research, queer podcasts are a valuable and dynamic platform for queer voices and experiences. They give queer people a platform to express themselves, tell their stories, and interact with others. They also give non-queer folks a chance to learn about LGBTIQ+ issues and viewpoints.

We examined the actors and institutions circulating anti-queer discourses (RQ1), the guests who were given a voice in the episodes to make queer discrimination audible (RQ2), and the other disadvantaged groups that were brought to the agenda (RQ3). The results of the content analysis showed that the targets of the criticism of the episodes are mainly society, the politicians, and the media for circulating discourses that encouraged rights violations and prejudices against queer people. Furthermore, podcast episodes have highlighted rights violations not solely against LGBTIQ+ people but also against women, minority/ethnic groups, children, and other disadvantaged groups. While announcing solidarity channels, they also offered solutions.

Community members, NGO activists, celebrities, and experts became the voices of solidarity channels as the guests of the episodes. Furthermore, being able to speak anonymously has contributed to a more accessible and independent media ecosystem.

In conclusion, LGBTIQ+ podcasts offer a valuable forum for debating and examining problems regarding the LGBTIQ+ community. They are powerful and promising mediums for queer representation and communication. These podcasts provide in-depth talks and storytelling, information, and entertainment that can aid in promoting an understanding of LGBTIQ+ issues by providing a private and intimate listening experience. There will likely be more LGBTIQ+ podcasts as the genre grows in popularity, opening up more possibilities to learn about and discuss these crucial issues. This study advances knowledge about queer podcasts and emphasizes the need for additional investigation and assistance for this dynamic and expanding medium. Our results are promising and should be compared with and validated by podcast studies conducted in various countries. We hope our research will serve as a basis for future studies on queer media.

Each episode of queer podcasts, produced and distributed within diverse societies and cultural contexts, holds immense value by amplifying numerous distinctive narratives. The burgeoning landscape of global podcasting serves as a conduit for the dissemination of queer voices through queer podcasts. Future studies on the current topic are therefore required to focus on the working practices and motivations of queer podcasters and the demands and expectations of the audiences, thereby unveiling more nuanced concerns instead of merely categorizing the discrimination encountered by LGBTQ+ individuals.

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