

Queer Environmentalism in Turkey: Intersectional Survival Against Authoritarian Neoliberalism

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Abstract

In Turkey, the LGBT movement emerged within the broader context of the green movement, which gained visibility in the late 1970s. This study explores the intersection of LGBTQIA+ and environmental movements in Turkey, focusing on how these marginalized groups, both targeted by the Erdoğan regime since 2002, build solidarity to resist state repression and neoliberal policies. The central question driving this research asks: What motivates the LGBTQIA+ movement's engagement with environmental activism, and how does this intersection shape new forms of solidarity under authoritarian conditions?

Applying a queer ecology framework, the study examines the connections between sexuality, environmentalism, and social justice, moving beyond essentialist ecofeminist narratives. It explores whether LGBTQIA+ involvement in environmental activism stems from ideological commitments to social justice or pragmatic strategies to navigate political repression. Using a narrative feminist lens, the study captures activists' lived experiences through semi-structured interviews, centering marginalized voices and linking personal stories to broader socio-political contexts.

Findings reveal that environmental activism often serves as a relatively safer space for political dissent, perceived as more socially "legitimate" than LGBTQIA+ activism. Yet, this engagement goes beyond pragmatism; activists also embrace a holistic struggle addressing interconnected forms of oppression, including ecocide, homophobia, and economic injustice. The study underscores how queer environmentalism in Turkey challenges neoliberal and patriarchal structures, fostering coalition-building across marginalized communities and linking local resistance with transnational movements. This research highlights the resilience and strategic adaptability of these groups in resisting systemic injustices.

Keywords: coalition-building; feminist narrative inquiry; queer environmentalism; neoliberalism; social movements