

INTERSECTION BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND MARITAL STATUS IN THE
USAGE OF PUBLIC SPACE: THE CASE OF HIGH EDUCATED ARMENIAN
WOMEN IN İSTANBUL

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ARMENIAN WOMEN IN İSTANBUL**

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ABSTRACT

INTERSECTION BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND MARITAL STATUS IN THE USAGE OF PUBLIC SPACE: THE CASE OF HIGH EDUCATED ARMENIAN WOMEN IN İSTANBUL

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This study focuses on the relationship between ethno-religious identity, marital status, education level, and the use of public space. It aims to understand the relationships highly educated single Armenian women in İstanbul have with the city's public spaces. Visibility, mobility, and access will be examined as three axes in the context of the use of public space. Making use of feminist methodology, this research examines the emotions and experiences of women in their everyday lives, focusing on their narratives. Through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with fifteen participants with university-level education and above, the study seeks to uncover their intersectional experiences between ethno-religious and gender identities in their spatial emotions in İstanbul. Fear, anxiety, safety, as well as

comfort, freedom, belonging are analyzed in women's public space experiences, focusing on their tactics and strategies for coping violence and discrimination. Henceforth, the study aims to highlight the agency of single Armenian women. Single Armenian women experience the fear of violence in public space in a multifaceted way. Their Armenian identity compounds the fear of sexual violence in public spaces. Nonetheless, women who persistently use public spaces are able to transform these spaces by asserting their presence. Education level is shown to ensure access to certain safe spaces in the city. As a result, this study aims to make visible the challenge to the gendered structure of public space by revealing the patriarchal relationships that shape space through fear and courage.

Keywords: Public space, Armenian women, gender, marital status, high education.

ÖZ

ETNO-DİNİ KİMLİK VE MEDENİ DURUMUN KAMUSAL ALAN KULLANIMINDAKİ KESİŞİMİ: İSTANBUL'DAKİ YÜKSEK EĞİTİMLİ ERMENİ KADINLAR ÖRNEĞİ

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Yüksek Lisans, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Bölümü

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Bu çalışma, etno-dini kimlik, medeni durum ve eğitim seviyesiyle mekanın karşılıklı ilişkisini odağına almaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, yüksek eğitilmiş bekar Ermeni kadınların İstanbul'un kamusal mekanlarıyla kurdukları ilişkileri anlamaktır. Çalışmanın kapsamında görünürlük, hareketlilik ve erişim, kamusal alan kullanımı bağlamında incelenecek üç eksen olarak belirlenmiştir. Feminist metodolojiyi benimseyen bu araştırma, kadınların anlatılarını odağına alarak onların gündelik hayatlarındaki duygu ve deneyimlerini katman katman incelemiştir. Bu çalışmayla, üniversite ve üzeri eğitim seviyesine sahip on beş katılımcıyla yaptığım yarı-yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanarak, İstanbul'daki mekansal duygulanımlarında etno-dini kimlikleri ve toplumsal cinsiyet kimlikleri arasındaki

kesişimsel deneyimleri ortaya çıkarmaya çabaladım. İstanbul'un yer ve mekanlarında korku, kaygı, güvenlik, tedirginlik gibi duyguların yanında, rahatlık, özgürlük, aidiyet gibi duyguları analize dahil ettiğim bu çalışmada, kadınların kamusal alanda şiddet ve ayrımcılıkla baş etme taktik ve stratejilerine odaklandım. Buradan hareketle, bekar Ermeni kadınların failliğini ortaya koyarak onların toplumsal aktör konumlarını vurgulamayı hedefledim. Bekar Ermeni kadınlar, kamusal alanda şiddet korkusunu çok katmanlı bir şekilde deneyimlemektedirler. Kamusal alanda maruz kalabilecekleri cinsel şiddet korkusu, Ermeni kimlikleri açığa çıktığı takdirde katlanarak artan bir hale gelmektedir. Her şeye rağmen, sokaklardan vazgeçmeyen kadınlar, varlıklarını direterek bir şekilde kamusal alanları dönüştürebilmektedirler. Bu noktada eğitilmiş olma durumunun, kentin kimi güvenli alanlarına erişebilme imkanı sağladığı ve bu alanlarda bulunabilme halini pekiştirdiği ortaya konmuştur. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, korku ve cesaret tarafından şekillendirilen mekandaki patriyarkal ilişkileri ortaya çıkararak kamusal alanın cinsiyetli yapısına olan meydan okumayı görünür kılmayı hedefler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kamusal alan, Ermeni kadınlar, toplumsal cinsiyet, medeni durum, yüksek eğitim.

To all women and LGBTI+ who never give up the streets

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holds a special place in my heart, and whenever I walk alone at night and take my *bold walks*, they are in my thoughts and in my heart. Without them, this thesis would not have been possible. I am forever grateful to them.

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When I started studying for my thesis, I was quite unprepared. I did not know what to expect. Like many people, my life turned upside down with the pandemic in 2019. My grandmother's rapidly progressing illness was the focus of my life during that time. My stays during her illness also made me accommodate myself back in my home city after a long while when I eventually settled back in İstanbul in 2022. However, this period of trying to get back on my feet was much harder. Losing my beautiful grandmother Mücella shook me more than I had anticipated. It was the first time I had experienced such intense pain from a loss. Which is still affecting me to this day. During my grief, my dear partner Ömer was always by my side, giving me whatever I needed and motivating me to hold on to my thesis with all my heart. Your razor-sharp mind never fails to amaze me, and our endless mind-opening conversations are the spice of my life. Thank you for always being here for me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.

Edward Said, Culture and imperialism (1993)

The challenges of living in an unequal world drive hope for change and transformation in our current neoliberal society. This quote by Edward Said (cited in Hopkins & Dixon, 2006:183) highlights the relationship between societies' existence in unequal spaces and spatiality. The sense of "feeling at home" for individuals and groups is linked to the creation of spaces and places. Claiming divided and segregated spaces presents some challenges for minority, or diminished regarding the population, communities. This poses further challenges for women in the communities in terms of gendered spaces. The geographic perspective on gender offers a way to understand how inequality, oppression, sexism is processed in the venue. Every settlement, every space of the public space is the inscription of the social relations in the society that they built in. Cities are actually patriarchy written on stone, brick and concrete. Firstly houses, then workplaces, schools, restaurants, cafes, parks, even highways and pavements, and the design and positioning of all those spaces, provide clues about what kind of society this is. The segregation, aggregation, inclusion and exclusion of people are as much gender-based as they are highly classed. So, all of our daily lives are not independent of geography, that is,

there is a geography of all forms of inequality and domination. While determining this research subject, both individual experiences from daily life and intellectual concerns were effective. The public space, an important part of everyday practice, is the space of both personal and political experience. This is how I personally relate to the public spaces.

When determining my thesis subject, my academic curiosity was at the forefront. When I applied for my master's degree, I had a clear idea of the area and subject I wanted to research for my thesis. In my undergraduate thesis, I had studied the positionality of Jewish women in the household. As I believed there were significant methodological gaps in my research, I wanted to take a step further and investigate the relationship between women and the public space, conducting methodologically more thorough research. My intention to investigate the relationship with the public space was accelerated by the feeling that a significant dimension was missing. All of these developments were proportional to my process of getting to know myself as a researcher. Since the Armenian community has a larger population, I decided to focus on the Armenian community instead. This must have been the right choice since the process flowed naturally afterwards. However, the transition from the Jewish community to the Armenian community unexpectedly took me on a journey in my own memory, and I found myself suddenly immersed in unforeseen processes. When I was an undergraduate, we were asked to make a family tree. Researching my mother's side was relatively easy since my grandmother and grandfather were alive, but my father's side was much more difficult. Since my father was an only child, no one from his side of the family was alive, so I had to rely on my father's memory. However, my father's father had chosen not to share much information about their ancestry. Nevertheless, some implicit and fragmented information was in my father's memory. Five generations ago, after 1850s, the ancestor named "Mehmed" migrated from the Armenian settlement of Arapgir in Malatya to İstanbul and started to trade timber. It was rumored that he had learned lumbering from an Armenian master in Arapgir. When my father tried to ask for more, he was met with statements like "we should not delve into the past". I had listened to all of this while making the family tree in my undergraduate studies, but I had buried it deep inside me. With my thesis subject shifting to the Armenian community, the pieces of the puzzle began to become more visible, and started to relate to each other and to my thesis.

My thinking about the public space began after I completed my undergraduate education. As someone who was born and raised in Taksim Beyoğlu, the heart of İstanbul, many things changed in my life when I started walking to high school on İstiklal Street. I was not alone; my twin sister was always by my side. Our early morning route often required walking through secluded streets. We were constantly subjected to verbal harassment on the way, while trucks did the delivery to shops that have just opened their shutters, few people went to work and some were hungover. Despite the relative seclusion in the early hours of the morning, the rather crowded streets in the afternoon after school caused other uneasiness. We learned from those streets that walking alone was not advisable, and eventually, it became a habit. Together with friends who shared the same route, we would accompany each other after school and leave at safe points, watching for each other when necessary. Behaviors that turn into habits seem *natural* after a while and become like reflexes performing without thinking. Towards the last years of high school, the strategies and tactics of protecting one's self and those around became something internalized after a while. Thus, it has become easier to explore the side streets of İstiklal. Taksim's complex, heterogeneous, disordered and chaotic structure taught itself to be cautious. In the first year of the university, to perform music, which is my biggest passion, I had to freeze the school and play in groups with many different people, which allowed me to meet the nightlife. I saw how gendered the streets and places are, especially in nightlife. The emotions of enthusiasm, excitement, fear, anxiety and security were intertwined in the streets at night. I learned by experience when the act of walking turns into a victory. All these emotions, observations and experiences told me what it was like to live in Taksim. One of the reasons why I chose this subject, İstanbul had a lot to teach, but there was also Ankara. Ankara will always hold a special and unique place in my life as it hosted my experience of living alone for the first time in an unfamiliar city. It brought the indescribable joy of freedom, excitement, discovering the city, meeting new people and places, and regular walks. As I walked between neighborhoods, I began to think about urban class clustering and had to once again relate it to my own class position through my experience of living in Ankara.

Daily urban public experiences are highly gendered. Where we can live, the places and spaces we can access or not, the routes we take while walking late in the

afternoon leaving work, the events we choose not to attend because we have no car or fear walking alone in the dark - all of these are not only class-based but also gendered. The constant threat of violence, harassment, or murder affects urban lives. However, although class position can bring many advantages, the gendered nature of urban daily experience reminds us of itself in some way. At this point, in light of research question, some of the advantages that high education would provide to urban women stand out. When ethnic and/or religious identity is added to the equation of this disproportionate relationship with public space through gender identity, the issue becomes much more complicated. While understanding the influence of high education on Armenian women's relationships with public space is the main goal of this thesis, the data collected through field research on this specific topic corresponds to a wider context. Therefore, while attempting to answer the research question, the gendered *nature* of public spaces and places of İstanbul will also be revealed.

1.1 The Process of the Research

In order to answer the research question(s), it is crucial not to deviate from the research question from the beginning to the end of the research process. If the research deviates from the path created by the research question(s), the researcher may lose their theoretical and conceptual focus and drift away from the subject. To prevent this, I reminded myself to abide as much as possible by my research question throughout every step of the research. My research question is, "How do the ethnic and gender identities of a highly educated group intersect with the relationality and spatiality in the public space?". Literature review was conducted based on the key concepts I determined, methodology was established, questions were created for field research, and data was collected, processed, and analyzed in order to answer this question. I started with one research question, but after the field research, I found that I also answered other question and thus, a sub-question has arisen spontaneously; "How are the tactics and strategies that single Armenian women use in their relationships with the wider society?". However, it should be noted that there is a broader framework of uncovering the gendered nature of public spaces in light of these specific questions.

The concept of “higher education” mentioned in the research question needs to be elaborated. The relationship between higher education and visibility and mobility in public spaces has been examined by researchers in different contexts. Tandoğan & İlhan (2016), who studied fear of crime in public spaces, found that while this fear is correlational to education level, education cannot overcome women’s fear in public spaces. Although it varies among women from different groups, this fear exists for all of them and affects their mobility in public spaces (Tandoğan & İlhan, 2016: 2013). Olivieri & Fagera (2021), who examined women’s mobility in public spaces in the metropolitan area of Uruguay, defined as a middle-income city, focused on gender differences. In this urban context, they demonstrated the relationship between individuals’ socio-economic positions and education levels, and highlighted that highly educated women have the privilege of working full-time and using private vehicles (Olivieri & Fagera, 2021: 8). This is significant in the context of mobility in public spaces and is related to education and socio-economic positionality. De Koning (2009: 537), who examined social segregation in the context of gender in the public space of Cairo, talks about the emergence of a new generation of white-collar professionals with the cosmopolitanizing of Cairo. These women, who adopt a Western and modern lifestyle provided by education, can benefit from the safe spaces of modern cafes in the center of the city (de Koning, 2009: 541). Educated and modern new generation women create a different category of “propriate woman” with their urban spatiality (de Koning, 2009: 543). Since the visibility in the public space *should not* conflict with moral values, women are dependent on safe spaces of those modernized cafes, and this results in women being spatially limited to these places. According to de Koning (2009: 544), these spaces designed for this new “social level” reproduce this *class* division.

Tran & Schlyter (2010) examined urban mobility in the contexts of age, gender, and social class in the cities of Xian and Hanoi. In the article, a narrative of an interviewee caught my attention. In her narrative, a woman living in Hanoi, shared her feelings, thoughts and experiences about the bus. Her emphasis on how uncomfortable she felt on buses actually revealed her perception of class differences. The interviewee associated her discomfort with the mixed environment on the bus with the “cultural level” and “education level” of the people around her, and explained her discomfort with the odor created by that environment in this context

(Tran & Schlyter, 2010: 146). Another source that I came across in the relationship between level of education and public space is the study conducted by Gauvin, Tizzoni, Piaggese, Young, Adler, Verhulst, Ferres, and Cattuto (2020), which examined gender gaps in urban mobility through mobile phone data. In their sample, they found that gender differences in urban mobility were related to gender differences in employment and could explain the observed differences in mobility in the labor market. On the other hand, they found no significant relationship between gender differences in education and gender differences in urban mobility (Gauvin et al., 2020: 8). This reminded me of bell hooks' book "Class Matters". In their comprehensive work, hooks (2000) emphasizes that education does not always result in class mobility. This book, which conducts an intersectional analysis of social class, challenges the idea that upward social mobility always results from an increase in education level. I have seen that the relationship between higher education and mobility, visibility, and access to public spaces in the city is examined within the framework of complex social relationships.

Another aspect that the research question points to is the relationship with the public space, which needs to be clarified. It was considered that the public space, as both a personal and political experience and an essential part of everyday practice, cannot be simply defined as anywhere outside of the home. Furthermore, since the focus was on women's everyday lives outside the home, the public space was examined in a layered manner. In order to fully understand single and young Armenian women, questions about the socialization processes prepared were comprehensive and aimed not only to understand their first contact with the public space, but also to understand the meanings of private space for women belonging to a non-Muslim minority community. The relationships established with the neighborhood and surrounding districts, the preferred routes and means of transportation when going to work and/or school, the spaces of the community, the risky areas of the city, the political use of the public space, and the ways of spending free time with one's self in the public spaces and leisure time have been analyzed by dividing the layers of daily life. The aim was to understand the various forms of publicness, such as the semi-public or community spaces, and the private spaces of the community, by examining how they are used. Therefore, the relationship with the public space has been approached in this direction.

1.1.1 The Aim(s), Design and Methodology of the Research

The primary aim of this research is to understand the relationships that single Armenian women establish with the public space and to reveal the influence of higher education in these relationships. The aim is to understand how the positionality, which becomes more fragile when the class dimension is added to the vulnerable position of being a member of an ethno-religious minority community, is reflected in the public space. Another aspect to be understood would be, who can reach and access where in the public spaces, with whom they feel comfortable and safe, and why. In addition to revealing the relationship between emotions such as anxiety, fear, safety, and belonging with İstanbul, the spaces that are used and not used within the city will be brought to light. Therefore, understanding the relationship between gender, space, and emotions is one of the main objectives of this research.

As ethno-religious identity is taken as another category of analyses, the relationships between gender and identity will be examined. At the same time, the aim is to reveal the experiences of unmarried women within the community. Another aim of the research is to understand how identities affect women's spatial emotions. In addition to analyzing the places that are mandatory to go and the places that individuals choose to go in the use of public space, the aim is to understand the "risky" areas of the city that can be entered but are not desired to. Therefore, *mapping* fear and danger constitutes another aim of this research. In addition, the relationships established with the neighborhoods where they live, the city's safe spaces, and women's "relief maps"¹ will be revealed. Understanding the tactics and strategies for ensuring safety in relationships with public spaces is of great importance for this research. The aim is to reveal these tactics and strategies to highlight women's agency and not reproduce the perception of portraying them as victims. The combination of all these specific objectives carries the quality of revealing the gendered structure of public space.

After forming the research question and determining the focus community, the sample was chosen based on answering the research question. Similarly, qualitative

¹ This concept will be addressed in the section where literature review will be presented and will be revisited when processing and resolving the findings.

research method was adopted as the most suitable method to answer it. Examining women's everyday life practices and *traveling* through their memories required in-depth interviews with open-ended semi-structured questions. In order to reveal the use of public space based on the main axes of visibility and mobility, it was decided to interview working and/or studying women. Furthermore, it was considered appropriate to conduct interviews with single women who were assumed to be "unsettled" in accordance with these axes to understand the use of public space. Additionally, as an unmarried researcher myself, I determined marital status in this way because I was curious about the urban public experiences of women belonging to a minority community. The age range for being single was set as between twenty-five and thirty-five, with a two-to-three-year flexibility. This age range was determined based on information obtained from a familiar woman within the community, taking into account the decreasing rate of staying single after the age of thirty and the difficulty of finding an interviewee after the age of thirty-five. In accordance with research design, fifteen women will be interviewed, including five self-employed and ten employees. The writing process began with the transcription of the interviews conducted during the field research. After completing the transcriptions, the analysis process began. For the thematic analysis method adopted, codes were first determined. When these codes, which were identified based on the answers given to the questions asked, formed a pattern, they were grouped under specific themes. These codes and themes created during the analysis process formed the determining paths and threads towards concluding remarks and arguments.

The methodological framework of this thesis is based on feminist methodology, drawing from feminist epistemology. Specifically, this research draws from feminist standpoint theory, which focuses on the knowledge produced through women's everyday experiences. By centering on the daily experiences and emotions of single Armenian women in public spaces, this research will bring their narratives to the forefront. Considering that no one is beyond the social context, individuals' experiences and/or emotions cannot be independent from the society in which they are situated, these narratives will be examined within the context of both their individual histories and the historical context of their communities. In doing so, it is important however to not dissolve individuals into their social context and neglect their agency. Thus, the knowledge they produce is meaningful in and of itself. At the

same time, it is also substantial to recognize that factors such as class, ethno-religious identity, and gender shape individuals' ways of perceiving the space, and emphasize that knowledge is shaped and produced within a historical and social context. This research will examine the narratives of single Armenian women within the historical and social context of the Armenian community in Turkey, emphasizing their agency within this framework. By placing the narratives of women at the center, this research draws on feminist geography to highlight their agency. As will be detailed in the methodology section, the research is influenced by two feminist geographers, Massey (1994) and Rose (1993), in order to enforce and contribute to feminist standpoint theory. By emphasizing the liberating potential of spaces, the research will uncover the spatial agency of women, and the tactics and strategies they employ.

To answer the research question, a literature review was conducted using the keywords "public sphere", "Armenian women", "gender", and "marital status". The review focused not only on examining each concept individually, but also on their combinations with each other. The concept of public space was examined within the framework of political debates. In this regard, democracy, consensus, visibility, difference, and diversity were highlighted, and universality, neutrality, and objectivity were questioned. In addition, the non-political uses of the concept of public space were also discussed. In addition to sources that relate the concepts of gender and public space, the review also emphasized on gendered spatiality in the context of class. The literature review will be followed by an evaluation of intersectionality literature. And finally, the sources that relate Armenian women, public space, and gender will be discussed. While conducting the literature review, emphasis was placed mostly on sources published after 2015. However, some fundamental sources from the 1980s and beyond were also included in the context of public space and feminist geography. Through the literature review, discussions on what is meant by public space, the gendered and class-based structure of public space, intersectionality, and the spatiality of Armenian women in the context of minority communities were carried out.

Before starting the research, I had some assumptions about how the field research would turn out. These assumptions also guided me in imagining what I would

encounter during the field research. Based on the research question, the assumption was made that places of residence within the city are clustered according to class. It was also assumed that Armenian women have a “task-oriented” use of the public space. Accordingly, there is no flaneuse experience, but rather a mobility flow such as work-home, work-market-home, work-restaurant-bar-home. While it is not possible to talk about a *fully* safe space in the public space, the community’s associations and clubs create semi-safe spaces. In the context of visibility and mobility in public space, the female identity stands out more than the Armenian identity. This is particularly evident late at night and/or in empty streets where side streets can be a danger. Armenian women, whose ethno-religious identities are not apparent from the outside, are fearful in public spaces during nights due to their gender. Speaking Armenian and sharing Armenian names in an unfamiliar environment can lead to identity questioning and uncomfortable situations. Changing Armenian names to Turkish names or using pseudonyms of Turkish origin is not always a tactic to avoid discrimination but also a pragmatic strategy in case the other person does not understand. For instance, women use pseudonyms at places like Starbucks. Women prefer to use any Turkish pseudonym rather than revealing their Armenian name to someone they do not know or someone they will only see once in their lives.

In addition to assumptions made based on identity, some assumptions have been made about the city’s public spaces and spatiality. First and foremost, the neighborhoods in which women live have been considered. Accordingly, while living in certain neighborhoods can sometimes create a sense of security, in other cases, it can act as a “morality police”. When it comes to schools, some Armenian families have a tendency to send their daughters to mixed schools before university, in order to be experienced in dealing with discrimination in public spaces and to integrate more easily into wider society. It is assumed that there is more discrimination experience in state universities than in private ones. Based on this, interviewees are assumed to have a tendency to choose private universities. Before and after university, women are subjected to discrimination and questioning as “foreigners” due to their names. After education, assumptions have been made about the workplace. Visibility and mobility of working women in public spaces are indirectly hindered by their families/communities, as marriage is prioritized over

pursuing a career. Women, as both female and Armenian, are subject to layered discrimination in the workplace. Community networks provide safe spaces for finding jobs, but networks within associations and islands, Kınalıada and/or Büyükada, can be restrictive. On the other hand, these associations and islands are the only spaces where women can *freely* live their ethno-religious identities. Women feel fearful around churches due to traumatic events like Neve Şalom synagogue bombing in 2003. While taxis are considered risky spaces in the context of public transportation, Muslim conservative neighborhoods are also considered risky areas. Lastly, areas where women feel unsafe and are considered risky are side streets especially during nights, public transportation, and neighborhoods identified as Muslim conservative. Directly avoiding these areas, Muslim conservative neighborhoods are assumed to be the areas that Armenian women would prefer not to enter.

1.2 Arguments of the Research

This research has shown that young and unmarried Armenian women do not give up on the public space, they continue to exist and thrive in it. What is important here is to understand how they exist. Fear is a multi-layered structure for women in terms of their gender and Armenian identity. Regardless of their social class, all the women I interviewed have a fear of violence. The filters developed to feel safe are primarily determined by the privilege of social class. In the field research, nightlife was the space that most highlighted this social difference. The frequency and forms of going out, however, vary between interviewees, as will be discussed together with the missing aspect of the research at the end of this subsection. Through my field research, I found that the most important factor that affects mobility and visibility, the two main axes I have identified in the context of the use of public spaces, is the fear of violence. Higher education affects women's positionalities in employment, and provides them with certain tools in terms of mobility, visibility, and access to public spaces of the city. It provides resources to move safely in public spaces and makes them visible in secluded spaces, which has a somewhat inhibitory effect on violence. Therefore, it is one of the factors that ensures the protective shield is even stronger.

Although the tactics and strategies employed by women to feel empowered and protect themselves, the presence of the fear of violence is evident in all cases. As a desire created by this fear of violence, the experience of a pleasurable city for all *classes* has emerged as a finding. Another argument regarding the class dimension of this desire is that while some women with resources can and will be achieving this experience by living in affluent areas without needing Armenian community, middle and lower groups tend to ensure their safety by staying close to the community. It would not be wrong to state that the desire to feel safe and secure, and to experience the city without fear is ultimately class-based. Women with resources can ensure their safety in this direction, while others rely on their communities to create safe spaces. The desire for a pleasurable city experience without fear is present because of the fear of violence, which is a situation that applies to all interviewees.

Another argument developed based on the findings collected in the field is the differentiation of the relationship between women and public space compared to older generations. These women, unlike their grandmothers or mothers who were identified as the “silent generation” by one of my interviewees, mostly openly express their identities. Using pseudonyms, hiding or concealing their identity is not a preferred option anymore. Additionally, for these women who prioritize their own lives and careers, marriage comes later. These women, who value their economic independence and contribute to the household economy, prefer to marry someone who can embrace an equal division of labor within the household regardless of their social class. Except for a few interviewees, there is no stance against marriage, but it is preferred to remain single rather than marrying someone who would restrict their access and participation of the spaces and places of İstanbul. In the field research, I saw that my interviewees who actively use public space have their own urban imaginaries. They are against marriages that could hinder the lifestyle they desire.

When I examined the use of the public space in terms of access, mobility and visibility, I saw that education provides some privileges for women in this context. Higher education enables these women to have various privileges in the use of urban public spaces by providing them with qualified positions within employment. Fifteen out of twelve women have their lives *arranged* in accordance with their work life. The days on which they can take a holiday are determined by their workplace. The

remaining three women have established their own businesses and therefore organize their daily lives on their own terms. The places and spaces they can access and be visible in urban mobility are similar. In addition, their daily life practices are also similar, even if they are defined and practiced in different forms. For example, they all have a nightlife in some form, or have a set of cultural activities to participate in to spend their leisure time. In their daily public lives, this situation makes it easier for them to resort to certain tactics and strategies to avoid discrimination and violence. As it will be elaborated and analyzed in detail in the following sections while presenting the findings, the existence of some constructed or designated safe spaces can be given as an example of this. However, although their mobility and access are similar with their protection tactics and strategies, and mechanisms for coping with discrimination and violence, some differences have emerged through field research. When these differences are brought to the forefront, I found that higher education did not have an impact. These differences were most apparent in their nightlife.

1.3 The Significance and Contribution of the Research

This research, which reveals the tactics and strategies of unmarried Armenian women to exist in the public space and their mechanisms for coping with different forms of violence in order to survive, is significant because it highlights the agency of women rather than victimizing them. It has a unique place in examining the intersection of gender, ethno-religious identity, marital status and higher education in terms of access, mobility and visibility in the public space. Although the literature on non-Muslim minorities in Turkey is growing, there are still a limited number of studies in this field, and feminist research is almost non-existent. Therefore, there is no study focused on unmarried and young Armenian women, making this research both significant and a direct contribution to the literature. The aim of this research is to understand the publicness of single Armenian women by revealing both the dynamics within the community and their strategies for mobility and presence in public spaces. Mapping fear and danger, identifying safe spaces, and determining routes and paths are essential for understanding the urban spatiality of Armenian women, and at the same time, it contributes to feminist geography literature by revealing the relationship between the fear of violence and the agency to ensure safety. As an attempt to reveal the gendered basis of spaces, this thesis strengthens

feminist knowledge by examining the mutual relationship between gender and spaces through the urban daily lives of single Armenian women. Therefore, in addition to its contribution to gender and women's studies, it will also contribute to space, place and urban studies. This thesis provides a direct contribution to the literature on non-Muslim minorities in Turkey, which focuses only on the experiences of Armenian women, can actually shed light on the experiences of non-Armenian women by revealing the multi-layeredness of women's experiences in the public space. Finally, it will also contribute in terms of revealing heteronormative patriarchal oppression mechanisms in public space.

In addition to the importance and contributions to the literature, this thesis has some limitations. Focusing on a specific group brings its own limitations. Firstly, this research is based on specific data collected from the sample and does not make generalizations. The sample criteria cannot be generalized for every young and unmarried woman in the community. The limited population of this group within the community makes this situation even more limited. To reveal the class differences within this group, diversity and differences should be as clear as possible. However, if we consider their socio-economic position on a scale, it was quite difficult to reach women at both ends of the spectrum from this limited group. Another limitation is the limitation of time itself. Field research, which needed to be completed within a certain period of time, required very well-planned interviews with working and/or studying women. Considering the two women who agreed to participate but could not be reached due to their busy schedules, it can be said that this situation created a limitation. Finally, the fact that this is a previously unexplored topic and that the literature could not be specifically found, can be considered a limitation in terms of unforeseeable and overlooked factors during both the field research and writing process.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

In this thesis, a framework will be presented in the form of literature review, methodology, and presentation of findings. Firstly, public space discussions will be included along with the literature review. In this section, the class dimension of spatiality and some prominent concepts within the literature of the gendered space will be discussed. Then, the intersection of gender, ethnicity and class, on being a

woman within the minority communities will be examined in the context of intersectionality literature. After the conceptual approaches to being a minority and a brief history of the İstanbul Armenian community are presented, this section will conclude with a review of the literature on the experiences of minority women in the public space and researches on Armenian women in the İstanbul Armenian community. Following the literature review, in the methodology section, feminist methodology will be discussed within the framework of the research design. The qualitative research methods will be discussed in detail under this heading, including the field research conducted. Methodological limitations, as well as challenges, difficulties and facilitations encountered during fieldwork, and the processes of analysis and writing, will also be discussed. The presentation of the findings will proceed with the processing and analysis of the data. First, the introduction of the interviewees will be presented, including their childhood and youth years, education and work experiences, marital status, and experiences with the wider society in the context of their socialization processes. The section on emotions and experiences related to İstanbul, will be followed by the relationship with urban public spaces. In this section, women's leisure activities, the experiences of being flaneuses, and the political use of public spaces will be discussed. Next, public space strategies will be discussed. Following this section, the conclusion will include the arguments and concluding remarks of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood.

Doreen Massey, Space, Place and Gender (1994)

The public space is a space that contains both personal and political experience, and an important part of everyday practice that undoubtedly includes complex relationships. Sometimes, when we take walks to relax and take a break in a square or stop at a café for a quick coffee on our way to work, we feel like we are *getting involved in the city*, and at other times, it becomes the site of street protests we participate in with political concerns, when we feel like we are *claiming the city*. However, the way we experience these, is certainly not the same for everyone. How much and in what ways one participates have been a subject of curiosity and research for researchers from fields like geography, sociology, anthropology and many other. In this thesis, I aim to reveal the gendered nature of the public space, in line with the research question I posed with similar curiosity and concerns. The first feminists to reveal the gendered structure of the public space were feminist geographers like Doreen Massey, whom I quoted above. As clearly stated in this favorite quote of mine by Massey (1994), some (exclusionary) means such as violence both reflect and affect this structure. However, on the other hand, exposing those means in this

context reminds us how important spaces and places are, in the struggle to change gendered public space.

Since my thesis is about the use of public space in general, I will first address the debate on public space within the framework of political debates and concepts such as “democracy”, “consensus”, “diversity”, and “visibility”. The reason for focusing on these concepts is to discuss how terms such as objectivity, neutrality, and universality need to be questioned, criticized, and challenged, as they reveal the fact that all citizens do not have equal access and equal voice in public space. Then, I will discuss the relationship between public space and gender, and how organization and experience of public space are determined based on gender. In participation in public space, concepts such as “mobility”, “visibility”, and “coming out” of one’s identity, are critical. These concepts, which I have identified to answer my research question, are closely related to concepts such as “safety”, “safe spaces”, “familiarity”, “fear”, and “perceived safety”, which will be discussed. Although public space may seem open and accessible to everyone, its organization and usage are heavily gendered, which is critical for this thesis, so I will use those to conduct literature discussions.

Finally, I will examine the experiences of women belonging to non-Muslim minority communities, particularly Armenian women, in terms of their experiences in the public space. Before doing so, I will explain what is meant by the term “minority”, how it is defined, and what concepts are used in making these definitions. Then, I will discuss how the roles assigned to women within the Armenian community in terms of survival of the community, which are based on the preservation of culture and associated with the private space, affect their relationship with the public space. Additionally, in light of the literature review, by examining the gendered tendencies in career choices, I will demonstrate how the relationship Armenian women have with public space is as patriarchal within the community as it is in society as a whole.

2.1 Approaches to the Concept of “Public Space”

In the literature review on public space, it was seen that the concept of public space was first discussed in the context of political debates and democracy. The concepts of public space and private space are potentially involved in the debates on democracy

in the political space. In this regard, approaches arising from many political perspectives. The public space can be defined in various ways as “area where pluralism, variegation and freedom exist”, “where public authority is valid” or “wherever there is a public official”. The dichotomy of the public and private space can be constructed within a moral hierarchy. Finally, while making sense of today’s society, for thinkers such as Wood, Calhoun and Hansen (as cited in Özbek, 2004: 27-28), it has been stated that the distinction between public and private space is not adequate, instead, triple or quadruple distinctions such as “public-private-political”, “public-private-civil-political” can be made. It has been seen that the two dimensions of the conceptualization of public space are expressed as follows: (1) Public space as a spatial concept; refers to the public opinion, culture, experience itself, and the national, subnational and supranational publics that emerge in the same process where ideas, expressions and experiences are produced, exposed, negotiated and disseminated in the social life. As a social space, the public space finds different historical contexts, dimensions of time and space. On the other hand, (2) the public space is seen as a normative principle. Publicity, openness, autonomy, self-reflection and criticism constitute the normative aspect of the public space. According to Özbek (2004: 41-42), opinions formed by daily thought, public discussion and criticism, and opinions filtered by *public mind* constitute public opinion.

The public space is actually a rather vague concept. By the concept of “public space” is meant, first of all, an area in social life where something akin to public opinion can be formed. Access to this space must be guaranteed for *all* citizens. In every conversational situation in which private individuals gather to exist in the public space, a part of the public space gains existence. According to Habermas’ (2018) definition of the public space, participation is, or must be, open to everyone. Accessibility to all is the first foundation required. Everyone involved is equal and free. Conversations made here are “overt”. Barriers to citizen participation must be removed and access must be guaranteed. The public domain should be located outside government institutions. There should be no agenda constraints other than that of the general interest (Habermas, 2018). Switching hats during public conversation needs to be necessary for participants to produce better arguments. Public debates are geared towards “rational consensus”. Such a rational discourse,

according to Habermas (2018), includes the criteria of universalizability and objectivity, neutrality, impartiality.

With the emergence of the bourgeoisie as a class, the public space of the bourgeoisie emerged as the manifestation area of its political and social demands. In order for the newly developing bourgeois society to establish itself as a system, it must become independent politically, legally and economically from the strictly defined sacred normative arrangements of the church. According to Habermas (2018: 93), in bourgeois society, the public manifests itself primarily in the form of private individuals who come together as a public community. Private individuals negotiate with public power by owning it against this power, which is subject to government regulations (Habermas, 2018: 93). Many criticisms from theorists like Geoff Eley, and, as will be discussed later, Negt and Kluge (Özbek, 2004: 67-68) have been directed at Habermas in their theory of the public space. The main ones have been directed by feminist theorists such as Fraser and Pateman (Özbek, 2004: 65-66). In Habermas' historical determination (2018: 95), the participants of the public space in the formation process of bourgeois society were men who were the heads of the household and property owners. Thus, their gendered perspective is quite clear in their theory. In addition to the criticisms directed at Habermas in this context, according to another wing of critiques their definition of the public space is problematical because it indicates public space as single and homogeneous. The fact that the multiplicity of the public space is based in the theory of public discourse creates contradictions in this context.

Fraser (Acar-Savran, 2019: 151) in late capitalist societies speaks of "public spaces", not a single one. Fraser opposes to Habermas' theory of the public space to construct the status of those participating as if they were equal. They emphasize that in this public plane individuals are not socially equal. Fraser states that the discursive interaction in the bourgeois public space marginalizes women and men in plebian groups, preventing them from participating in negotiations (Acar-Savran, 2019: 157). In addition to their criticisms, Fraser challenges Habermas' assumption that multiple publics hinder democracy. Given the ongoing conflicts to exist in public space today, it is possible to say that Fraser's criticisms are quite appropriate. The first feminists who wrote proto-feminist texts in the late 1700s and who wrote the history of equal

existence in the public space by the 1800s, and the demands of the LGBTI+ community from all around the world, which have been organized as political struggles in the last decades, for their rights in the public space, inevitably come to mind in the context of this thesis. Talking about subaltern counter-publics such as women, workers and LGBTI+s, these groups and masses have been ignored in the public space for centuries but have persistently claiming it through their political struggles or by simply just be visible in it, without giving up. Based on Fraser's theory, the members of the oppressed group present alternative publics against the dominant public space, and that the ideal of participation and democracy will be more successful in this way.

As Taylor (2004) indicates, individuals have started to act with the same rules in actions unaware of each other, around an invisible hand in the field of economy. With the disintegration of the economic system, the rules of the bourgeoisie began to work and the understanding of the individual and society has begun to change. Society has started to seen as a common agency and it has become open to the intervention of private individuals and their collective actions outside the rulers. The independent economic system, individuals as subjects, are components of the formation of public opinion. As Charles Taylor mentions in their *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004: 167), collective action and objective analysis have expanded, and the economy, the public space, and popular sovereignty, in which people act simultaneously, have begun to institutionalize. Isn't Taylor's approach not only ignoring the impact of the state in the public and historical uprisings, but also being refuted by them? According to Habermas (2018: 96-97), a historically unique instrument of this struggle and deliberation is "public reasoning". Individuals have tried to transform political authority into a rational one by playing a role in transferring the needs of bourgeois society from the state through the emerging public space. The free market economy, which is the canon of this rationality, is also protected by laws (Habermas, 2018: 97).

Another prominent concept in the context of being in the public space for public reasoning was "visibility". The concept of "visibility", discussed in the context of common spaces, is included in the literature as the practice of seeing and being seen (Hatuka & Toch, 2015: 2). Being visible in the public space can bring the political

and collective action with it. Therefore, it becomes a space that simultaneously includes space, places, time and social relations (Lefebvre, 1991). In the context of this interaction and relationality, as a challenge to Taylor's approach, the common life visible in the public space is the materialized form of collective action. In the literature, it has been seen that the concept of visibility, which brings diversity, can create a contradiction with the concept of consensus. The publicness, where there are individuals who are visible with their differences, makes transparency and openness a must. But on the other hand, this makes political consensus impossible because (political) consensus sometimes requires compromise; one wing argued that differences must be compromised in order for the public space to be conciliatory and consensual, while the other argued that this reproduces inequalities and domination, and that everyone's common participation is only possible through their (political) visibility. At this point, the multiple structures of the public space come to the fore in the literature. With the modernization, the "nation", which is the common entity of the public space, has created a certain process of integration, harmonization and approximation, and some entities from the private space have been included in the public space. On the other hand, they became a subject in the public space by reproducing themselves within and its possibilities and boundaries.

With their "proletarian public space" model, Negt and Kluge (2004: 133), have tried to construct an oppositional public space. It is seen that Negt and Kluge refer to Habermas' conceptualization of public space while conceptualizing their concept. While describing a single and homogeneous public space, Habermas has overlooked the various publics in the emergence of the bourgeois public space, in which Habermas had historically constructed their theory (Liebman, 2004: 632). At that time, there were many subaltern counter-publics such as nationalists, peasants, workers and women in the newly formed bourgeois public space (Liebman, 2004: 632). These counter-publics existed in spaces where they could negotiate their own class, group and identity interests and needs, and produce oppositional discourse outside the dominant discourse. In this context, Negt and Kluge criticized Habermas for making those publics invisible. Moving the differences out of the narrow borders of the private space into the public one has given meaning to the differences. Because closing the differences to the private space brings standardization, and this means that differences are ignored in that society. Similarly, "autonomy, originality,

having a unique initiative” against the state is only possible with the existence of the public space and expressing the differences here (Bora, 2004: 559). In the multiplicity of public spaces, wider participation in one of these spaces and the state’s taking into account the views emerging from this space creates a hierarchical situation among the public spaces by highlighting this space over the others. If this space is addressed by the state and the interaction between the state and this public is more intense than any public space, it is called the “official hegemon public space”. According to Bora (2004: 559), the problem in this is that over time, it loses its independence as a result of very close relations with the state and is subject to manipulation. Various public grounds and political publics created by sub-cultures outside the official hegemon public space are the source of the emergence of very different ideas outside the hegemonic public. The plurality of these sub-publics can contribute to democratization in terms of interaction, communication and representation of specific identities and interests.

Before moving on to the gendered nature of the public space, more current definitions of the public space should be included. UN Habitat (2016: 26) defines public space as follows; “public spaces are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive”. In this direction, the functionality of the public space in daily life is emphasized rather than the political dimension. In a similar vein, Carr and Francis (2006) emphasized individuality in addition to the emphasis on the collectivist structure of the public space. According to them, the public space is a space that includes various human interactions and activities, as well as a space where individual activities take place. The public space has the potential to meet the different needs of different individuals. Some are here to escape from the chaos of the city and relax, while others are here to spend a comfortable time and watch the city (Carr & Francis, 2006: 231-233). Individuals can be in the places of public space in active or passive ways by doing sports, participating for instance in various neighborhood activities or just watching (Carr & Francis, 2006: 239). Another dimension of the public space is to enable *discovery* by observing and/or interacting with what others are doing (Carr & Francis, 2006: 238). Emphasizing that civic and leisure time and functional urban spaces become urban policy tools, Carmona (2014) has examined them as the connecting fabric between private spaces, potential to local democracies, community

revitalization and urban renewal. Categorizing criticisms of public space theories as neglected, exclusionary, consumption, privatized, discriminatory, invented, isolating, scary and homogenized, Carmona (2014) defines *good public spaces* as balanced, diverse, social, free, engaging, safe and comfortable, robust and meaningful. On the other hand, Low, Mcleave Maharawal and Dalakoglou (2014) approached the public space in a more holistic way, emphasizing its aspects in terms of including places that will provide breathing in the city and political actions. When those current approaches are examined, it seems inevitable not to think that the political dimension of the public space has been emptied. Is it possible to address the individuality here without depoliticizing the public space? Does collective political action that paces the way for public participation reduce individuality here? In the context of equal and non-dominant access and participation of sub-cultures and counter-publics, individual agency is undoubtedly important, but just as visibility alone does not mean much, the political dimension of the public should not be overlooked in order to achieve this.

2.2 Gendered *Nature* of the Public Space

So far, approaches to the public space have ignored its gendered nature. In addition to theorists, such as Fraser, who state that the public space should include diversity, feminists have extensively addressed the gendered nature of space. Feminist geographers, who first studied the relationship between gender and space and place, approach space as a process that contains contradictions, which can create the opportunity to resist and push boundaries, but also strengthen them, rather than an approach that completely limits and imprisons women (Lordoğlu, 2018: 16). It has been seen that feminist geographers have aimed to read space in a gendered and thus critical way through all areas of daily life. The relationship between gender divisions and spatial divisions has been examined, and it has been tried to be made visible and the mutual construction of these two. Drawing attention to the gendered character of urban spaces, Fortuijn, Horn and Ostendorf (2004: 215) point out that it is related to the use of space, power relations and meaning. The context and construction of spaces and places refer to gender; symbols used in design and construction function as organizers of urban spaces (Fortuijn, Horn & Ostendorf, 2004: 215). Accordingly, this is the reason why some places seem attractive to certain genders, because they

evoke a sense of belonging. This is a situation that produces and reproduces power relations. Rodo-de-Zarate (2013: 18), examining the negotiations of young lesbians in the public space, revealed that women's experiences of oppression in urban spaces are related to the power dynamics of places and spaces. These unique experiences, created by young women's needs and forms of opening, closing and disguising their identities in the spaces of the public space, are proof of the heteronormativity of the public space.

Power, which has never been one-sided, is not the same as the West as a renegotiation, changing, deteriorating, re-established compromise between those in power and those over whom power is established. With this theoretical approach, which Kandiyoti (1988) calls "bargaining with patriarchy", the dichotomy of men in the public space and women in the private does not work well. In addition, while accepting that men and women exist in separate spaces, it can be said in a spatial sense that this does not correspond to a conventional, traditional distinction of the public and private. This distinction, which is based on Plato and Aristotle and reinforced by thinkers of the Enlightenment, was and continues to be one of the basic and regulative principles, especially in Western societies. The public world, which is the domain of politics in Plato and Aristotle, is constructed against the private world of the household. The household, which, although very ordinary, could not keep up with the rationality of politics, was at this both the field of production and reproduction. Accordingly, this meant that women had no place in politics, since women's nature have made them fit only for the lower virtues of the private space (Phillips, 2012: 44). In liberal theory, domestic life has existed in a distinctive way with its basic principles from civil society, which has emerged as a public space, in terms of being subject to the private space (Phillips, 2012: 45). In the theories of thinkers like Hobbes or Locke, it is seen that the private space points to the familial and the power of husbands over their wives are discussed. Nevertheless, domestic life remained forgotten in liberalism's theorizations of society, public space and civil society (Acar-Savran, 2019: 241-245). Likewise, Rousseau, claiming that what goes on in the private space of property relations is irrelevant for political discussion, saw women as naturally inappropriate in terms of demands for justice and associated them with lower values of love and compassion (Phillips, 2012: 46-47).

The West-centric use of this dichotomy is another notable feminist critique. When it is elevated by generalization in its modern form, the gender-based division of labor and hierarchy between the two spaces are ignored and being able to get out into the public space becomes the criterion of salvation. For instance, feminists such as Mernissi and Stowasser examine from an Islamic perspective that the historicity and present of this distinction is different in the Middle East (Thompson, 2003). Recent studies in Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt and Morocco have also revealed how gendered the public space is, but also revealed that the dichotomy of private-public is not fixed and unchanging (Ghannam, 2002) (Newcomb, 2006). All of this challenges Enlightenment thought. It should not be forgotten that in some cases, private spaces can turn into public and/or public spaces can turn into private. For instance, in their article, Bora (2004: 533-534) says that other women's homes can turn into public women's spaces, although in other cases they are shaped as a very private symbolic center. They also stated that the streets between the neighborhoods can be seen in this way in some instances. Likewise, mosques are men's private spaces in certain situations, while the bazaar is a public men's space (Bora, 2004: 534).

According to Spain (2015: 11-12), the most important condition that paves the way for public participation is above all political action. However, demographic instability, socio-political change, massive migration, and violence, which often erupt when the sovereign authority is challenged, create barriers to participation (Spain, 2015: 13). At this point, as a feminist theorist, Spain (2015: 13) emphasizes that gendered spaces create a relatively safe space for women to develop political identity. According to Gillian Rose (1993: 137), the various forms of white, bourgeois and heterosexual patriarchy are forming within geography as a discipline that claims to know space and place. In Rose's approach, space is multidimensional, contingent, flexible and variable, but also contradictory. In order to rethink the space constructed to express the problematic relationship with the hegemonic discourses of masculinity, approaches that shake and displace the dominant forms of thought are needed (Rose, 1993). Rose aims to provide the opportunity to go beyond the contradictory information of space and the definitions of womanhood and manhood, beyond this definition of binary gender, and to see the difference among women in social space. According to Rose (1993), space can also offer opportunities to

transcend the hegemonic masculinity it produces and reproduces. In this sense, it can be said that contradictory space also contains a liberating potential. Therefore, it can help to create a stronger, more critical and freer public against hegemonic masculinity by making differences visible and thus political.

On the other hand, Massey (1994), who is one of the theorists who most effectively reveals the mutual construction process between gender and space and place, has challenged this field by exposing the masculine and patriarchal nature of space and place studies with their feminist approach. The spatial is socially constructed (Massey, 1994: 178), and understanding the spatial requires economic and social analysis. Thus, social and spatial change are parts of a social whole. According to Massey (1994: 155), the place is by no means static. If place is to be dealt with in relation to social relations, space should also be conceptualized with social interactions, thus revealing that space consists of processes. The dynamic and fluid space is not frozen in time, but flows with time. According to Massey (1994: 161), space is a complex web of relations of domination and obedience, solidarity and cooperation. Places, spaces and place-based identities are not limited, they are open, permeable, fluid formations, and they are constantly in relation to countless other places. Massey examines gender relations by expression space as a geometry of power. Spaces and places are not only gendered themselves, but also reflect, influence and are affected by the ways in which gender is constructed and understood (Massey, 1994: 179). The symbolic meanings that spaces and places contain, convey and are affected by manifest themselves in the public space, up to explicit exclusion through violence. (1) Limitation of mobility through consignment and confinement, and (2) limitation on identity constitute two aspects of this exclusion (Massey, 1994: 179). It is a threat to the patriarchal order that women assigned to the household set aside their domestic roles and have economic income in the public space. Here is the conflict and contradiction of patriarchy and capitalism. The spatial control that women, who are visible in this sense in the public space of the modern world, are confronted with, has a fundamental role in reproducing gender (Massey, 1994: 180). Therefore, metropolitan life itself is in fact a threat to patriarchal control.

Regarding the metropolitan life, if we consider that this thesis focuses on İstanbul as a metropolis, it would be appropriate to refer to Simmel, one of the leading sociologists when it comes to metropolitan life. According to Simmel (2013: 25), who defines the city not with its physical boundaries but with its sociological ones, although the city is a unique social space that has a fundamental impact on social interactions within it, it is actually a spatially formed sociological entity. The metropolis is not only the concentration point of social differentiation and complex social networks, but also the place of communities and crowds with uncertain borders. According to Simmel (2013: 26), one of the reasons for the spontaneous behavior of these crowds is that they “find themselves either in an open space or in a very large space”. The city offers one the possibility of absolute indifference towards one’s neighbors, not only to those living in the vicinity, but to everyone with whom it encounters in daily interaction. In the face of crowds as potential sources of interaction, the individual seeks a form of self-preservation, which manifests itself in the form of indifference among the city dwellers (Simmel, 2013: 26). Returning to Massey, this structure of metropolitan life sometimes contradicts with patriarchy in providing opportunities for *some* women. Here, the significance of class in the gendered spaces of the city comes to the fore.

2.2.1 Gendered Spatiality in the Context of Class

Just as access and participation in the public space is unequal between individuals and communities, so is gender, which is not a homogenous category. Class, which is perhaps the most important factor affecting women’s relationship with the public space and their spatiality, will be examined in this section. According to Mary P. Ryan (1990), while shaping the mental maps of the city dwellers in order to create order, as key figures, women were constructed and used as the “architects” of the urban space. The social status and position of women is largely limited by private spaces and relationships (Ryan, 1990: 63-68). On the other hand, in the capitalist system, even though they are visible in the public space as the main subjects of newly formed urban (entertainment and shopping) spaces, they are excluded from places and spaces like official institutions (Gibson-Graham, 2010: 151). Women who could exist these spaces were bourgeois women, but working women were held responsible in social and economic reproduction but were not considered visible in

urban spaces (Ryan, 1990: 73-74). Therefore, bourgeois women, who are visible as consumption subjects in the urban space, and working women, who are held responsible for social (and biological) reproduction, have been spatialized in a way that they are kept away from political spaces. In their worth commending article, Elizabeth Wilson (1991) discussed the threats in emerging cities; sexuality, poverty and democracy because it brings individualism and “the mob” with it. At this point, working-class women, along with migrants and homeless people, cause confusion and are distinguished as “dangerous” (Ryan, 1990: 74). By urban cartographers, writers and journalists, while these women, who are visible generally in poor neighborhoods of the urban space, were cited as dangerous, bourgeois women were identified as “endangered” in order to regulate their visibility (Ryan, 1990: 73). This distinction shaped the mental maps of the city dwellers, and at the same time caused women to be excluded from certain spaces and places in certain times, and to be stigmatized as “public women”. The visibility of women in cities created a desire to protect appropriate women and initiated the era of department stores designed to create a “proper-to-women” public space in Paris in the 1870s (Kern, 2019: 118). By limiting their contact with the ugly elements of the street but at the same time some freedom would be allowed.

Feminist geographers Liz Bondi and Mona Domosh (1998) have written about the gendered patterns of spaces in New York City in the mid-nineteenth century, drawing on the diary of the city’s middle-class visitor, Sophie Hall. Although she is always accompanied by a female friend during her day-to-day activities, the detailed account of Sophie’s visit illustrates how spaces of the city are gender-based, allowing for some moderate liberties for white women. Approaching the historical and ideological unfolding and reshaping of the dichotomy of the public/private from a feminist perspective, Bondi and Domosh (1998) focused on the spatial qualities of the narratives by giving sections from women who lived in three different time periods. There is a relationality between the rise of the bourgeois class and the emergence of this dichotomy. Although the bourgeois class seems to advocate an egalitarian and pragmatist attitude in the public space where the state and economy take place, the gendered structure of spatial classification contradicts this (Bondi & Domosh, 1998: 284). According to Bondi and Domosh (1998), the public spaces of late twentieth-century Western cities, as well as the shopping areas of the nineteenth

century, are spaces of commercial consumer activities pursued to create environments in which middle-classed women are observed and protected. In this context, it can be said that the freedom that contemporary urban life offers to women still depends on gender-based norms about spaces and roles, so-called, suitable for women in the city.

Similar patterns were seen in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century. The stigma of women in the public space as immoral and dishonest was conveyed by Tanyeli (2020), where only immoral ones and *slaves* were found on the streets. While it is clearly accepted that the aforementioned slaves *are touched* by men in the market, it is not permissible when they become the property of a man (Tanyeli, 2020: 301). Therefore, the woman on the street is accepted as a commodity open to everyone in the market and harassment is legitimized. There is a clear difference between the way married women appear in the public space and captive women. A married woman who takes care of their children at home and does not go out to the public arena is considered acceptable. What makes the “bad woman” bad is their “immorality” stemming from existing in the public space. Even just the “visible woman” in public space is bad (Tanyeli, 2020: 303). The relation of visibility and property to the class context of gendered spatiality is seen here. The fear and panic that “going on the street” (“*sokağa düşmek*”) means “be on the streets” (“*kötü yola düşmek*”) shows itself in the Republic of Turkey as well. During the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, as a result of the great wars and class conflicts of rapidly industrializing societies, *distinctive democracies* began to be built all over the world, starting from the second half of the 20th century (Sancar, 2014: 28). In this process, women from the working class, who were exploited as cheap labor force, were *asked* to be sent home on the grounds that they should provide housework, child and men’s care. At that time, this point of view formed the dominant political style of union politics (Sancar, 2014: 29). Women belonging to the urban merchant and capitalist class were sent home with the mission of “raising new urban noble generations” (Sancar, 2014: 30).

Examining gender relations in the axes of industrialization and nation building, Sancar (2014: 33) emphasizes that the struggle of women who are trapped between the family and the labor market in early industrializing societies is significant in

shaping the *gendered capitalist democratic state*. Although the Ottoman-Turkish modernization and the establishment of the Republic were shaped by different political dynamics, they showed that the most important axis shaping the gender regime was the way women were included in the *national cause*. The modern Turkish woman of the new republic, which was formed with masculine ideals, had to appear modest and at the same time modern in the public space (İvegen & Baydar, 2006: 694). The public visibility and citizenship of women constitute the backbone of the modern public space of Kemalist ideology. In this period, tea saloons, balls, Western-style dinner restaurants symbolized the “prestigious” and “civilized” way of life for certain class, and photographs taken in those places of the public space of women dressed in Western style appeared in newspapers (Göle, 1997: 66). In addition to photographs of young modern women performing feminine professions such as nursing or teaching, playing sports in shorts, they are seen as listeners or participants in political arena, but no information was given about those women’s names, what they did and/or said (Sancar, 2014: 275). These women, who are used as signifiers of modern publicity, have been muted. In gendered publicity, this is “the dose of modernity”, according to Sancar (2014: 276).

Emphasizing that city design and planning ignores gender, Navarrete-Hernandez, Vetro and Concha (2021: 3) showed that women’s use and experiences of public spaces are not taken into account. The effect of gender norms on the mobility of individuals in daily life emerges by examining different mobility models in cities. Accordingly, feminist scholars studying women’s mobility patterns and experiences have found that broader structural factors disproportionate to these experiences and patterns (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3). Among women who are disproportionately responsible for housework and care, those who have to work are more likely to work in part-time jobs. These women therefore have more complex daily activities and spend more time in public spaces than men and unemployed and/or childless women (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3). Urban planning, which generally takes into account men whose daily mobility is home-work-home, fails to respond to the complex mobility chain of women, for example in transportation planning models (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3). In addition, it can be said that many women prefer walking or public transport because they do not have the privilege of accessing a private vehicle. Therefore, in the context of

security, these women have more anxiety and fear in the city than other women or men who have private cars (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3).

Kern (2019:120) highlights the feminization of urban spaces, showing that gendered norms are associated with creating spaces suitable for women in urban areas. In city centers and/or metropolitan areas where industrialization is heavily felt, some spaces that are closed off and have limited access for women, as mentioned above, are being “softened” to attract female customers (Kern, 2019: 120). Kern (2019:120) emphasizes that gendered norms are related to the creation of women-friendly spaces in urban areas, indicating the feminization of urban spaces. In city centers and/or metropolises where industrialization is strongly felt, some spaces that are limited in access to women are softened to appeal to female customers, as previously mentioned. Kern (2019: 121) also highlights that even chain businesses such as McDonald’s are aesthetically designed, with the intention of being more family-friendly and feeling like a home. Color choices, seating arrangements, business names, decor, and menu content changes are actually marketing strategies developed to make women feel more comfortable and secure. Geographers associate this with gentrification, referring to the modernization and transformation of spaces where working-class spend time into places for middle and upper classes and groups. The use of chain stores such as Starbucks as common urban spaces is designed to provide customers with a “home-like” experience (Bookman, 2013). Undoubtedly, *the warm and cozy atmosphere* associated with home is intended to evoke feelings of security and comfort. Comfortable chairs and bookshelves containing artificial or real books create an intimate conversational atmosphere, and these spaces can be defined as semi-public spaces between home and public space. As “third spaces”, these cafes are places where women can socialize in a *safe* and *appropriate* manner in public spaces, where they can experience urban life *appropriately*. It can be said that the class transformation of urban spaces, while providing safety and comfort for women and diversifying their customers to make a profit, actually limits their movements and keeps them under control. The concepts such as “urban anxiety”, “fear” and “security” and many more that appear here, will be discussed in the next section in the context of gendered space.

2.2.2 Prominent Concepts in the Gendered Public Space

Women's mobility in the public space has been studied by feminist theorists in the context of gendered space. While it has been argued that mobility and access to certain spaces are determined by gender roles, it has later been demonstrated that gender roles and mobility and access are processes that constantly mutually define each other (Siwach, 2020: 34). On the other hand, it was underlined that the most significant and determinant factor shaping the mobility in the spaces and places of the urban public space is the fear of violence (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3). At this point, women's fear of men takes on a spatial and geographical dimension. Rather than avoiding certain men, women internally identify which places and spaces to avoid (Valentine, 1989). This is a coping strategy that interrupts the continuity of fear felt on the streets of the city. Valentine (1989: 386), who notes that women do not fear every man, identifies where and when they might encounter "dangerous men" to maintain the illusion of control over their safety.

The concept of security being gendered shows itself with the concept of "perceived safety". An example of this is the fact that despite the decrease in violence and crime rates in one part of the city, the fear felt by women does not change. Therefore, the concept of fear and security goes beyond the absence of crime and is related to freedom in the context of acting fearlessly in the public space and accessing the places of the city (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3). Studies showing the inequality of perceiving safety in the context of gender have found that urban design is blind to the experiences of women and other disadvantaged groups. In addition, the fact that these experiences are not taken into account in places such as dark alleys, high walls, stops and stations in dark and desolate places, public toilets, underpasses and bridges causes women to be unable to move freely and fearlessly in the public spaces of the city (Jiang, Mak, Larsen & Zhong: 2017). Another phenomenon emphasized in the literature in the context of security, perceived safety and fear is that women usually feel safe in a familiar place and environment. The "familiarity" here is cultural, demographic and class familiarity with environment and place (Roy & Bailey, 2021: 7). Here, individuals can create "safe spaces" for themselves. "Relief Maps", in this case, identify the relationships of individuals'

emotions and experiences with spaces and places, and visually show the visibility of identities (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013: 17).

Being visible in urban spaces does not always equate to equal access and safety for all individuals and groups. In fact, visibility can lead to a number of issues such as segregation, stigmatization, and even violence. This concept is often approached in literature through three levels of visibility: categorical visibility, moral visibility, and visibility through public policy. Categorical visibility pertains to the recognition of a group as a separate category, moral visibility pertains to the recognition of the group as a threat to the civil order, and visibility through public policy pertains to the perception and addressing of the so-called problem by public policy (Pospech, 2020: 1-3). Popa and Sandal (2019) cite the reluctance and refusal of queer activists to use the rhetoric of “coming out” and “visibility” to intervene politically in their local contexts. Christina Hanhart, as cited in Popa and Sandal (2019: 6) argues that in urban centers that were gentrified in the 1970s, an environment was created to oppose pro-business gay politics. In this context, it has been argued that increased visibility does not make nonwhite people and queers safer. It is important to note that an intersectional and spatial approach is required to understand the urban experiences of women, LGBTI+s and nonwhite people. Intersectionality needs to be understood as reciprocal with spatiality (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013). The experiences of marginalized groups in urban spaces cannot be understood through a single lens and must take into account the intersections of different identities and the physical spaces in which they exist.

Another prominent concept in the literature in terms of being visible in the gendered public space was the concept of “male gaze”. The woman’s body, which is visible in public, becomes a *resource* that must be *obtained* and *conquered* by the male gaze and thus gendered social norms are reproduced (Ponterotto, 2016: 147). This gaze, which emerges with the visibility and appearance of the female body, rejects female subjectivity and agency, focuses on the body and reveals gendered power relations (Ponterotto, 2016: 147). While theorists such as Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988), the concept of “empowerment”, which is defined as “the connection between the sense of personal competence, desire and willingness to act in the public sphere”, according to some, is defined as the control over one’s life, is destroyed by the

masculine view through fear. In their article, Munt (1995) proposes the “lesbian flaneur”, aiming to reverse the male gaze. In the literature, the flaneur has been represented as an archetypal resident and observer of the public space in the rapidly developing, changing and growing big cities of 19th century Europe (Wilson, 1992: 93). Blending in with the urban crowd without being seen, roaming the streets freely, and engaging in an independent but admirable spectatorship have been seen as genuine urban ideals since the boom and growth of industrial cities (Kern, 2019: 38). The figure of the flaneur, which constantly appears in Charles Baudelaire’s works, is “one body with the crowd”, a gentleman who is at the center of the movement but still trying to be invisible, who is the “passionate audience” of the city (Kern, 2019: 38). While the philosopher and the writer of the urban life, Walter Benjamin crystallized the flaneur further as an indispensable urban character in the modern city, urban sociologists such as Georg Simmel identified traits such as “boring” and the skill of anonymity as integral parts of the new urban psychology (Kern, 2019: 38-39).

Elkin (2021: 22), who examined the concept of flaneur historically in their book, stated that this concept which refers to both an observer and an observed person, is actually an empty concept. Flaneur and flaneuse are like a vessel that is shaped and filled in the historical context. Stating that the pleasure of walking and observing in the city is the right of women as well as men, Elkin (2021) has shown that, historically, there have always been women walking on the streets. Coming back to Munt (1995), in their article they propose the idea of an urban lesbian flaneur who delights in observing other women, by hollowing out the notion and eliminating the usual heterosexual male gaze. This is accepted as a way for women and LGBTI+s to transform the public space of the city. The spatial restructuring mentioned at this point, takes place at the moment of existence. Lesbian identity and other non-heterosexual identities are constructed in the temporal and linguistic mobilization of space and shape urban life during movement in space. Existence of bodies in space is, albeit temporary, a vital sign of intersubjective interaction and location. Therefore, people filling the space with others and taking up space there can trigger the transformation of the space. As Munt (1995: 125) points out, space is full of possibilities, positions, passages and paths; it is never static.

Koskela (1997) emphasizes the need to focus on the concept of courage both conceptually and theoretically in her article on Finnish society. They highlight in their article that women with a “bold walk”, despite the risks they may face, do not limit their urban movements, emphasizing that they are active agents and subjects (Koskela, 1997: 315). However, despite their courage and precautions, Koskela (1997: 316) have shown that fear dominates their walks, thus revealing the gendered structure of spaces in their walking experiences. Valentine (1992: 23-24) emphasizes that the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence is higher than in public spaces, and that parents’ warnings and everyday arguments construct fear in women’s public lives socially and ideologically. Valentine (1992: 22) discusses “coping strategies” for dealing with violence in public life, and notes that distancing oneself from potential risks in terms of time and place is at the forefront. Parents who tell their daughters that it is not a problem to be in crowded streets during the day but that they should not walk around in the dark, initiate the process of internalizing the gendered nature of space from childhood. The geography of fear created by these admonitions produces perceptions of “dangerous places and times” (Valentine, 1992: 25). These perceptions are possible through the mediation of sources such as the gendered nature of space, parental warnings, business environment, fear of strange men, and media reports of violence. However, as shown in Valentine’s research (1992), every woman, regardless of her socioeconomic status, has experienced at least one act of violence. Therefore, the sources of knowledge of fear have layers consisting of (1) memory, (2) emotion, and (3) informativeness, and these directly affect women’s relationships with public space (Valentine, 1992: 28).

So far, the concepts of perceived safety, familiarity of the spaces and places, and safe spaces discussed in the context of women’s mobility and access led us to the concept of visibility. Then, in the context of unequal visibility in the public space, different experiences and emotions revealed the concept of the male gaze. Ideas like *flâneuse* and *lesbian flâneur*, which are glorified against the male gaze, shed light on the idea of owning the common spaces of the city. Therefore, before following through, it would now be appropriate to talk about the feminist approach to the concept of “right to the city”, which is another prominent concept in the literature. Henri Lefebvre first mentioned this concept in 1967, who said that was both a cry and a demand (Harvey, 2015: 30). The right to the city, which includes this cry as a reaction to the pain

caused by the crisis of daily life in the capitalist city, is both a capacity and power created by the demand to transform the alienation caused by this crisis into more enjoyable and meaningful city life. It contains many conflicts that require an openness to the dialectic of occurrence and chance, and the constant pursuit of unpredictable innovations (Harvey, 2015: 30). The idea of the right to the city arises from the cry for help and support of the oppressed people from the streets and neighborhoods in difficult and desperate times. According to Lefebvre (as cited in Harvey, 2015: 34), this will trigger an urban revolution materialized from the working class, which consists not only of factory workers but urban workers. Today in most capitalist countries, “class” which becomes fragmented, multiple in purpose and needs, irregular and fluid, complicates the demand for the right to the city. It may also contain some oppressed groups and identities. The right to the city, then, is much more than the right of individual and/or collective access to the resources the city has. According to Harvey (2015: 44), this is the right to change and reinvent the city according to our hearts. It is a collective as well as an individual right, because *inventing the city* inevitably depends on the exercise of collective power over urbanization processes. This concept, which is very important for a polyphonic public space where differences are visible for equal participation and access, reminds individuals and groups who the real *owner* of the city’s public spaces, streets is.

On the other hand, like many other concepts, the right to the city is a concept that should be considered and criticized, when necessary, just like feminists’ criticisms of the public space. In their article, Beebeejaun (2016), who considers the spaces of daily living as political spaces, showed that the scope of the concept of the right to the city is gendered. These spaces, which are political in terms of the production and reproduction of senses of belonging and rights, are spaces where gender relations are created (Beebeejaun, 2016: 9). Processes of negotiation, challenge and/or ownage, in which gender relations are created both discursively and physically in terms of exclusion, inclusion and distancing, manifest themselves in those spaces (Beebeejaun, 2016: 10). Engaging in rights and gender negotiations while building cities does not naturally lead to one-sided results. In this context, feminists such as Grosz and Irigaray (as cited in Beebeejaun, 2016: 10) emphasize that perspectives that consider bodies and gender concepts beyond the gender binary system should be taken into account. Issues such as the working conditions of women and LGBTI+s,

their unequal wages, childcare, access to public transport, walking trails and pavements, safety in everyday spaces like underpasses, public toilets, public transport stops and stations, overall, the city life, have been visible through the challenges of feminists since the 1970s (Beebeejaun, 2016). The dominant visibility of spaces associated with the right to the city, such as the Agora and city squares, leaves those issues *unmapped*. Therefore, a wider range of urban spaces shed light on space analysis for constructing more inclusive, free and equal spaces. As Harvey (2015) has shown, the concept of the right to the city is actually an empty concept. What matters is how to fill it.

2.3 Women in Minority Communities: Gender, Ethnicity and Class

Intersectionality, which was used to refer to the trio of gender, *race* (ethnicity) and class, was first conceived as a system and then as a multiplicity of identities. It was used by Kimberle Crenshaw, who produced in the field of critical race studies. Although the concept of intersectionality is claimed to have been put into use by Crenshaw in 1989, its origins can be traced back to the slogan of the “triple danger” coined by *Third World* activists when the women’s liberation movement reached its peak (Aguilar, 2015: 256). The women’s liberation activists brewing in the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-Vietnam War movements were both intellectually influenced and inspired by the socialist New Left policies and the national liberation and independence movements that were increasing in number in the Third World (Aguilar, 2015: 257). The influences made by feminists from US policies in Vietnam and subsequent invasion of Cambodia in Asia, overt or covert US interventions in Central and Latin America have led to a collective questioning of the humanity of capitalism as a social system. This new awareness and ensuing anger at the oppression of women is for those reasons placed in a much more general context of capitalism. This has led to a rethinking of everyday gender relations in private and public spaces (Aguilar, 2015: 257).

Third World women, inspired by Vietnamese female freedom fighters, claimed that their own experiences of oppression were not just gendered, but stemmed from the “triple danger”. The term refers to three separate systems of oppression such as sexism, racism, and capitalism (Aguilar, 2015: 257). The danger motif, as “jeopardy”, has been dealt with in turn by those who wish to develop the concept

along a Marxist line. The first of these essays belongs to Beal (2008), who wrote an article in 1969 detailing the concept of double jeopardy. They began their discussion with the allegation that the capitalist system and racism has destroyed the humanity of all people, especially Blacks (Beal, 2008: 166). Beal places black women at the bottom of social relations of production. In Crenshaw's article (1991) dealing with violence against Black women, it was seen that they did not consider intersectionality as a holistic theory, or even as a methodology. Crenshaw resisted the tendencies to measure or evaluate the effectiveness of intersectionality at the level of abstraction and explained how they was positioned on this issue, and they stated that rather than making theory, the connection of the concept with practical applications is of interest to them (Crenshaw, 2011). On the other hand, Davis (2008: 72) states that "intersectionality offers a new *raison d'être* for feminist theory and analysis". Considering the challenge posed by black and other marginalized women, feminism was likely to stumble without resorting to this kind of conceptual tool. Fear of the deconstruction of the category "woman" could have delegitimized the field, but the result was the opposite. Intersectionality has been seen as the most important contribution of women's studies to other disciplines (Davis, 2008: 72). Yet, some conceptual difficulties have emerged in some studies.

According to Marxist feminists, the key to understand why gender, race and other identity indicators produce oppression is to understand the capitalist mode of production and the social relations that give it life. Identity categories become active as mechanisms to facilitate mentioned exploitation, precisely in the context of capitalist social relations in which the capitalist derives surplus value from those who are exempt from ownership of the means of production. The milestone of the issue revolves around the concept of class, which has caused so much concern. Meiksins Wood (as cited in Aguilar, 2015: 267) states that class is not only a particular system of power relations, but also a constitutive relation of a distinctive social process, the dynamic of accumulation and the self-expansion of capital. The concept of "class" is not just another form of inequality or stratification meaning conflict and insoluble opposition. The interest in this concept has faded even in the context of the notion of class, which has been reduced to the cultural dimension, in intersectionality studies. The focus has narrowed to gender and ethnicity only (Aguilar, 2015: 267-268). For Meyerson, class is not only the primary determinant but also the only structural

determinant. Meyerson said, “the priority of class means building a multiracial, multi-sex international organization of the working class should be the goal of any revolutionary movement. The priority of the class puts the fight against racism and sexism at the center. Oppressions are very diverse and intersect with each other, but their reasons are not like this” (as cited in Aguilar, 2015: 268), they bring the concept of struggle back to the theory.

Examining the concept of gender and ethnicity from a dual status perspective in their articles, Reid and Comas-Diaz (1990) revealed that studies that deal with these concepts separately neglect each other. The concept of “social status” has been studied by social scientists in the context of social and individual relationships and interactions. It provides information about human behavior such as social status, individual and collective behavior and/or attitude changes. In many studies where social status is the main focus, age, ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation and class are considered as categories of analysis. It is theoretically accepted that those categories, which constitute the characteristics of status, cannot be easily isolated in individuals. In practice, however, assumptions of majority rule and universality seem to be reflected in research data, meaning that most researchers focus only on Whites (Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990: 398). This shows that the concept of social status is a concept that can be fed from hegemonic ideologies. Ethnicity or physical characteristics and family background are accepted as indicators of social status inherent and related. Based on these indicators, the decisions taken in response to the majority are biased and prejudiced. Individuals and any minority communities that are judged to be different are not given opportunities in many areas; deprived of equal opportunity.

2.4 What makes a “Minority”?

In the literature review on the concept of minority, different approaches came to the fore even though they were like parallel to each other. In addition, it has been seen that, concepts such as “cultural diversity”, “citizenship”, “minority consciousness”, “collective discrimination”, “exclusion”, “marginality”, “peripherality”, “diaspora” and “locality” are related to the concept of minority in terms of theory and practice. Finally, in relation to these prominent concepts, a conceptual criticism of the concept of “minority” draws attention in the literature. According to Suciyan (2018), in terms

of terminology, this concept is ideologically constructed in a contradictory way, ignoring some significant historical and therefore social facts. Minority as a concept is essentially a legal category that legitimizes the history of deportations and various exiles by rendering them invisible (Suciyan, 2018: 57). Moreover, it refers to and reproduces the structure of the nation-state in which the majority corresponds to the “nation” and the minority to the “other”. This concept, which by definition contradicts the nation-state that establishes a uniformizing and homogenizing unity and solidarity, forms a general category of non-Muslims by covering up their unique political history and state’s discriminatory policies and different types of racism (Suciyan, 2018: 57). Although the concept of minority seems to indicate a limited and small formation, in fact, the issues that concern the minority directly concern the majority. As it is defined politically in this problematic way, the concept of minority renders the unique socio-political histories of non-Muslim societies invisible.

In sociological terms, the concept of minority is defined as a numerically small group that has different characteristics from the majority in a community, tries to preserve those characteristics and is not dominant (Oran, 2018: 97). There is no universally accepted definition of minority in international law, as there is no consensus among states on which elements the “difference”, which is a condition for being considered a minority, should be based on (Oran, 2018: 97). It can be said that each state does define the concept of minority according to its own interests. The most widely accepted definition of this concept so far is the review prepared in 1977 by Capotorti, special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Committee’s “Sub-Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities”, in the context of Article 27 of the 1966 UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the protection of minorities (as cited in Oran, 2018: 97). Accordingly, five elements come to the fore such as (1) difference, (2) number, (3) non-dominance, (4) citizenship and (5) minority consciousness (Oran, 2018: 98-99). Minority consciousness, which is unclear compared to other elements, corresponds to the position of the sub-identity against the upper-identity. If the effort to maintain oneself is only for the purpose of preserving its own customs and traditions, there is only a cultural diversity here and it can be said that there is no minority consciousness, hence the existence of a minority. But if this effort is put forward in a way that leads to political demands, there is a minority consciousness and therefore a

minority (Oran, 2018: 100). From this point, it can be said that the concept of minority should come to mind together with the demands for political rights.

From the 1910s to the 1930s, Chicago School sociologists began to study European groups in North American cities with the wave of migration from Europe (Laurie & Khan, 2017: 4). Whatever the differences between linguistic and kinship practices, and between political and religious beliefs, minority groups were required to share basic characteristics with majority groups. Without this, “cultural diversity” would be lost, according to sociology of Chicago School (Laurie & Khan, 2017: 4). The discourses covered by these studies on minorities in the West are based on a commitment to an egalitarianism that belongs to the national body and the political nation and is constructed from here (Laurie & Khan, 2017: 4). In other definition of minority prominent in the literature, it has been seen that this concept is associated directly with ethnic minorities. The term “ethnic minority groups” is used to refer to immigrants and their children, encompassing both similarities and differences based on an increasing variety of experiences (Morris, 2003: 3). This definition shifts the emphasis towards identities produced by its members themselves, suggesting, according to Morris (2003: 3), an agreement focusing on special needs and interests from the physical and cultural differences that trigger discrimination. Here, (ethnic) minority groups appear as organized and institutional organisms, therefore, they are in a position of active, conscious and aware demanding, not passive and/or submissive. In line with this definition, the concept of “exclusion” comes to the fore in the literature. Morris (2003: 5) approaches the exclusion of ethnic minorities as a set of processes. According to this approach, exclusion is not only economic but also encompasses the inability to have the opportunity to fully participate in social and everyday life (Morris, 2003: 5). This exclusion is actually a complex phenomenon because it includes power relations. Although some excluded individuals and/or groups are left completely ineffective, others can actively exercise their power to exclude others. It can be said that power relations are inherent in people’s everyday lives and daily practices, and are related to various forms of discrimination such as stigmatization and stereotyping. Therefore, power relations have a direct relationship on exclusion.

On the other hand, however, Samers (1998) emphasizes that the use of the concept of ethnic minority evokes colonial, victimizing and patronizing. Instead, an affirmative and celebratory concept of “marginality”, “peripherality” or “diaspora” should be used (Samers, 1998). The main purpose of Samers (1998) in asserting this is to show that ethnicity, which is perceived as a fixed category, actually excludes multiple identities shaped by class, gender, sexuality and age. In the context of ethnicity and cultural difference, a social constructivist approach says that ethnic identity is “situationally variable and negotiable” (Jenkins, 1997: 50). According to Jenkins (1997) (Evans, 2006: 111-112), who establishes a dialectical relationship between internal and external identification processes with individual and collective consequences, the importance of understanding the reality of ethnicity should be primary and locality has an effect on the power of ethnic belonging. Accordingly, ethnicity studies focusing on the definition of external identity and its social classification were only concerned with understanding social inequalities (Evans, 2006: 112). However, Jenkins (1997: 75) argues that the internal processes of self-knowing and self-identification are at least equally significant, and that “hierarchal difference is not significant in the context of ethnic relations”.

2.4.1 Armenian Community in İstanbul

Armenians, who have been living in Turkish soils for centuries, are quite crowded in population and heterogeneous compared to the other three non-Muslim communities. Dalyan (2011) divided the Armenian community into five different groups in the structure within the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, (1) the first group consisted of the rich ones who were influential in the 19th century and took part in the administration and civil services. The Dadyans, who were brought in charge of the gunpowder factory (“*baruthane*”) during the period of Selim the 3rd, or the Balyan family, who held responsible for the architecture, are included in this group (Dalyan, 2011: 10). While (2) the other group consisted of those who were engaged in trade in İstanbul and other cities and towns of Anatolia, (3) the third group consisted of the peasants, who were the most numerous (Dalyan, 2011: 9). (4) The fourth group consisted of (4) Armenians living in high mountains such as Sason. And (5) the last group was the clergy. Thanks to their military exemptions, this group was gaining an economically privileged position during the imperial period (Dalyan, 2011: 9). Part

of the “*millet*” system denoting a sect or religious community, the Armenian Apostolic church was one of the three traditional communities of the Ottoman Empire (Hofmann, 2002: 12). Later, Catholic and finally Protestant Armenians were recognized. In the constitution of 23 December 1876, all the subjects of the sultan were accepted as “Ottoman citizens” (Hofmann, 2002: 12).

With Lausanne, non-Muslims, who legally obtained minority status and *accepted* as equal citizens of the newly established Republic, have often interrupted the use of rights of their minority status during the construction of the nation-state, or various obstacles have been put in front of the use of those rights. Contrary to the Ottoman Empire, the new Republic, emphasizing ethnicity in its definition of national identity, on paper, stated “being Turkish” as an individual’s self-definition as Turkish regardless of the ethnicity and/or religion, non-Muslim minorities were accepted as “the other” (Maksudyan, 2005). According to Göl (2005: 136-137), who stated that one of the historical reasons for the emergence of Turkish nationalism was the Ottoman modernization policies, the religious character of the Ottoman Empire and the millet system prevented “ethnicity” in the definition of “Turkishness”. Instead, Islam has become a unifying social *force*, replacing ethnic differences in Turkish nation building. This process has required a construction in relation to the other. In this context, Armenians have played a role *threatening* the territorial unity and integrity of the nation in the eyes of the Turkish state (Göl, 2005: 137).

On the other hand, Çağaptay (2002) examines ethnicity in three nested dimensions of Turkishness. These dimensions represent three definitions of the Nation. Çağaptay (2002: 77) created a Venn diagram that depicts these definitions. From outermost to innermost the names of these diagrams are: (1) territorial, (2) religious and (3) ethno-religious. According to the territorial definition that registered the inhabitants of Turkey as Turks, in regard to the 1924 constitution, Armenians are in the category of equal citizens of the republic (Çağaptay, 2002: 76). As far as the second definition, all Muslims in Turkey are accepted as Turks. This is recognized as the legacy of the millet system (Çağaptay, 2002: 76). Considering that not every Muslim in this land speaks Turkish, like Kurds, this definition is quite contradictory. High Kemalism²

² In 1931, the policy of centralizing the ruling party, Republican People’s Party [“*CHP*”], of the Kemalist regime led by Mustafa Kemal corresponds to the period defined as “High Kemalism” (Çağaptay, 2002: 69).

considers ethnic Turks as Turks and divides non-Turks into Muslim and non-Muslim categories. According to Çağaptay (2002:76), ethnic Turks were quite a minority and hereunder *other* Muslims *could* be assimilated. Therefore, Turkish was used as a tool of assimilation. Turkish nationalism has marginalized Armenians, since Armenians are excluded from this in terms of religion and ethnicity. In the diagram created by Çağaptay (2002: 77), the farther a person was from the center, the harder it was to *reach* the Turkish state. Non-Muslim minorities still face obstacles in exercising their rights and freedoms. Stuck between being equal citizens and being a minority, non-Muslims constantly reproduce the vulnerability created by this situation, both through the new experiences they practice in the social space and through the collective memory created by trauma (Kaymak, 2017: 15). In the history of the Republic, historical events pointing to the discriminatory policies and actions of the state, and whose traumatic effects still continue in daily life through memory, cause the number of non-Muslim minorities to decrease gradually, also they constantly re-establish the perception that these communities are “guests” in these lands.

The Turkish Armenians, who are the vassals of the Ottoman Empire and citizens of the Republic, constitute unique situation among themselves. This uniqueness stems from their cultural and legal ties with the Turkish territory and its other communities, as well as their connection with the large Armenian population in the world (Örs & Komşuoğlu, 2007: 413). This makes them an ethno-religious minority. In the context of diaspora, which can be defined as the separation of a people of their homeland, the Armenians of Turkey constitute an exceptional situation, according to Örs and Komşuoğlu (2007). They are not considered to be living in the diaspora because they live in Anatolia, the homeland they lived in for centuries. However, on the other hand, even if they have official citizenship status, they cannot live like equal citizens in the Republic of Turkey, whose national identity is built with an ethnic and religious emphasis. Örs and Komşuoğlu (2007) have revealed through their fieldwork that the Armenians of Turkey have never identified themselves with the Armenian diaspora or with the Armenians in Armenia. On the other hand, they cannot fully identify with the Turkish people and the state. But they also share strong cultural ties with the people of these lands, with whom they have had ties for centuries.

According to Suciyan (2018: 58), who defines İstanbul Armenians as a diaspora community, they were well organized until the 20th century. In addition to institutions such as churches, hospitals, schools, foundations and associations, they have produced and continue to produce intellectual knowledge such as magazines, newspapers and books (Suciyan, 2018: 58). The common religion of the Turkish Armenian community, beyond being Apostolic, Catholic or Protestant, is Christianity. In 2001, the U.S. Department of State estimated that Armenian community had a population of 50.000 (as cited in Hofmann, 2002: 9). On the other hand, the Armenian community estimates their number to be between 60.000 and 65.000 (as cited in Hofmann, 2002: 9). By its members, “community” refers to a shared environment, values and beliefs, customs and traditions, and historical background. Certain behavioral patterns are shared based on the common historical context, collective memory and ethnicity (Kaymak, 2017). However, since individuals also share the same concerns, dangers, risks and needs, a certain social structure emerges, both intellectually and physically. Hereby, feelings of “being a community” and of “belonging” stand out. According to Örs and Komşuoğlu (2009: 331), Armenian identity and Armenian society, community, are based on a political and ideological content. As discussed above, since the national identity of the Turkish Republic was built on the foundations of Turkish ethnicity and being Muslim, “being an Armenian” implied *otherness*. Being *outside* of this definition brings with it the development of some self-defense reflexes, tactics and strategies against the dangers that may come from this outside, and encourages an *inner* commitment and interlocking for the community. According to Örs and Komşuoğlu (2009: 332), religious, ethnic and cultural affiliations provide the means for Armenians to maintain their existence within the hegemony of the Turkish nation. This identity, which is indicated by being Armenian and has certain limitations within, creates relatively safe spaces by separating inside and outside, us and them. The creation of an “imaginary community” (Örs & Komşuoğlu, 2009: 332) such as the “Armenians” also provided some tools to be developed against any discriminatory, disproportionate and unequal actions that might come from outside.

During the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the main dynamic of the settlement of non-Muslims in İstanbul was the phenomenon of migration. The compulsory resettlement of the Ottoman Sultan Fatih and the population mobility

from the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century shaped the distribution of İstanbul's non-Muslims in the urban geography (Kaymak, 2017: 102). In the spatial history of İstanbul, this distribution has formed the ethnic, religious and cultural identities of the districts, while urban belongings have been built on these identities. For this reason, the effect of migration and its reflection in the settlement history of non-Muslim minorities in the city have historically revealed different settlement dynamics (Kaymak, 2017: 102). In İstanbul, class divisions emerged within this ethno-religious geography of the city due to the increasing trade and articulation process with capitalism in the second half of the 19th century (Kaymak, 2017: 116). One of the spatial reflections of the modernization process has been that the enriched non-Muslims and/or Muslims began to move from ethnically, religiously and culturally segregated neighborhoods to newly built modern apartments and modern neighborhoods with infrastructure (Kaymak, 2017: 116). However, this did not disrupt the community structure of non-Muslim neighborhoods, which were settled on an ethno-religious basis, and some of those neighborhoods continued to exist as minority neighborhoods until the 1950s. The socio-spatial segregation of Armenians in İstanbul from the 1950s to the 1980s is based on (1) the community life formed around churches and schools in the districts where Armenians historically settled, and (2) class mobility dynamics created by changing economic and cultural capitals (Kaymak, 2017: 131). In the context of the spatial differentiation of the class geography of the Armenians in İstanbul, there is a separation between Kurtuluş, Feriköy, Pangaltı and Bomonti, Nişantaşı, Yeşilköy, Tarabya, Kadıköy and Üsküdar on one side, and Gedikpaşa, Beşiktaş, Samatya, Kumkapı, Ortaköy and Bakırköy on the other (Hofmann, 2002: 9-10). In addition, Adalar, especially Kınalı, have emerged as a place of attachment and belonging for the minority communities of İstanbul. In their extensive field research, Kaymak (2017), in terms of being disconnected and isolated from the city's experiences, for some people, Adalar are a place where they can live their identity freely, while for others it evokes being stuck, restricted and what is traumatic.

2.5 The Public Space Experiences of Women Belonging to a Minority Community

Literature reviews have suggested that the positionality of women is scarcely examined in the already few and far between studies in the context of minority and/or ethno-religious communities. In their article, Brink-Danan (2011) examines the disguise of difference and the erasure of cosmopolitan difference from the public space in light of security concerns, as a result of the “bodily marking” and emphasizing this danger in the language of the Jews in İstanbul. In their article, the researcher who examines the community in general, not women, set out from the spatial, social, political, structural, moral and essentialist definitions of cosmopolitanism. Accordingly, a political cosmopolitanism envisions people as citizens of the world, while a structural understanding uses cosmopolitanism as a tool to demean the local population (Brink-Danan, 2011: 445). On the other hand, a moralist cosmopolitanism says that one should be in solidarity with *strangers*, while essentialist cosmopolitanism defines each person as a being outside of systems (Brink-Danan, 2011: 445). Cosmopolitanism in İstanbul does not quite fit those definitions, and Turkish Jews, according to Brink-Danan (2011: 445), do not challenge at least two of them. In a context where otherness is felt in many dimensions such as legal, structural and discursive, Jews distinguish the *other* from “ours” among themselves (Brink-Danan, 2011: 447). In theory, the cosmopolitanism of İstanbul, where diversity prevails in the public space, in practice suppresses the identities of minorities by concealing, closing or erasing them (Brink-Danan, 2011: 447). The cosmopolitan mode of existence of the Jews thus often involves conflicts, contradictions and censorship/self-censorship. “Lived cosmopolitanism” informs what should be kept secret in the public space (Brink-Danan, 2011: 447). Historically, Turkish Jews have had to be “low-profile” by not challenging the wider society in order not to be completely erased from the public space due to security concerns (Brink-Danan, 2011: 452).

In another article focusing on the construction and use of names as a means of othering in the public space, Brink-Danan (2010) indicates that in everyday life, in public spaces of the city such as markets, banks and workplaces, names are codes that contain social meanings. Names are loaded with highly political connotations,

marking individuals as “Turkish” or “stranger”. Because Turkish identity has a Muslim implication(s), women have developed the strategy of naming their children in Turkish in order to avoid all kinds of suffering and difficulties (Brink-Danan, 2010: 387). Another strategy women use mentioned in the article is to play with names in a way that reminds them of the *roots*, e.g., adding a Turkish suffix to the end or beginning of the Hebrew name, or the translation of Turkish names according to phonetic transcription rules (Brink-Danan, 2010: 388). Names that people have are social, political and also historical as a dictionary of inclusion or exclusion, as they have the potential to offer new context in terms of reclassification and re-dating in the current sense (Brink-Danan, 2010: 392). Kaymak (2017: 307-308) stated that the strategy of hiding the name of the Jews and Armenians, who are especially concentrated in the commercial field, is common. On the other hand, they (2017: 309) observed that the women of the third and fourth generations of the republic used modern and/or French-origin names and traditional Armenian-origin names together. It has also been revealed that young women from those generations who are working do not prefer strategies such as hiding their names or using Turkish pseudonyms, even though they have difficulties in their daily lives due to their names (Kaymak, 2017: 309).

Another study (Blumen, 2007) among ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel looked at the four layers of going-to-work in the context of performance. (1) The compatibility of the material and the way one uses it, (2) the human movements and the clothes worn, (3) the diversity of individual practices on the way to work, and (4) the timing of this collective ritual forms the four layers of commuting performance, which Blumen (2007) calls “landscape”. In the community, religiously and culturally women are *allowed* and the only ones who can go to work. Among the women who go to work in public, the effect of the clothes is most noticeable in the landscape Blumen (2007: 827) mentions. According to another recent study conducted in Australia (Gholamhosseini, Pojani, Babiano, Johnson, Minnery, 2018), the way migrant women from the Middle East see the public spaces of the city differs from cultural, political and religious perspectives. The narratives of migrant women have shown how gendered religious and cultural identities are constructed and performed in public spaces. Although individuals and communities differ among themselves, there are commonalities arising from being migrants in the public space (Gholamhosseini

et al., 2018: 18). In the article, when the experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women in Australia are examined, it is revealed that the meaning of public/private spaces is quite flexible compared to local ones, the contradictory and conflicting existence of security and surveillance, the ambiguity and need of the “sense of place” and the “sense of belonging” (Gholamhosseini et al., 2018: 19). Considering the different experiences arising from diversity in the public space is very significant for a more equal and free urban experience in multicultural cities. However, non-Muslim communities in İstanbul have minority status not migrant; yet, considering the centuries-old history of some in İstanbul some in Turkey in general, it is quite ironic that they share common feeling with migrant women in Australia in the context of “belonging” and “sense of place”. Another article (Burchardt & Griera, 2018) examining the public space regimes through the visibility of the veil in Europe emphasized the importance of examining the symbols that express minority and/or otherness in any way, the place, time and forms of public space usage of individuals. Since these connotative symbols are political, they directly affect the public space experiences of individuals, communities and groups.

“Sense of belonging” and “attachment” are complex concepts that are influenced by power relations. According to Hopkins & Dixon (2006), who approach the concept of “visibility” from the framework of political psychology, the political and social movements’ visibility is related to the significance of place. The individuals’ psychological representations of space(s) are the determinants of their political visibility. As such, it shapes behaviors and actions such as who belongs to where, where to feel “at home” and “out of place”, where to go or run away. The representations of space and place in daily life shape these behaviors and actions. The experiences of individuals are affected and controlled by social structures and categories such as nation, class, and ethnicity, and the spatial distinctions constructed in the context of domination relations are thus reproduced. At this point, the feeling that some individuals and groups do not belong anywhere constitutes their political psychology. The relationship between humans and space and place is explained in terms of psychological concepts such as attachment, belonging, and identity (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006: 174). In the context of the relationship between collectivity in the public space and the urban landscape, Abell, Condor, and Stevenson (as cited in Hopkins & Dixon, 2006: 179) argued that political imaginations such as the state,

nation, and civil society are sometimes constructed solely as a matter of place/territory. From this point of view, there is a social, individual, and political identity construction based on place, and the skills of living, experiencing, and practicing these identities are determined by power relations (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006: 182). Perhaps the relationships individuals establish with spaces are processes that influence their political consciousness.

Back to non-Muslim communities in İstanbul, it can be said that the private space for all three of them has the feature of being the place where the minority identity is protected, built and transferred to the next generations. In the heterosexual family, it is the woman's *duty* to convey the traditions and history of this identity to the child and to teach the language (Kaymak: 2017: 365). Therefore, the traditional patriarchal gender-based division of labor is the norm among non-Muslims, just as it is in the wider society. Assigning these duties to women in the household means that she is associated with being a mother and therefore with the private space. In their research, Kaymak (2017) determined that this patriarchal family structure is began to be broken when young women and men start university and then participate the work life. It should be added that their professionalization in different business lines from the family business, their integration into the wider society and their mixed marriages with them have had an impact (Kaymak, 2017: 365). It has also been determined in their research that divorce has increased in the last 10 and 15 years in non-Muslim communities with women's economic freedom.

2.5.1 Armenian Women

Considering hundreds of years of oppression, domination and control, endogamy continues to exist as a norm in the patrilineal and patriarchal state and the Armenian Church, even though mixed marriages are increasing day by day. In addition to this norm, which is the reflection of the Ottoman legal sanctions to the present, the discourse and practices of the 19th century in the context of nationalism and modernity had gendered implications in the influence of Armenians' self-perception as a society (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 34). This awakening of the Armenians at the end of the 19th century assigned some duties to women in creating a nation. Women were defined as guardians of "tradition", while men were allowed to act in the name of "progress", "modernity" and adaptation to whatever was perceived as an "external

threat” (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 34). The household, which would ensure the salvation of Armenian culture, manifested itself as the assigned space and place of women. According to this two-pronged formula lying on the axis of “the world” and “the home”, women were saving the spirituality and the “inner essence” by making sure of the continuity of the tradition in the household and passing it on to their children. So here, another gendered duty emerges; same as mentioned above, it is a norm that equates womanhood with motherhood. Only if the woman fulfills her motherly duty, this inner essence is considered to be saved (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 35). Tradition cannot be saved without being passed on to generations, accordingly. But this was creating a contradictory situation with the spirit of the changing time; these mothers should have been educated but they should not have broken away from the roots. Therefore, in an increasingly modernized society, women had to change as well, but not that much. As can be seen, the division of labor designed to protect and maintain the ancestors in the process of creating a nation is highly gender-based.

With their existence shaped by the Treaty of Lausanne, the Armenian community was able to continue their daily lives with their ethno-religious identities. According to Ekmekçioğlu (2016: 38), the way in which the Armenian community positioned itself against the state and the dominant group was envisioned orbicular, in which the borders of the circles drawn together were shaped according to state intervention. While the inner part of the community consisted of Armenian households, families and kinship, churches, schools, other institutions and cemeteries form the middle part. As of this middle part, state surveillance began. The public space of non-Armenians and the territory of the state was the outer part of the community (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 38). Therefore, the house, which was a space that marked the private lives of people along with family and kinship relations, was the only place where Armenians did not feel the state pressure in terms of their ethno-religious identities (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 39). And thus, the difference became invisible in the public space, drawn into the household, and the tradition once again associated with women.

At the end of this historical process, the status of Armenian women as a “minority within a minority” has shown itself in the literature (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 379). During the construction of the modern Armenian female identity in the 19th century

mentioned above, women gained social visibility as musicians, actors, publishers, painters, teachers and writers. The increase in the number of women who graduated from the established Armenian schools and started to participate in the working life placed women in a conflicted position due to the gender-based division of labor. Today, this positionality has not changed and continues to exist as a situation experienced by women. In the extensive field research conducted by Karakaşlı et al. (2009), it has been seen that today, even if the “head of the family” is accepted as a male in Armenian households, just as in the wider society, women have a dominant role in all decisions taken within the “family”, from the arrangement of the family budget to the education of children. Endogamy, which is carried out to protect and maintain the Armenian identity, has a special place in the community (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 356-357). As a result of their field research, although there are differences in the intergenerational approach to mixed marriages, most of the interviewees reasoned that this led to assimilation (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 357). Yumul (as cited in Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 358), in their doctoral thesis, revealed that “love” is not a value in itself for the Armenian community, arranged marriages are valid instead of love marriages, and families can interfere with the whole marriage process. It can be said that those roles assigned to women have the function of providing cultural reproduction and continuity of lineage and thus reproducing the collective identity (Örs & Komşuoğlu, 2009). Bearing in mind that it is learned and internalized survival strategy, is it not an unseen aspect of reality that these norms dominate and oppress women? Perhaps the growing awareness of this issue, most young women of the republic’s third and fourth generations, is related to the aforementioned rising divorce rates.

Through their field research, Karakaşlı et al. (2009: 380) found that the majority of the working Armenian women they interviewed are in professions assigned as “female-specific”, such as nursing and teaching. This case also manifests itself in the political space as the concentration of women in charities and in the women’s branches of political parties, not in mechanism of decision-making (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 380-381). Pointing out that among the minority communities of İstanbul, Anatolian Armenians have the most patriarchal codes, Kaymak (2017: 315) states that in the first and second generations of rural origin, girls were not educated and were sent to sewing courses. Boys, on the other hand, were either sent to school or

given to work with a master in professions such as electrician, jewelry and tailor. Again, in these generations, the fact that women's work is regarded as "shame" in working-class families is an indication of the traditional and closed family structure (Kaymak, 2017: 316). Therefore, women of the working-class families are kept under control of their father, brother or husband, in short patriarch, through the discourse of shame. On the other side, some of the young women from wealthy non-Muslim families, although they can complete their university education, they get married and do not start working life, or stop working after having children (Kaymak, 2017: 317). Women's participation in public life in spaces considered as an extension of their traditional domestic roles reveals the patriarchal structure of the community. But when it comes to the third and fourth generations of the Republic, the increase in the number of working women brought about an increase in participation in different institutions and business lines.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This master's thesis aims to uncover the gendered nature of public spaces and places of İstanbul and understand the impact of higher education on the relationships between single Armenian women and public space, drawing on feminist methodology. Firstly, the research design will be presented in a layered manner. Feminist epistemology will be discussed as the philosophy that sustains the research, followed by the presentation of feminist standpoint theory and a discussion of why these two contribute to this thesis. Then, the adopted research method, which is qualitative research, will be discussed, presenting the strategies and steps taken during field research. Since this research also contributes to literature of feminist geography and draws from it, the approaches adopted in approaching space during field research will be discussed. Next, the criteria used to determine the women interviewed, as well as some self-reflexive experiences, will be shared. After completing the field research, the resulting path will be presented, followed by a discussion of the method used to analyze the collected data. Finally, the chapter will conclude by discussing methodological limitations.

Feminism has been nourished and fed by different branches of science such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, political sciences, literature, psychoanalysis and many more. From the end of the 1700s, the period of its emergence with profeminist works until today, it harbored some theoretical divisions and conflicts. Although theory and practice have historically been produced and reproduced, constructed and deconstructed from different wings, it would not be wrong to say that feminism(s) is the struggle for a more bearable world. It is still not clear what this world will, or should, be like, what tools and methods will be used to build it. What is common though, even in this varying state, is that theory and practice

nurture, shape, build and amplify each other, and the feminist struggle encompasses and surrounds every aspect of life. The process of living a feminist life that demands the ability to read, think, ask questions, discuss, criticize and act in all spaces of life, as Ahmed (2017) has extensively underlined in her book, is ultimately a rebellion. Therefore, feminism is a collective and social as well as an individual journey. This master's thesis aims to understand the gendered structure of the public space and its relationship with identities, and to expose the interrelationship between space and gender. From this perspective, tactics and strategies produced against inequalities and power relations will be identified, and their reciprocal relationship with the spaces and places of the public space will be revealed. In the Turkish context, the Armenian community, which was found to be larger in terms of population compared to other non-Muslim communities, was chosen as the focus. The reviewed literature focuses on the gendered spatiality of the public space, its consideration in the context of class, and the experiences of women from ethno-religious minority communities in the public space. This feminist standpoint thesis aims to reveal and make visible the experiences of young and single Armenian women in the public space in İstanbul through field research, as well as to challenge the patriarchal structure of the public space by exposing its spatial structure in light of the narratives of Armenian women. The literature review was conducted after determining the research question and the sub-question that was formed through the field research. These are as follows:

Research Question:

RQ: How do the ethnic and gender identities of a highly educated group intersect with the relationality and spatiality in the public space?

Sub-Question:

SQ1: How are the tactics and strategies that single Armenian women use in their relationships with the wider society?

In this section, I will discuss the design of my research, which was created based on the research question I formulated. The basis of the research design, which was based on feminist epistemology, will be presented along with the qualitative research method and the semi-structured interviews used for data collection. Then, I will

explain the method I adopted for the selection of the sample for the thesis, and the subsequent process of creating my outline, and finally discuss the methodological limitations.

3.1 Research Design

Before clarifying the research question, I had a curiosity to study the experiences and affectivities of single and young non-Muslim women in public spaces. I wanted to expand on my undergraduate thesis that examined the positionality of Jewish women in the household, to understand their relationships with public spaces of İstanbul. However, the sample of the research switched to Armenian community. In order to understand women's mobility and visibility in the public spaces, I accounted that having interviewees who were working, studying, or both, would guide me in understanding their activities and practices in the public space. Additionally, since I was particularly curious about the experiences of single Armenian women, I identified one of the criteria as unmarried. Feeling indecisive about determining the age of being unmarried, I contacted a friend from the community, whom I knew from before, to ask for her opinion and to obtain information from an *insider*. According to information I received from her, there was a relatively high population of unmarried working and/or studying women aged twenty-five to thirty-five in the community. However, within this group, the marriage rate would increase after the age of thirty. Generally, women around the age of thirty-five were observed to get married. Based on this information, I identified the age range of the interviewees as twenty-five to thirty-five, but left a margin of two or three years during the field research.

The effects of socio-economic positionality on behavior, experiences and emotions could be inferred from the field research. When considering women's mobility and visibility in the public space, in order to increase diversity, not only working women but also self-employed women, women who have started their own businesses or have taken over family businesses, or who are top-level executives have been included in the sample. Therefore, in this thesis, women interviewed was determined in the context of their relationship with the means of production, and five self-employed women who owned their own means of production or were high-level managers, and ten salaried women were planned to conduct interview with. In this

way, it could be understood, based on the socio-economic commonalities and differences among women, the advantages and disadvantages, and their access to spaces and places of İstanbul. It can be argued that women in the first group, who have the capital to start their own businesses or take over a family business, demonstrate a similar socio-economic status to their families and maintain this position. Meanwhile, women in the second group are considered to be diverging from their families' socioeconomic position. Assuming that the upper and upper-middle groups have many opportunities to overcome spatial limitations, this research will reveal spatial emotions in İstanbul. At the same time, the interrelationships between the categories of gender, ethno-religious identity, and marital status in relation to each other and to spaces, contribute to literature of intersectionality. Through this research design, the urban mobility and visibility of single women belonging to Armenian community, tactics and strategies for ensuring safety, and mapping fear and danger will be understood. The socioeconomic positions and demographic information of the women interviewed during the field research will be discussed in detail in the upcoming sections. Then, we will thoroughly examine the field research and analysis processes within the scope of the research method.

3.1.1 An Epistemology Shouting for Change

Harding (1987), who explained the “method” as techniques of data collection, “methodology” as the theory and analysis of the research process, and “epistemology” as an act of *knowing*, what is *knowable* and whether the *known* is valid or not, explained feminism as a political movement for social change. At this point, it would not be wrong to argue what makes a “feminist” is not the method that contains the research techniques, but the methodology and epistemology, which can also be explained as a philosophical stance. Feminist philosophy emerged from the libertarian social movements that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s against the political problems arising in the West (Browning Cole, 1993: 1). Hence feminist philosophy, as seen historically, is *essentially* a critical cry for change. Feminist epistemology, which was flourished in the late 1960s in the West, also includes profeminist articles written in the 18th century. Wollstonecraft's work, written in the late 1790s, challenged philosophy itself associated with possession of reason and thus, possession of moral and political rights (Browning Cole, 1993: 3).

Wollstonecraft (as cited in Browning Cole, 1993: 3-4) argued that women should have equal educational and job opportunities, stating that intellectual differences stem from inequality of opportunity rather than allegedly natural and biological differences. Thus, with Wollstonecraft, feminist epistemology has begun to criticize the dichotomous system of Western philosophical thought, which puts reason against emotions, culture against nature. In this dichotomy, the reason, which is associated with science and objectivity, was masculine, and affectivity associated with the feminine with the connotations of the *uncontrollable*.

From this, it follows unequivocally that all epistemological mainstream theories of “human knowledge” are incomplete and therefore inadequate and biased. By challenging the epistemological theories of human knowledge, feminist epistemology has revealed that with the exclusion of women, knowledge is one-dimensional and incorrect. Feminist epistemology refutes and demolishes the claim that scientific theories are rational, universal and abstract. In this way, it is revealed how scientific theories and practices present sexist metaphors (Narayan, 2020: 38). Additionally, feminist epistemology tries to reintroduce emotions into theory, revealing that emotions are an inevitable part of the act of knowing. Browning Cole (1993: 14-17) has referred of four essential key *rules* of feminist epistemology; (1) all intellectual processes should be based on social and historical realities, (2) take seriously the experience including emotions, feelings and perceptions, (3) pay attention to the orthodox institutionalized philosophical production and the work that comes from it, and finally (4) not forgetting the liberating potential of the produced feminist theories’ political and social implications. Therefore, value has been added to the experiences that were considered *worthless* in the historical process. It can be said that the visibility of the different oppressed groups’ experiences is a necessity for feminist epistemology. On the other hand, one should not pass without mentioning Narayan’s (2020: 39) in point warning; it should not be forgotten that if different cultures and experiences are romanticized, there might be a danger of ignoring the mechanisms of oppression and restriction within these cultures. It has been kept in mind throughout the course of the field research of this thesis.

Narayan (2020), who is not a Western feminist, has criticized feminist epistemology’s focus on positivism that has dominated Western thought. While this

focus in understandable, meaningful and fitted in historical context, it should not blind feminists to other *enemies* of feminism (Narayan, 2020: 42). What is meant here are non-positivist constructs. Rather than the perspectives emphasizing the distinction between values and facts, what is significant is the revealing of the perspectives that are invaded by the values. Positivism, which developed simultaneously with liberalism in Western political theory (Narayan, 2020: 43), is associated with individual and subjective values, and with individual freedom in the context of political and legal protection of the individuals' values in liberalism. But liberalism for colonized societies, and the implementation of individual rights and freedoms, are conceptually blurred. Herein, Narayan (2020: 43) highlights the fact that many of social, cultural and political problems faced by non-Western feminists are the product of non-positivist context. In point of fact that women's daily lives in Turkey have a much more complex historicity that the Western theoretical context have had suggested, has been hesitant until recently, when "women" have moved away from the center of feminist research in time (Erdoğan & Gündoğdu, 2020: 25). However, it does not change the fact that feelings, experiences, values, the personal and everyday lives are used to understand the social world. It should be realized that nor every research that puts *woman* at its center is feminist, however, it should be remembered that the knowledge of women should be centered and a theoretical and practical feminist knowledge should be produced from there. The philosophical foundation of this thesis is formed by feminist epistemology, which emphasizes the necessity of criticizing grand theories and ways of thinking that have a prominent place in the history of philosophy. This thesis challenges the gendered public space of patriarchal capitalist order by exposing it.

3.1.1.1 Looking Through the Feminist Glasses: Feminist Standpoint Theory

Another factor that makes feminist methodology unique is Harding's (1986: 24-29) triple definition model; (1) feminist empiricism, (2) feminist standpoint theories, and (3) postmodern epistemologies. Before moving on to the feminist standpoint theory, if we talk about feminist empiricism and postmodern epistemologies, the difference between these three and, finally, the current debates that go beyond all three will be easier to deal with. Feminist empiricists emerged from feminist critiques of science. Accordingly, it is aimed to develop traditional positivist scientific theories and

practices by providing information of feminist values to empirical research. These values, formed by all observations, findings and facts, play a critical role in empirical inquiry. On the other hand, the concept of empiricism as a “theory of evidence” (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 37) must also include the senses and feelings. According to another element of feminist empiricism, communities, not individuals, acquire and possess knowledge. So, the “knowers” are not individuals but (epistemological) communities (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 37). Here, women’s individuality is forgotten, and their specific experiences are rendered invisible by dissolving them in the community. The flip side of feminist empiricism, postmodernism has deeply influenced feminist epistemology with its focus on identities. Firstly, it criticizes the concept of “woman” and argues that there cannot be a single subject of knowing in this sense. Therewithal, postmodernism has drawn attention to the ways in which researchers possess knowledge and construct it in line with their identities, keeping in mind the sociality of knowledge. Postmodernism has certainly contributed to feminism in terms of the articulation of different perspectives, different becoming and specificities, and the fact that knowledge is not universal. However, it has been criticized by thinkers such as Jane Flax, who has described postmodernism as the death of history, meta-narratives and human beings, and Seyla Benhabib, who has thought that even the possibility of feminism is undermined (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 38). Undoubtedly, postmodernism, while emphasizing the peculiarities of identities, is insufficient in terms of the production of theory and policy making.

On the other hand, epistemologists with a feminist standpoint have argued that marginalized groups that are not included in what is *universally accepted* have the act of knowing (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 37). Along with highlighting the experience of women who can be included in the aforementioned marginalized groups, it has been argued that knowledge is produced by women’s daily lives. These experiences must be understood and analyzed in the broader relations of social structures, and placed in historical context to arrive at group-based experience (Harding, 1986: 26-27). Perspectives that claim to represent epistemic privilege and authority are at the center of standpoint epistemology (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 37). This center is formed in the perspectives of marginalized groups. Accordingly, a standpoint is historically formed and emerging experiences that are shared by a particular group. The distinction between those three definitions introduced by

Harding has been shrunk over time. More recent theoretical discussions have revealed that the lines between those three are no longer so sharp. Postmodern and postcolonial critiques, which have developed and multi-layered over time, have advanced the feminist standpoint epistemology in a pluralistic direction (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 38). On the other side, it has been made clear that the focus on empirical evidence and experience, and the emphasis on communities rather than individuals, has converged empirical epistemology with standpoint epistemology. During this criticism process that continued throughout the 1990s, three separate epistemologies were replaced by focusing on the processes of “knowing, knowers and known” (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 38). The questions like “who can know?”, “what can be known?” and “how can we know what we know?” are among the main questions that occupy the minds of feminist epistemologists of this period. The idea that there can be several different feminist ways of knowing has lost its effect and meaning with the increasing influence of postmodern, post-structural and postcolonial thought. With the feminist theory reaching the center of narratives, conceptual debates such as validity, legitimation, representation and authority have emerged (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 38).

Although there is still no consensus on the contradictions of feminist knowledge or feminist science, or how the epistemological framework should be, these conceptual debates are very significant in terms of deepening both feminist theory and practice. This thesis will focus on narratives that include multiple stances and perspectives, as advocated by the feminist standpoint theory. However, while doing this, the individuality of the narratives will be considered within the historical, social and political context of a particular community (here, the Armenian community), and the fact that the narratives of individuals belong to one or more sociability will be accepted. Thus, it can be argued that no narrative and perspective can be neutral, because no one can exist without being involved in any structure. Ethnicities, genders and concrete historical positions of individuals determine, both individually and socially, their way of perceiving the world, and determined by them. Hence, knowledge is gained not by individuals alone, but by socially constructed members of communities that have formed, changed, and re-formed throughout history.

3.1.2 A Feminist Qualitative Research Attempt

The method differs from the methodology in that it includes data collection techniques. Although Harding (1987) clearly distinguishes between methodology and method, the question has been asked whether these have feminist forms. Questions such as “are there methods that are feminist?” and “what makes feminist approaches to methodology unique” were among them (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 38-39). Contrary to the interview-based but allegedly objective method in the social sciences, the feminist method has emphasized that the relationship between the interviewer and the participant does not always have to include a hierarchy. However, it should be noted that this emphasis risks ignoring any possible hierarchy that may occur. Feminists have later criticized this view, objected to the concepts of reciprocity and equality in the interviews, and stated that there are structural features that are both different and can be shared, and that research should be done with the awareness of this (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 39). Being of the same sex is not enough for the act of “knowing” as it does not eliminate differences such as ethnicity and/or class and age among women. Moreover, sharing the same sexual identity cannot make the lived and current experiences exactly the same. Because gender is not a specific category on its own, but a *reality* experienced in a dialectical relationship with all other identity components.

The inevitability of power differences that may arise in the research has brought some discussions with it. It should be remembered that the illusions of *equality* that can arise by sharing similar experiences may result in the reproduction of the disadvantaged positions of the groups. And it would be pretty agonizing to think that this has been reproduced by a feminist researcher. In this context, sociologists have begun to talk about the dangers of approaching interviewees “friendly” (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 39). Here, feminists such as Ramazanoğlu, Holland, Oakley, Neilsen (as cited in Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 49) have formulated the triple dimension of feminist research as follows:

First, feminist researchers have long advocated that feminist research should be not just on women, but for women and, where possible, with women. Second, feminist researchers have actively engaged with methodological innovation through challenging conventional or mainstream ways of collecting, analyzing, and

presenting data. (...) Third, feminist research is concerned with issues of broader social change and social justice.

Feminist research can be summarized as research that opens traditional scientific research understanding to discussion, produces concepts and approaches that are not included in social sciences before, and brings original perspectives to existing concepts and approaches. At the same time, it has challenged positivist frameworks, objective research methodologies, and the dominance of quantitative methods. Along with feminist research, the experiences of everyday life, which is considered unimportant and insignificant, has been discussed.

After addressing these nurturing discussions, feminist geography will be mentioned in light of the spatiality analysis content of the thesis. According to Tuncer (2020: 118), feminist geography, which developed as a sub-discipline at the intersection of feminism and geography, has an interdisciplinary character and focuses on the reciprocal interactions between gender and space. Feminist geography is the product of women researchers' struggles for feminism and *making space for women* within the discipline of geography, which has a male-dominated and sexist academic tradition (Tuncer, 2020: 118). As discussed above, feminist methodology debates, which have changed, transformed and developed throughout history, have also shaped the research of women geographers and sprouted challenges within the discipline. The political, economic, cultural aspects of geography connect geographers with fields such as sociology, anthropology or political science. On the other hand, what distinguishes geography from other disciplines is that it deals with the spatial organization of phenomena, the processes that spatially organize the world, and their consequences for particular problems and people (as cited in Tuncer, 2007: 119). In other words, it underlines the specificity that emerges when the geographical imagination focuses on space. In Tuncer's (2022: 120) on-target expression, "geography is essentially based on space, but this space is a real, physical space". In this thesis, the map of İstanbul was studied with certain places and locations, and spaces such as routes, paths, shortcuts, side streets, bridges and borders were used to better understand the experiences, which were evaluated through the events that took place in certain contexts of the space. Therefore, it is aimed to make a feminist analysis of individual and social realities that correspond to spaces, places and locations. In the context of feminist geography, two feminist

geographers are significant for this thesis, and their approaches to space has been adopted in the field research. On the one hand, (1) Doreen Massey (1994) emphasizes the reciprocal construction processes of the space. Accordingly, a space is relational, plural and heterogeneous, and has a continuous construction process. On the other hand, (2) Gillian Rose (1993) lays stress on a space's liberating potential. In Rose's theory, geography is shaped around the notions of white, bourgeois and heterosexual masculinity forms. She considers spaces and places as a contingent and variable notion, and has multidimensional nature. Hereunder, based on women's common experiences, spaces have contradictions. Hence, in the field research, the focus will be on women's tactics and coping strategies in order to reveal those contradictions.

3.1.2.1 Why Qualitative Research?

As a researcher with a degree in anthropology, my commitment to qualitative research method is almost self-evident. Qualitative research, which is a method I have used in the research projects I have been a part of after graduation, may be a preferred method for a researcher, but it should be chosen because it is the most appropriate method for answering the research question, rather than an affinity for it. The method of research is the set of methods researcher selects to collect and analyze data. This master's thesis is a study based on a feminist standpoint theory, that aims to reveal the relationship between single Armenian women and the public space. The vulnerable positionality of not belonging to the ethnic majority produces other forms of vulnerability. Understanding the effects of these differences arising from this vulnerability on the use of public spaces, in this study, it means understanding how emotions such as anxiety, fear, security, and belonging manifest themselves spatially in women's daily lives. Therefore, this thesis will reveal (1) how higher education affects these emotions towards spaces, and (2) how gender, marital status, and ethno-religious identity affect the use of public space and related emotions. Since these emotions will be derived from the detailed narratives of women's lived experiences, quantitative research methods are not suitable for answering the research question of this study. Therefore, the qualitative research method, which is the method I have resorted to and which I prefer as a researcher, has been referred, and in-depth interviews have been conducted with single Armenian women. From here, data was

collected through in-dept interviews, and recurring and clustered patterns were identified in the collected data, which were then used to form codes and themes. Thematic analysis was found, thus, to be appropriate for this research as a method of understanding the intersecting and multi-layered experiences of everyday life.

3.1.2.1.1 Semi-structured In-dept Interviews

In this section, I will focus on the questionnaire I used in the field research. Additionally, I will share insights about the interviews. “The experiences in the public space” is an expression that can have very broad and infinite meanings. To avoid getting lost in this infinity while preparing my questions, I first divided everyday life into layers. I thought about the places and spaces they go to in two forms: mandatory and chosen. I tried to imagine the spatial routes and routines of working and/or studying Armenian women in their everyday lives. Accordingly, the main spaces and places that stood out were the neighborhood where they lived, their workplace/school, public transportation including taxis, preferred places for night life, church, spaces and places attended in idle hours such as cafes, bars, park, shopping malls, squares and streets. On the other hand, in order to understand my interviewees comprehensively and holistically, I detailed the socialization questions as much as possible. Thus, while aiming to understand the episodes of their ethno-religious identity, socio-economic positions, and what it means to be a young and unmarried woman within the community, I also aimed to reveal their first contacts with the public space in these socialization processes. Additionally, I added questions about how they interacted with the wider society while being visible in the public space as an Armenian woman in İstanbul. When I brought all these purposes together, I aimed to reveal the visibility and mobility of single Armenian women in İstanbul’s public spaces, as well as their emotions related to this city. I aimed for my questions to contain answers that would share experiences, perceptions, observations, and emotions, rather than yes or no answers. Being aware of the emotions that the subject could trigger, I aimed to create non-judgmental, open and concise questions. Finally, in order not to trigger my interviewees and cause emotional harm, I aimed to avoid triggering questions. In this direction, the questions I created were semi-structured open-ended questions. With the question form consisting of a total of 35 questions, I organized my questions under two main headings as follows:

- 1- Individual and Family Questions
- 2- Questions on Interaction with Public Space in Daily Life

Mostly, a question was followed by a few secondary or tertiary questions that were related to the initial one. I aimed for asking each question separately, not at once. I waited for the interviewees to answer the first question in their own time, thinking that asking too many questions in succession would overwhelm them and narrow down the collected data to a one-dimensional level. I followed the question form. However, each interviewee had unique experiences within themselves. Therefore, although not present in the question form, interviewee-specific questions were also asked during the interviews. The interviews lasted two to three, sometimes three and a half hours. Only in one interview where I met with the interviewee in the evening after her school, we had to hold two sessions.

After applying to the ethics committee, I tried to contact the interviewees I was searching for before I was given permission by the committee and tried to stay in touch with them. This strategy, which I applied feeling that it would create trust, seemed to have laid solid foundations for me to build intimate relationships. Before scheduling the interview, I had already been messaging most of my interviewees for updates on the situation. Another purpose of doing this was to eliminate any possible problems or situations that did not sit well with them before the interview was conducted, or if it did not work, to find another interviewee without putting pressure on the hesitant interviewee by insisting.

In the field researches, there are inevitably unproportional power relations between the one who has the information and the one who demands it, between the respondent and the questioner. Feminist researchers have focused on tensions and conflicts related to knowing and representing narratives, experiences and lives as a result of this act of knowing (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 41). The danger here is that speaking on behalf of others, *knowing* about them and making claims in this direction assigns power to the researcher and makes some things implicit or invisible. In this field research, I tried to develop relationships with my interviewees that were not hierarchical, more balanced, and that they could also feel to have control. For instance, the place where the interview will take place has always been chosen by the interviewees. The aim here was not to make them feel compelled to

open their privacy in a *strange* place with a person they also do not know. I did not want them to be forced to resort to some tactics of self-censorship and/or self-control, such as lowering their voices during sharing. In addition, I answered the private questions from my interviewees in an honest and sincere manner without hesitation. I left voice recording optional, and took notes in five of total fifteen interviews, taking into account those who did not feel comfortable. The interviews generally took place in places that were the *safe spaces* of the community. These are frequented by people from the Armenian community in their daily public lives, where they can easily speak Armenian and, in the words of some interviewees, “feel at home”. Although it can be understood from both their expressions and narratives that meeting there made the interviewee feel comfortable and safe, it could also be observed corporeally.

I conducted a pilot interview to test the questions I created, see if they worked, and add new questions if necessary. After an interview, I added four new questions to the second section. In the first section, which focuses on the socialization processes of the interviewees, “Individual and Family Questions”, I first asked questions about the interviewees’ families. If there was a migration *story*, I tried to listen to, besides the birthplace of the parents. My aim here was to understand whether my interviewees’ families were İstanbul Armenians or Anatolian Armenians, because in either case, there would be different memories and narratives, and thus experiences. Then, I listened to their life stories, their education, professions, how their paths intersected with each other, and their marriages. Additionally, I asked if they had moved when they were in İstanbul or when they came to İstanbul. After these questions, I asked the interviewees when and where they were born, where they spent their childhood and adolescence, how they spent their free time, and their education. Thus, it was aimed to understand whether the interviewees grew up within the community; who formed their environment, whether they went to community schools or mixed schools with the wider society, and whether they participated in community activities. Then, by asking what they did during summers, I tried to learn if there was any socialization on Büyükada or Kınalıada, where non-Muslim communities in İstanbul were concentrated. While talking about their choice of university and department, I asked how their lives changed with the university life with ethnic majority, and also whether they heard any comments from their elders or

parents about marriage or whether they had any observations about the perception of single women in the community. In the final questions of this section, the work life questions, I asked about the age they started working, their experiences in workplaces, and how their paths intersected with their current workplace. Thus, there was a chronological transfer of memory and experience about every aspect of my interviewees' lives related to their families and themselves.

In the second part of the interview, titled "Questions on Interactions with Public Space in Daily Life", I began by asking my interviewees about their first encounters with the wider community in their memories. I wanted to understand that did these encounters take place in public or private spaces, what were the conditions that created the conditions that created these situations, and what kind of spatiality did they have. Next, I asked my interviewees if their parents or elders had any recommendations, advices or warnings about interacting in public space. Through these questions, I aimed to understand the intergenerational behavior in public spaces, as the data I intended to collect would reveal which advice was adopted and which was rejected. Then, I asked those who commuted to work or school about their preferred mode of transportation, route and reasons for their choices. Similarly, I asked the same question again to those who commuted to school. I then moved on to ask about public transportation, asking my interviewees to rank the transportation they used by security level and provide their justifications. Through this question, I aimed to collect comprehensive narratives and experiences about the extent to which public transportation is used in urban mobility, which ones are preferred and what emotions they elicit. Keeping in mind the vital importance of intersectionality for my research, I asked my interviewees if they experienced individual and/or institutional discrimination due to their gender and/or Armenian identity in their work/school lives.

After my initial questions, I had some questions to start a conversation during the free time. I asked about who women hang out with after school/work, what they do on weekends, what time they usually come home on workdays and holidays, how *the home* reacted to that, and questions about night life. Although I had one question about night life, I made a note to focus on who women go with, where and how often they go, and tactics and strategies used to avoid discrimination and violence. After

these questions, I had questions about the tactics and strategies used by women in their individual relationships in İstanbul based on ethno-religious identities. Additionally, I had a question about the general feeling of discomfort on the streets. I thought this issue was crucial in public emotions and did not want to overlook it. Later, I had questions about the church as a physical space. I focused on the emotions inside and outside. After that, I prepared questions about neighborhoods of İstanbul, including risky and unwanted areas, as well as places they want to live. To not overlook the political use of public space, I prepared questions about political tendencies and whether women participated in street protests, followed by questions about emotions in spaces of İstanbul such as parks and shopping centers. As I approached the end of my questions, I thought “walking” was significant in the relationship between women and the city. So, I had questions about women’s walking habits in the streets, what they pay attention to while walking, and how they feel. Finally, I asked questions about “belonging”. I asked about places women call *mine* and about taking ownership of the city. For my final question, I wanted to make sure that my interviewees felt that they were the main ones who “have the say” in this interview, so I assigned an active role, and agency, where they could express their opinions on class differences. I asked them to think about what their lives would be like if they did not have the financial means they currently have.

After each interview, I did not neglect to talk to my interviewees about the interview. How they felt during the interview was very important to me. I embraced all kinds of feedback because I did not want to give anyone a bad experience. Fortunately, the feedbacks I received was highly positive, and I felt that I achieved to connect with each of my interviewees individually. With all the questions I have prepared, the aim is to reveal the relationships between public space in everyday life, the spaces and places that are entered or not, the spaces that are considered safe or risky, the ways in which women spends time alone in the city and the tactics and strategies for ensuring safety in spaces, the practice(s) of being a *flaneuse*, the stories of claiming urban space, and the political use of public space. At the same time, it is aimed to uncover how Armenian identity is experienced in the public space, where it is revealed and visible while also exploring where it is concealed and kept hidden in different situations and places. Therefore, these questions are thought to be sufficient to

comprehensively and thoroughly understand the intersecting experiences in urban space.

3.1.2.2 The Schedule of the Field Research

In this section, while providing information about the timing processes of the field research, some personal experiential sharing about this process will be presented. At the beginning of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic, which had an impact on Turkey, caused me to pause my studies and to struggle focusing on my thesis. The year 2022, which had started out difficult for me, was getting progressively harder, and I found myself racing against time to complete my studies. The losses, like my beautiful grandmother Mücella, I experienced had disconnected me from the world and myself, and the field research helped me regain my footing. I had been living in Ankara until 2022, and I needed to move to İstanbul for my field research. In June 2022, I made the radical decision to close my home in Ankara and move to İstanbul. After all the losses I have been through, I spent the summer preparing for the field research: I quickly prepared my questions, conducted a pilot interview, applied to the ethics committee, and began searching for women to interview. With most of the interviewees, I stayed in touch before obtaining permission to meet, and I arranged appointments with them as soon as permission was granted. I began fieldwork in mid-November, with a limited amount of time, so I tried to schedule four interviews each week. As I had allowed for some flexibility in the dates I set, I was able to complete the fieldwork on time. Later on, I realized the importance of this flexibility because I was interviewing women who were working and/or studying. If we consider that some interviews were confirmed just one day prior, I saw the great advantage of living in İstanbul during the field research. I was lucky because despite facing some difficulties, I was able to arrange all of my interviews. I realized the importance of keeping the field research dates flexible, especially when it comes to finding interviewees and scheduling interviews with working individuals. In my opinion, field research should not be rushed, as it is not only about collecting sufficient data but also about touching people's lives and sharing intense emotions, as well as touched by them. It is a fragile yet empowering and nourishing experience that should not be rushed.

3.1.3 Who Did I Interview? Sampling Design and the Interviewees

In this master's thesis, I started the study by considering two criteria while designing the sample in order to reveal the relationships established with the public space. One of them was visibility and the other was mobility. Since I wanted the women I interviewed to have high visibility and mobility in the public space, I decided to interview working and/or studying women. This was also important to understand their socio-economic positions. I distinguished women who worked for themselves or were top-level managers from women who worked for others as employees. At this point, the interviewees are also divided into those who share similar socio-economic positions with their families and those who differentiate themselves. Since I thought that unmarried women who had not "settled into a stable life" would have more visibility and mobility in the public space, I set the age range as twenty-five to thirty-five. However, considering the possibility of difficulty in finding interviewees, I left some room for a few years of variation within the age range.

I used the snowball sampling method while creating the sample. Before starting the fieldwork, I first started to research my own environment. I reached out to three *key persons*, who will connect me to my interviewees, and branched out from them. These people were very different from each other in terms of socio-economic and age perspectives. Among these key people, one person was from my generation and two were from older generations, and while two of them were Armenian, one was Muslim, but his Armenian circle was wider. I tried to provide class differentiation through these key persons consisting of two self-employed and one employee. In addition to the advantages they provided me, there was also a disadvantage; I could only reach the women within Kurtuluş. Upon reaching another key person, I contacted one of her students and he connected me with two women. After meeting with two or three people reached through these key persons, sometimes before and sometimes after, I asked if it was possible for them to introduce me to other women. The snowball grew as these two or three people, each found me one or two more to interview. I tried to diversify their professions as well as the locations they lived in. I also tried to reach out to some institutions of the community, considering the socio-economic diversity of the interviewees, but did not receive any response.

My first contact with the interviewees was through a phone call after the key person who connected us stepped back. Before calling them, I used to message them to introduce myself and ask for a suitable time to talk. I believed that by making my voice heard and explaining my purpose in detail, as well as listening to them, I could establish a more intimate relationship with them. This mutual exchange of information often started off like a conversation between two friends. When permission was granted, I believed that face-to-face interviews with the interviewees would take our relationship to a more intimate level. Considering the depth of the issues the thesis sought to understand and reveal, in-dept face-to-face interviews were considered the most suitable method for data collection. On the other hand, as the Covid-19 pandemic continued, I always offered online interviews as an option. However, the interviewees preferred to meet in person like me. By leaving the date, time and place of the interview entirely up to my interviewees, we had become accustomed to each other's voices. The day before the interview, I always confirmed the interview and asked the interviewees to come up with a pseudonym for themselves.

I spoke with a total of fifteen women who were highly educated and proficient in several languages, such as Kurdish, English and French, besides Armenian and Turkish. Three of them worked for themselves, two of whom ran their own businesses and one who had taken over the family business. One of them was a senior executive in a private company, and one was a university student who worked part-time. The remaining interviewees were full-time salaried workers in various private sectors. All of them, including the university student, were employed, and although they had stopped receiving financial support from their families, they still lived with them. Among the interviewees were experts in different fields, including teachers, psychologists, sociologists, architects, and engineers. The table below shows the demographic profiles of the interviewees. The link between their profession and age, educational level and the place they live, which is considered important for the thesis, has been kept confidential for fear of exposing their identities. These demographic findings will be explored in-dept in the following sections where the findings will be presented.

Table of Interviewees' Sociodemographic Profile

<i>Pseud.</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Place of Residence</i>	<i>Level of Education (degree)</i>	<i>Employment Status</i>
<i>Margot</i>	30	Kurtuluş	Bachelor	Employee
<i>Bunny</i>	31	Bomonti	Bachelor	Employee
<i>Azad Gin</i>	23	Kurtuluş	University student	Part-time Employee
<i>Antigone</i>	30	Elmadağ	Bachelor	Employee
<i>Yeraz</i>	24	Bomonti	Currently pursuing a master's degree	Employee
<i>Lala</i>	27	Nişantaşı	Currently pursuing a master's degree	Employee
<i>Solin</i>	31	Çekmeköy	Master's degree	Employee
<i>Arev</i>	31	Yeşilköy	Bachelor	Employee
<i>Luna</i>	28	Akatlar	Master's degree	Employee
<i>Luys</i>	28	Samatya	Bachelor	Self-employed
<i>Samsara</i>	28	Ortaköy	Bachelor	Employee
<i>Karianda</i>	31	Bomonti	Bachelor	Self-employed
<i>Tinker Bell</i>	31	Kurtuluş	Bachelor	Top-level manager
<i>Zabel</i>	31	Kurtuluş	Bachelor	Employee
<i>Şuşan</i>	31	Bakırköy	Currently pursuing a master's degree	Self-employed

3.1.3.1 Encountered Difficulties, Facilitations, and Some Self-Reflexive Affectivities

In this section, challenges and facilitations encountered, as well as feminist ethics and related emotions will be shared. The biggest challenge I faced during the course of my research was that the focused group I was studying was limited in population. Given that most women at this age are either engaged or married, it was quite difficult. In fact, among my interviewees, there was a woman who had been engaged at the age of twenty-three but then broke off the engagement. However, the limited size of the group did not diminish my desire to study them. During the three weeks I waited for approval from the ethics committee, my search continued tirelessly, and when the concern to diversify demographic information was added, it became even more challenging. In addition, due to the *nature* of the subject I was working on, experiences and emotions that had been exposed or could be exposed in the public space were being discussed. This caused me to think twice or even three times before asking the question I wanted to ask, regardless of whether the question had been included in the questionnaire or produced during the interview. Given the care I took to maintain the flow of the interview, I had to think as quickly but carefully as possible while listening to the interviewee and asking the question in a suitable manner. Although I believe that this *extra* care and attention was necessary and not something to complain about, I can classify it as a difficulty. In fact, two women I reached out to, said they wanted to think about the sensitivity of the issue and asked for time before declining to participate in the study a few days later. In such situations, I was careful not to force the person in any way and respected their decisions. Another challenge I faced was having to adjust to the working schedules of the women I interviewed. Because I was racing against time, some interviewees understandably postponed our meetings due to work pressures. In such cases, I tried to fill the gaps by making interviews with other interviewees. The lack of comeback from some of the institutions of Armenian community I reached out to for socioeconomic diversity was a challenge and also a limitation I encountered. Finally, the time constraint was a major challenge in itself that I had to deal with.

One of the conveniences I encountered while conducting my research was the central location of Beyoğlu Taksim, the area where I live. In addition to the abundance of

transportation options due to its central location, it was also quite close to the neighborhoods where the community clustered. I went to many interviews by walking, getting on the metro, or taking the bus or the ferry as a single means of transportation. Being from the same generation as the interviewees was another advantage. Despite ethnic and socioeconomic differences, we did not have any communication problems, on the contrary, I could establish close relationships with almost all of them. In addition, our similar education levels enabled us to build a hierarchy-free relationship mutually. I never encountered statements such as “you are educated, you know better”. On the contrary, I observed that my sincere answers to all kinds of questions directed at me, along with my education level, established closeness between us. Being close neighbors, having similar education levels, and being in a similar socioeconomic position with my interviewees provided important advantages. Lastly, I can say that my affinity to the field of ethno-religious minorities that I have studied before, provided me with some conveniences. At the beginning of the research, when I have had my assumptions, I saw the great convenience of *being familiar* with the subject. And when I have been conducting interviews, I was *being able to see* the meanings of the religious and cultural practices of the ethno-religious minority women I interview. Additionally, I had acquaintances within non-Muslim communities who were happy to assist me in reaching the interviewees.

Although feminist field ethics focuses on the principle of protecting participants, it does not fill the content of this protection unlike traditional ethical guidelines (Kirsch, 1999). Instead, it envisages the formation of decisions in the field according to the value of the relationship, not according to the principle as a requirement of the ethics of protection (Erdoğan, 2020: 292). The claim that it is not possible to decide whether partial realities are *good* or *bad* by adhering to universal principles actually constitutes the basis of feminist ethics (Erdoğan, 2020: 293). In order not to harm the participant, the researcher has to constantly think about the well-being of the interviewee. During the research process, the power of interpretation of the researcher and the power relations established with the interviewee require the research to be reflexive. In the context of the processes of knowledge production, “responsible knowing” is significant as well as determinant in order to be reflective and transparent (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007: 41). As the researcher’s self-positioning

processes as a subject within the research, reflexivity reveals how the socio-economic and cultural baggage, such as class, gender, ethnicity or age, of the researcher themselves influences the fieldwork. Although this approach has been criticized, it is important in terms of explaining the researcher's relationship with the act of knowing and knowledge production processes.

Emotions and feelings against the traditional thought, which argues that they are completely and always a hindrance to knowledge, actually help researchers in many subjects. One of them is to make them reflect on their own position, who they are, and their implications for the research. In other words, self-reflexivity reveals that the unequal power relations between the researcher and the interviewees shaping the data collected during the research, and the questioning of the negotiations between both sides of the research. Feminist methodology and epistemology have asked "who knows what and how?". Thus, an answer to this question have been tried to be given also from the *inside*. Research can be affected by the feelings and thoughts of researchers. Therefore, the researcher's questioning of their inner world and holding a mirror to themselves ensures that, at the end of the day, their research processes can be more egalitarian and more ethical. Social science research, which has a multi-layered structure, has a transformative and instructive effect(s) for the researcher (and the interviewees as well) through communication, observation, participation and experience.

At a time when I was feeling alienated from my roots, from myself and my surroundings, this research helped me find *myself* again. As I briefly mentioned earlier, the losses I experienced last year shook me deeply. In addition, the conflicts and alienation I experienced with my parents had created a love-hate relationship that was already very draining. Over the past few years, along with a lifetime of accumulated experiences, I had shut the doors of my memory to a point three years ago. This research inevitably opened those doors, honoring my losses by taking me on a journey into the past. The losses, both metaphorical and real, form the experiences that I am still trying to make sense of today. On the other hand, during my journey into my memory, I remembered the family tree I created while studying for my bachelor's degree. While creating this tree, I had the privilege of talking to my grandmother and grandfather from my mother's side, who were still alive and

healthy at the time, but on my father's side, there was no one except my father. However, listening to my father's family story deepened my relationship both with him and with myself. The information that five generations ago, my family lived in Arapgir, Malatya, had been verbally passed down to him as a child. He had a very old father, lost his mother at a very young age, lived with his unmarried aunt and very old grandmother, and was the only child, so family relationships were not very deep. He had tried to ask his grandmother and father about their roots from time to time, but had either been silenced or the subject had been changed, or he had been told "we shouldn't delve too much into the past." However, he had still managed to learn the story of his ancestor "Mehmed", a timber merchant while being in İstanbul, who had migrated from Arapgir, which was formerly an Armenian settlement, to İstanbul generations ago, and was rumored to have learned lumbering from an Armenian master, but "we are Armenian" was never mentioned. Even if it had been said, would it have made us Armenian? I don't think so. What ultimately makes a religion is how much cultural and religious practices occupy a place in an individual's daily life practices, while of course keeping in mind the approval of the community and the church. Still, this research in general, the people I met during the field research, sharing my family history with them, and making peace with my memory, transformed me and gave me an unforgettable experience.

3.1.4 Data Analyses

Before waiting for the field research to be completed, I started to transcribe the interviews during their course, and thus the process of writing the thesis began. Without using any transcription program, I manually transcribed the interviews. As I transferred what I heard word for word to paper while transcribing the recorded interviews, I remained faithful to the interviewees' unique speech patterns, repetition of words such as "um", "you know" or "like". When referring to family members, I wrote down the Armenian words such as "*kuyrik*" or "*ahparig*" as my interviewees have used, instead of using Turkish. I did not care about grammatical accuracy and did not interfere with any original expressions. In cases where one sentence was interrupted and another was started, I continued to the other sentence by putting three dots. In addition, I did not neglect to convey what I observed, such as laughing, pausing, or thinking, in box brackets. I thought that this would guide me in

understanding the interviewee's emotions at that moment while working on the findings by reading the interview over and over again. On the other hand, when talking about their families and friends, I replaced their shared names with "X". I did not transcribe some sensitive shares which were not related to my subject, that were not off the record. Instead, I wrote a few words of explanation in box brackets and passed on. I transferred my own questioning style and expressions in the same way. Considering that each interview lasted at least one and a half hours and some exceeded three hours, this was quite an exhausting process. While I was physically and mentally tired, my familiarity with the collected data was increasing, reminding me of my emotions during the interview and prompting me to highlight some points. When I put these two sides of this transcription process on a scale, one side was definitely heavier and took my fatigue away because it deepened the relationship I established with the data. I saw the great advantage of not waiting for the field research to be completed to start transcribing. On the other hand, during the field research, I had no time or energy for anything other than conducting interviews, taking notes, and transcribing.

In some interviews where I didn't record the audio, I did not take notes because I did not want to break eye contact, while my interviewee was opening up her heart to me. But to remember what was said, I put in a lot of effort while I was writing down the data afterwards, in comparison to recording interviews. I made sure to approach those interviews with a clearest mind so that I could take good notes afterwards. However, on the other hand, I did not neglect to jot down any striking narratives that my interviewee used. After the interviews, I usually did not have a chance to stay by myself. I did not immediately leave my interviewee's company. We either walked together or spent a little more time together because I noticed that this was due to the bond that we had established between us. That is why I chose not to leave immediately after the interview was over. So, I did not always have the opportunity to immediately jot down my thoughts. When I was alone, I was able to take notes on the first interview that I did not record, but it was very tiring. I just wrote down what I could remember without thinking too much, but my hand could not keep up with my thoughts. In the next interview where I did not record, I tried a different method. As soon as I was alone after the interview, I took out my questionnaire and played back the audio recording to myself, and without thinking about the questions, I

talked non-stop about whatever came to mind about the interviewee's sharing. When I later wrote these down, I found that I was able to convey enough information. So, I used this method in the next three conversations where I did not record the audio.

During the field research, I had developed a habit of keeping two separate notebooks. One notebook contained data that was relayed to me during conversations where I did not record audio, while the other was a personal notebook where I wrote down my observations and feelings. Later, I realized that these notes were actually self-reflective projections of each other. I noticed that writing my observations and emotions as a researcher made me more invested in the research. In addition, during the course of processing my findings, these notebooks guided me as I categorized the data and turned it into findings. Thematic analysis was chosen as the method of analysis for this thesis. This process involved extracting codes from the narratives of the interviewees and then identifying themes from these codes. I began processing my data based on the questions I asked. Since I categorized my questions into clusters, I wrote down the answers under the questions, to each question and any relevant answers embedded in the overall interview that I read repeatedly. This is how I began processing my data by writing down every question and every answer to that question. As I deciphered and processed the raw data, I began to extract codes from the narratives. These codes corresponded to patterns within that narrative. I continued by checking whether this pattern existed in the answers given by each interviewee. After a while, repeating and varying patterns began to emerge clearly. Codes related to the topic of my thesis, such as "hiding in public spaces", "security", "visibility", "femicide", "being alone on the street", and "encounters with men", began to emerge. Eventually, themes began to form under these codes, such as "advice from elders" and "clothing strategies in public spaces".

3.2 Methodological Limitations

The narrowness of the sample I created for this research posed certain difficulties. Initially, I thought that I would be able to reach women who could more openly represent class differences. However, it was quite difficult to find self-employed women who are still quite few in number within the community, despite increasing compared to the past. As I observed in the field and heard from some interviewees, family businesses are mainly transferred to male children within the community,

while female children are directed towards more gendered professions, which will be discussed in detail in the sections where the findings will be presented later. This put me in a difficult position. Although I reached many working women from the middle classes, if we consider that class differences are classified on a scale, I had difficulty reaching women from the two extremes. In addition, as I observed and heard in the field, families were doing their best to ensure that their daughters graduated from university. Therefore, class differences could have been more explicitly highlighted in this study. However, keeping in mind that this thesis is a master's thesis and emphasizing the time constraint, I will move on to the next limitation.

The women I spoke to were highly educated women. As mentioned above, the high tendency to maintain a high level of education within the community was a limitation for me. Considering that variations in education levels would have an impact on the socio-economic positions of women, different methods could be considered to reach more diverse individuals. Finally, the fact that the research field I focused on, the experiences of single women in a non-Muslim minority community in the relationships established in the public space, had never been studied before, within the limited literature on non-Muslim minorities in Turkey, represented a gap in the literature. Without sufficient guidance from previous studies, I was unable to anticipate potential limitations adequately, and the limitation of the literature became a methodological limitation for me.

CHAPTER 4

WHO ARE THESE SINGLE ARMENIAN WOMEN?

To thoroughly understand the single Armenian women I have interviewed, it is crucial to take a journey through their memories in order to make sense of their current experiences and emotions. In this section, first and foremost, their public encounters with the wider society will be examined within the different layers of their memories. Then, their experiences as single women within the community will be discussed.

It was important to start with the parents to understand the homes in which my interviewees were born. Here, determining whether the roots went to İstanbul or Anatolia was important, as it would give rise to different memories, emotions, and experiences. Of my fifteen interviewees, six had parents born in Sason, Batman. The remaining six had parents born in various Anatolian cities such as Kayseri, Malatya, Adiyaman, Erzurum, Diyarbakir and Mardin. Three interviewees' families were from İstanbul, but one of them had been living in İstanbul for generations, while the other were born in Sivas, Bursa and Yozgat. Some of them came to İstanbul to work and to have a *better* life. My interviewees were knowledgeable about their parents' memories. Since migration stories were often discussed at home, they knew about the various traumas their families had been subjected to before migrating. They had come to İstanbul to be closer to Armenian community and to live a safer life. Some had changed their identities to survive and had changed them again upon arriving in İstanbul as Christian. Some of the parents were Kurdish Armenians, or half-Syriac heritage, and some had mothers who had been Islamized Armenians. A few of my interviewees spoke both Kurdish and Turkish at home, while some spoke Arabic on

their mother's side because of their mother's Syriac heritage. Three of my interviewees had learned Armenian at school.

Parents who were Anatolian Armenians and did not have any property in their hometown mainly stayed in the foundation houses of the church when they came to İstanbul. Some had to stay in the church because economically they could not stay at those houses. In addition to the parents who stayed together with other families in the foundation house in Tarlabaşı, some stayed collectively with their extended families in Sarıyer, Samatya or Kumkapı. The first neighborhoods they settled in were Tarlabaşı, Sarıyer, Taksim, Bakırköy, Samatya, Çağlayan and Kumkapı. After accumulating enough capital, some of the parents moved to Kurtuluş, Harbiye and Ortaköy. Before this moving process, the overwhelming majority of parents worked as tradespeople. In addition to the parents who opened fur, leather and textile shops as family business, there were also those who worked in jewelry and restaurant businesses. Some of my interviewees' fathers still work as laborers in other Armenians' leather workshops. Their mothers worked as laborers in a factory until childbirth and continued to produce at home after giving birth. After getting married, the parents settled in Kurtuluş, Harbiye, Ortaköy, Yeşilköy, Bakırköy and Samatya by purchasing houses with their accumulated capital. The vast majority of the parents met in the community. Some got married through traditional matchmaking, while others through common friendship groups in community spaces like the island. After getting married, some continued their trades with the family, while others started their own business. Among those are contractors, advertisers, electricians and former journalists. Almost all men still work, even if they have retired. Some of these parents have established companies instead of a shop. These companies have increased their capital and enable them to purchase houses in Nişantaşı, Akatlar, Bomonti and Yeşilköy. eleven of the interviewees' mothers continued to work after getting married. Besides the four mothers who still work, only five did not work after getting married.

4.1 Diverse Encounters in Daily Life

In this section, firstly, the socialization processes that the interviewees went through will be examined layer by layer. In order to understand their current experiences and emotions in the public spaces, past experiences are like a guide. Thus, by revealing

the social and collective as well as individual aspects of their agency and actions, the framework of the social context in which they constructed their individuality will be uncovered. Then, the data collected on being a single woman within the Armenian community will be presented.

4.1.1 Childhood

The themes of *not opening up to the outside* and *staying inside* emerged as a prominent tendency among the majority of my interviewees' families, with regarding their education. I found that eleven out of fifteen interviewees had attended Armenian schools until the end of high school. Different options for primary and middle school were not discussed at home, and they were directly sent to Armenian schools.

These things are not talked about much among us, Armenian families send their children to Armenian schools. Now more people are sending their children to private schools and such, but back in our time, it wasn't like a choice. We had our school, and people went to our school. It wasn't talked about or anything. The subject was already pretty clear cut. (Zabel, 31, university)³

During the interviews, I noticed that some parents had some personal connections with these schools. Some had been graduated for generations, while others, including all their siblings and cousins, had graduated from there. Thus, these parents wanted to continue this family tradition. The interviewees shared that the choice of high school was discussed at home, while they reached the age. Many families, including the option of mixed schools where they would study with the wider society, chose to enroll their daughters in Armenian high schools because they did not want to separate from their friends. All of my interviewees had studied at Armenian schools in their neighborhood until high school, mostly within walking distance. The interviewees who were dropped off by their mothers or fathers in the first and second year of the school, started going to school together after making friends. Since their homes were already close, they would pick each other up at the door and go to school together in the morning. They also returned together after school. I saw that

³ Bizde çok konuşulmuyor bunlar, Ermeni aileler Ermeni okullarına gönderiyorlar çocuklarını. Şimdi kolejlere vesaire gönderenler çoğaldı ama bizim zamanımızda bu tercih gibi bir şey değildi. Bu okulumuz var, bizim okulumuza gidilecekti. Konuşulmazdı. Zaten belliydi gibi bir şeydi. (Zabel, 31, üniversite)

the first relationships established with the public space started this way. Since they moved in groups, their parents were also more at ease. As long as they were in a crowd on the street, even if their crosses were visible, they were not bothered too much.

4.1.2 Youth Years and High Education

Two of the interviewees who switched to mixed schools in high school decided on “foreign nationality” colleges. I saw that their families were close to the community but not very involved. They, who could afford these schools, thought that their daughters would be safe in them, which had a more diverse ethno-religious environment and where the children of upper-income groups were also enrolled. One of my interviewees who shared this with me, said that she did not experience any discrimination because she was surrounded by more educated people’s children. Another one emphasized that this experience made her more extroverted and that she had grown up in a “capsule” until then, but opened up with mixed high school. And lastly, one of the two interviewees who always attended mixed schools and lived outside of İstanbul most of her life, shared that she did not know her ethno-religious identity until the university because her family had kept it hidden. The other had parents who had a mixed marriage and kept their distance from the community. According to this interviewee, being around the community too much makes people more conservative, which she observed in her own circle. She said that this situation “separates” people from their wider environment.

My mother is a bit anti on that subject. She thinks that staying within the community makes people very conservative, and I agree with her. My father wanted it [for me] at the time, and my mother said no. I wanted to learn Armenian and become more familiar with it. However, I agree with the idea that most people who grow up in community schools are very closed off. Even though I have friends who have gone to those schools and become very open, I think it generally disconnects most of them from the world and from Turkey, so to speak. (Lala, 27, graduate student)⁴

⁴ Benim annem o konuda biraz antici. Cemaat içinde kalmanın insanları çok conservative hale getirdiğini düşünüyor ki ben buna katılıyorum. Babam o zaman istemiş annem hayır istemem demiş. Benim biraz şey isterdim mesela, Ermenice öğreneyim, biraz daha aşına olayım falan. Ama şey konusunda hak veriyorum bence hani o, ki hani yine de cemaat okullarına gidip çok açılan arkadaşlarım var ama geneli çok kapalı bir cephede büyüyorlar. Ve o da bence biraz dünyadan, Türkiye’den ve dünyadan koparıyor bence öyle söyleyeyim. (Lala, 27, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

As will be discussed in the upcoming section titled “Being a Minority”, the first encounters and awareness, which usually occur in the preschool period, have maintained their continuity in varying frequencies and given way to habituation. My interviewees have encountered many absurd questions, especially when going to at private courses (“dershane”), such as “isn’t it difficult for you to come here from Armenia every day?”, “are there no dershane in Armenia?”, “why is your name like that?”, “what do you eat?”, and even “how do you hide your tail?”. While a large majority of my interviewees responded to these questions with ridicule and mockery, some of them remember getting into arguments with those who asked questions. For example, one of my interviewees shared with her friend group at dershane that he was expelled from the maritime high school exam because he was Armenian. In response, someone from the group made the statement, “you are not even person from this nation, why would he be accepted?”, and my interviewee expressed her disapproval rigidly. Another shared that her history teacher at dershane asked her, “when did you migrate from Armenia?” and she could not bear it, so she replied, “do you even know about the Treaty of Lausanne, Mr.?”. Additionally, during history classes, some of my interviewees were exposed to racist and fascist discourses from their history teachers when discussing 1915. In such situations, some of my interviewees shared that they became withdrawal. This experience can be explained by being reminded the disadvantaged position in front of the state and society, by being exposed to such exclusionary practices in environments where the ethnic majority is present, and therefore “being a minority” (Morris, 2003). The transmitted memory, discourse, and experiences lead to the formation of a minority reflex, which, in this case, can be said to result in withdrawing into oneself for protection (Kaymak, 2017).

Fourteen interviewees who attended a private university stated that they had a relatively safe environment. However, one interviewee’s friend who attended a state university was envious because her Armenian identity was constantly brought up. Some interviewees emphasized that they could still adapt if they had attended a state university, while others believed they would have different experiences.

My friends who go to Istanbul University and others envy the situation I am in. Because it’s like I’m still in high school. Yes, my teachers aren’t Armenian, but that doesn’t change anything

because their perspective is similar. I said before that the fact that the class is under the teacher's control reassures me because the teachers have such a similar perspective. If I were in a state university now, I would be speaking very differently. But in that sense, I'm more comfortable. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)⁵

In addition, four interviewees mentioned the lack of guidance when choosing their university and major. While some were content with their choices, others mentioned they would have explored other fields if they had known better. Six interviewees admitted to choosing their major without much consideration, while five intentionally chose it. In addition, three interviewees, who were teachers, recalled that they had always been directed by their parents to be a teacher since childhood, and had pursued this path *naturally*. Only one interviewee expressed dissatisfaction with this approach, stating that it was sexist and that she would apply to a different major for her graduate studies. The feeling and experience described here is in line with the finding of Karakaşlı et al. (2009: 379-380) in their research. The direction of women towards “female-specific” professions, as expressed by my interviewee, is the reproduction of patriarchal norms in the gender-based division of labor within the community.

When I look at the changes that come with university, one of the prominent themes is the changes in social environment. Some interviewees, who made their first Muslim friends, shared that although they are no longer in touch, they had formed good friendships during their time in university, while others stated that they shed their shyness as they had never socialized in a mixed environment before. An interviewee who stayed in a dormitory shared that, by coming together with different people, she got to know herself and the *other* well. They also shared that in the university, where lots of people came from very different family backgrounds, they realized how careful their own upbringing was. These interviewees, who always paid attention to what they said and how they behaved, stated that for the first time, they encountered people who could make all kinds of jokes and speak obscenely. On the other hand, two interviewees who had attended Armenian schools emphasized that their friends

⁵ İstanbul Üniversitesinde okuyan arkadaşlarım falan çok özeniyorlar benim içinde bulunduğum şu duruma. Yani çünkü ben sanki liseimin devamında gibiyim. Evet öğretmenlerim Ermeni değil ama bu bir şey değiştirmiyor çünkü bakış açıları böyle. Geçen de demiştim, sınıf hocanın kontrolünde olduğu için hocaların fikrinin böyle olması beni rahatlatıyor. Bir devlet üniversitesinde olsaydım şu an çok daha farklı konuşuyordum. Ama o anlamda daha rahatım. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

from university were their “core group”. They said that in this group of friends, with whom they still communicate but rarely meet after starting their professional life, there were not only Muslim ones but also Alevi and Kurdish friends. In addition, one interviewee shared that this group also fed her politically. Like this interviewee, who never felt like “the other” with her feminist friends, there were other interviewees who shared similar experiences. One interviewee who studied at a university in Eskişehir shared that she made friends with a mixed group of Kurdish, Alevi and Muslim leftists and joined street protests with them for the first time. Some interviewees, who are no longer in touch with the friends they made, have preferred to stay within their family and friends from the community. On the other hand, those who maintained communication now had two different groups. Three of these interviewees connected these two groups, while one interviewee did not connect them as there was no special effort made and the groups did not coincide. Interviewees who formed close friendships during university, started to gather and stay at each other’s homes. While a group tended to be outgoing and embrace outsiders, a small group tended to stay within their community and not socialize much at university.

Another change that occurred with university was that many of the hobbies pursued during high school were mostly abandoned. Some of the interviewees continued in areas such as art and music, but most of them only had time for sports. Additionally, the interviewees shared that there were changes in the time spent on the streets during university. The universities were mostly in different locations from where they grew up and were familiar with, which observed to be changed their relationship with İstanbul. The interviewees also mentioned that they had the chance to observe life in these new areas and learn new roads and distant regions of İstanbul. The use of public transportation had become more frequent and varied for some. After classes, the interviewees started to spend time with their friends around the school, but now they did not have the constraint of being home early. However, many of the interviewees spent more time on the streets at night. While some, who started going to clubs during high school had no time restrictions, the intensity of the classes resulted in less of a night life for other interviewees.

In university, students who learned the interviewee's name, always without delay, asked the question, "where are you from?". Especially during preparatory classes, my interviewees who encountered students from mixed departments and whose families were from Batman, Diyarbakir or Batman, shared that people just would not believe that they were Anatolian Armenians. They often encountered questions like, "how can you be from the East?". They also faced a lot of questions about their names, which were not asked in a discriminatory and condescending manner like in dershanes, who felt like they were constantly explaining themselves. Questions about the Armenia-Azerbaijan or 1915 issues were also something that exhausted them. Together with these questions, the visibility forms of my interviewees in the space can be explained by Pospech's (2020: 3) concept of "moral visibility". Accordingly, the reinforcement of the otherness of my interviewees, who are perceived as "a threat" (Göl, 2005: 137) against the official ideology, is at stake. Some of my interviewees shared that they did not remain silent when faced with questions like, "what do you think about the genocide?" and gave strong responses to those who tried to corner them. When they told their families about these experiences, they would often receive comments like, "well done, but still, be careful". The vast majority of my interviewees advocated for not withholding one's words and giving the necessary response as required. Another case that caught my attention in my interviewees' stories was the influence of teachers. As one of my interviewees emphasized, if the teacher could silence and respond to racist and divisive discourse in the classroom, they felt very comfortable there. As Azad Gin put it, "you get strength from that teacher because they are the ones who run the place"⁶. However, the opposite was also encountered; my interviewees' withdrawal was related to the power dynamics in the classroom (Morris, 2003).

4.1.3 Work Life

Along with their work life, the daily lives of the women I interviewed have become more structured, and limitations have been imposed on the activities they were able to do in their previous lives. The interviewees, who no longer receive support from their families in their working lives, have had their options for places to go and

⁶ "O hocadan kuvvet aliyorsun çünkü orada orayı yöneten o." (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

activities to do become more limited. Additionally, new limitations have been added to the number of days and nights they can go out and the duration of these outings due to their work commitments. There has been a decrease in the continuation of hobbies and in their night life. I saw that the women I interviewed were started working in early ages. Among the ones who grew up in İstanbul, between nine and thirteen years old, most of them were taken to their fathers' shops and workplaces during their school years and helped them by standing at the cash register and observe. For example, one of the interviewees who recently took the family business over, said that her father initially implied and later explicitly told her that, "one day, this will be yours". She shared that she always looked at the business this way and her desire to learn it grew. Additionally, many of my interviewees worked part-time during summers thanks to network from the community. Half of my interviewees stated that they worked in this way during their adolescence. The other half started working through internships in the university. Today, almost all of them work. The one who does not work today, had worked in her mother's company during summers before university, then work multiple jobs at the same time while studying. When we had our interview, she had taken a short break to determine her future direction. Four of my interviewees work for themselves, one works as a high-level executive, one studies at university while working part-time, and the remaining eight work as teachers, engineers, or white-collar workers. Regardless of their class, I observed that working had a shared symbolic meaning for all my interviewees. Based on their shared experiences and narratives, I saw that, becoming financially independent after starting their careers and no longer receiving financial support from their families, made them feel respected in the eyes of the families. Although their parents did not question them about how they spent their time on the streets, they continued to keep in touch with their daughters about where and with who she was. However, they did not intervene excessively. Some of my interviewees said that their parents are no longer treated them like children. Some also contribute to household finances. Even those who are financially well situated, continue to work, such as one interviewee who said that although she did not actually need to work, she shared her pride in being able to cover her own expenses including the night life. One interviewee who took over her family's business shared that she made her father retired and supports her household.

Living with their parents, all of my interviewees emphasized that advantages of not having to pay rent or bills. More than half of my interviewees found their current jobs through community networks, while others were accepted through online career platforms where they made their applications. I observed that out of nine interviewees who had a dream of moving out of their parents' house, six did not have such a request or need. These interviewees emphasized the comfort of living in their family home. Some of them wanted to stay close enough to their parents to not want to move too far away. On the other hand, women who wanted to move out but were facing obstacles from their families shared that their families were not supportive of this decision. However, they added that if they could afford all their expenses, including rent, their families would not get a say in this. All my interviewees, who were very critical of Turkey's economy and real estate market, many emphasized that they could not survive with their current income in İstanbul without the support of their families. Therefore, the primary reason for women who wanted to move out but could not do so, was economic. In addition, interviewees who currently lived in central districts of the city emphasized that they did not want to lose the advantages of living in the center and being close to their community. On the other hand, interviewees who had summer houses in Büyükada or Kınalıada, stated that they already lived alone in the city when their parents went to these houses. In winter, they could also go whenever they needed space and stay there alone. Considering all these factors, although it is very desirable for some, moving out does not seem advantageous for now.

Anxiety due to the ethno-religious identity was shared by an interviewee who expressed her feelings while applying for a job. She shared that she was worried that people in positions such as general managers might not hire her because of her Armenian identity. Another interviewee shared her experiences of being rejected from job interviews because her CV stated that she worked at an Armenian school, even for jobs that were completely unrelated to her profession and workplace. Different employers, regardless of her application's context, have asked about her Armenian identity, verified whether she worked there or not, and then thanked her by escorting her out of the room. Regarding workplace experiences, just like in the university, same questions about names and where they are from, were frequently asked, in addition to questions such as "what do you think about the genocide?".

Interviewees who said that they did not encounter such questions from their managers stated that they were mostly asked by their colleagues. As they answered as necessary, did not remain silent and put those who were rude in their place, interviewees shared that they “got used to it” and they also got used to their colleagues. After this process of getting used to each other, they were subjected to reactions such as, “we thought Armenians were bad, but you are very nice” ...

Every nation has good and bad people, so do we. But when you say these people are bad through religion, there is an automatic assumption that if they are Armenian, then they are definitely bad people. But when you talk and chat, you show them that it's not true, then they say, 'Oh, you're not that kind of person.' That's how I familiarized myself with them. (Margot, 30, university)⁷

The interviewees, who were exposed to discrimination in layers like this, shared that they were often asked about their opinions on the Armenian Genocide, in addition to questions about their name and where they were from, during their workplace experiences. Some of my interviewees were subjected to *jokes* related to their Armenian identity, but they thought that this was not done from a discriminatory and exclusionary place. An example was shared where during a conversation about frugality, one colleague said to my interviewee, “don't be too Armenian”. Or *jokes*, like “Temel jokes”, that mentioned Armenians were made. One of my interviewees working the Grand Bazaar shared that she did not feel the need to hide her name or use a nickname because her name resembled Turkish, but her cousins who worked in another shop like her, used Turkish nicknames. She was scared by the way the vast majority of employers dressed in a way that they were Muslim conservatives. She added that if she had such a boss, she would definitely feel the obligation to pay attention to her clothing, behavior and name. Three of the interviewees whose names resembled Turkish said that they encountered people in their work and daily life, who first attributed them to the Muslim Turkish identity. When they repeated their name for them to understand it correctly, my interviewees faced reactions like, “we thought you were Turkish”. The exclusionary discourse, persistent questioning, and workplace anxieties experienced can bring to mind power relations that are inherent

⁷ Her milletin iyisi kötüsü var, bizim de var. Ama, din üzerinden bu insanlar kötü dediğin zaman otomatikman bu Ermeni'ye tamam kötü bir insandır algısı var. Ama bakıyor, a aslında öyle bir insan değilmişsin, bana öyle yargıyla yaklaşıyor ama konuşup muhabbet edince bakıyor a değilmişsin aslında diyor. Böyle böyle alıştırdım kendimi onlara. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

in individuals' relationships in everyday life (Suciyan, 2018). The tendency of one group to behave towards another in such an exclusionary manner, and the reproduction of such exclusionary practices, demonstrates the internalization of the Turkishness ideology by the state (Çağaptay, 2002).

On the other hand, they also mentioned some situations where their Armenian identities put them in an advantageous position in the work life. One of the interviewees, who owned her own business, shared that a customer chose her instead of a Muslim saying, "Armenians are hardworking, do their job well, and I do not trust Muslims". Another shared that when there was a need for some information in the workplace about anything, she was directly asked because people think Armenians were cultured, knowledgeable, and noble. While some interviewees were not bothered by such situations, others were very uncomfortable. They were uncomfortable with things assigned to them. Additionally, one of my interviewees emphasized that she was uncomfortable with statements like, "I really like Armenians", in her daily encounters.

This bothers me, usually the conversation goes like this: 'I have Armenian friends like this and that', and yes, it's great, 'I love Armenians'. Firstly, I don't need to be loved, and no Armenian needs to be loved just because they are Armenian. Secondly, there is no need for such discourse, it is very annoying. So, thirdly, why do you need to say this? Will I love you more if you love Armenians more? Will I talk more about them? Will I be around you more? (Samsara, 28, university)⁸

Many of my interviewees shared that they also receive reactions based on their names from customers they encounter in their work life. In addition to repeating over and over their names, they are asked questions such as, "in what language your name?". A psychologist among my interviewees shared that a client who asked about the language of her name, was not satisfied with her answer and kept questioning, "your name is foreign". The same client requested multiple appointments despite his limit, and constantly called my interviewee outside of working hours. My

⁸ Şu rahatsız ediyor beni, genelde hep şöyle ilerliyor çünkü muhabbet, benim de şöyle Ermeni arkadaşım var böyle Ermeni arkadaşım var, evet eyvallah çok güzel, 'ben Ermenileri çok severim'. Şimdi, bir, benim sevmeye ihtiyacım yok, Ermenilerin herhangi birinin bir şey olmasıyla sevmeye ihtiyacı yok. İki, böyle bir söyleme hiç ihtiyaç yok çok rahatsız edici bir söylem. Yani üç, niye bunu söylemeye ihtiyaç duyuyorsun? Ben seni sen Ermenileri sevince daha mı çok seveceğim? Daha mı çok anlatacağım? Daha mı çok yanında olacağım? (Samsara, 28, üniversite)

interviewee shared that she felt that she had to accept all of this in order not to be reported. Feeling obliged to *accept* the fact that the client's actions were illegal, despite it being unethical, has become a source of stress for my interviewee in her professional life. Another notable observation was that three of my interviewees, some work in science and some in cinema industry, shared their experiences based on their sexual identities rather than their Armenian identities. These interviewees described how their environments were almost entirely made up of men, and how they were able to find their place in such settings by identifying themselves as having strong communication skills, being "like a man", or having "high levels of masculine energy". Two other interviewees who work in the field of education shared that they were marginalized due to their age, with one experiencing mobbing from a manager and the other from her teacher colleagues for being young and not married.

4.1.4 Leisure Time

I have observed that the interviewees who grew up in Armenian schools were surrounded by Armenians until the end of high school. Even if these interviewees made Muslim friends at dersshane, they did not socialize much because they went to dersshanes with their Armenian friends from the school. Two of my interviewees who stayed within community until the end of high school described themselves as quite conservative. However, two other interviewees who attended mixed schools mentioned that they had two different groups of friends. One of them emphasized that they found their first close Muslim friends in high school. Except for one interviewee who grew up outside İstanbul, all of my interviewees participated in community activities in their spare time. Some participated less and some more, such as folk dance, choir, theater, volleyball and music classes at school. Some of them were in church choirs or took music lessons at community's associations. Except for one interviewee who went to a sports club in Kınalıada, some of them also participated in activities outside of the community, such as going to Şişli Sports Club or taking ballet and chess lessons or private piano and guitar lessons. Fourteen of my interviewees attended community parties, which were safe spaces where young ones socialized. One of my interviewees who had always attended mixed schools also established a connection with the community through these parties. Most of my

interviewees who started going out with their friends from the last year of middle school were able to go to the cinema, theater or drink tea in a café.

Plus, my parents knew everyone. They knew who I was with when I left school and never worried about it. Most of them were my childhood friends. We started in kindergarten, and we still talk to two or three people from back then. We've never been apart. That's why they never asked where we went or to do what. In our family, we had this thing where the emphasis was on with whom we were, wherever we went. It's still the same way. (Margot, 30, university)⁹

Although they saw the advantage of their parents knowing each other, they always mentioned that there were time limits. They mostly spent time near their homes. Three of my interviewees who were very restricted by their fathers shared that they had gatherings at home. One of them was not allowed to stay at a friends' house, even if they were from the community, so her friends always came to her house. The other two were allowed to play on the street but not allowed to hang out with friends outside the neighborhood. As they approached the final years of high school, especially when they turned eighteen, most of my interviewees started going out at night. They began going to clubs in Ortaköy with groups of female friends as long as their older brothers were with them. Some of them, who attended high school in Taksim and Karaköy, also mentioned that they drank alcohol in Taksim after school. Thus, relationships with the public space developed during the high school years.

The majority of my interviewees were going to summer houses to spend the summer. Only one of my interviewees who grew up outside of İstanbul, mentioned visiting her relatives in Bakırköy, İstanbul and going to the village to visit her grandparents. The other fourteen talked about their summer houses. Three of them had houses in Kınalıada, and four had houses in Büyükada. The remaining seven had summer houses in Marmara Ereğlisi, Çınarcık, Silivri, Tekirdağ and Altınoluk. Some of those who had summer houses rented for the season and gathered their extended families there. Similarly, in a building complex of five or six houses, the entire extended family lived separately. Some of them went with their nuclear family to the houses they had purchased, without anyone from the community around. But in these cases,

⁹ Bir de herkesi tanıyorlardı babamlar, okul çıkışlarında kimle olduğumu bilirlerdi sorun etmezlerdi. E zaten birçoğu çocukluk arkadaşım. Ana sınıfında başladık diyeyim hala 2-3 kişiyle görüşüyoruz düşün. Hiç ayrılmamışız. O yüzden o zamanlar nereye niye gittin demezlerdi. Bizimkilerde şey vardı, nereye kimle gittiğini söyle. Hala da öyleler. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

they generally felt safe because the houses were usually in a gated community and belonged to people with a certain income level. Some of the interviewees who did not have summer houses in the complexes began their interactions with the wider community. On the other hand, regardless of whether they interacted or not, speaking Armenian was prohibited in these environments. At the time of sharing their experiences during the interviews, my interviewees emphasized repeatedly that they did not find it right to be so closed, although they understood the traumas of the past. According to them, identities were not something to be hidden. Going back to the summer houses, I observed two tendencies in the parents in the context of the locations of the summer houses. The first was that they could not afford to buy or rent a house on the island. The second was that they wanted to keep their distance from the community and/or to get away from the crowds of tourists and have a more *refined* vacation.

We don't really swing with the Islands crew. My dad doesn't like the [Prince's] Islands very much. What would we do? Well, when yaya came to visit us, they would go to the Islands with my mama a lot because we have relatives who still live there, and they would go back and forth doing visits. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)¹⁰

On the other hand, the families of my interviewees who had summer houses on the islands were people who had close relationships with the community. My interviewees, who had a house in Büyükada, explained that there was a very diverse ethno-religious environment there.

The atmosphere on Büyükada and Kınalı was quite different. We had Armenian friends in Büyükada, but it was more mixed, with Greeks, Jews, and Turks. There was everything, you know. It was a completely mixed group, and I liked it more because it had every kind of person, you know. (Luna, 28, master's)¹¹

Three out of four of them shared at length the pleasure of being part of many different groups, including Muslim, Jewish and Armenian. One of them shared that

¹⁰ Biz adacı tayfa değiliz. Babam çok adayı sevmez. Biz ne yapardık? Mamam, daha doğrusu şöyle, mamam yayam geldikleri zaman buraya onlar çok adaya giderlermiş hem akrabalarımız var hala orada hala yaşıyor onlar vesaire, onlar çok adaya gider gelirlermiş. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

¹¹ Büyükada'yla Kınalı ortamları bayağı farklıydı. Büyükada'da Ermeni arkadaşlarımız vardı ama daha karmaydı, Rum'u vardı Ermeni'si vardı Yahudi'si vardı. Zaten ne bileyim her şeyden vardı. Türk de vardı. Tamamen her şeyden vardı komple ve karma bir grubumuz olmuştu, onu daha çok sevmiştim hani böyle her türden insan olması daha bana göreydi yani. (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

her father had rented a house in Büyükkada to offer her a more diverse environment due to the concentration of the Armenian community in Kınalıada. This interviewee also attended a mixed high school. One of four, who had a house in Büyükkada, on the other hand, shared that she could not adapt well to this diverse environment and went to Kınalıada for a day-long to see her cousins and friends.

In this section, it would not be wrong to say that the majority of my interviewees were remained *inside*. As Morris (2003) emphasized, groups in minority status are organized and institutionalized, and children socialize within this structure. Thus, my interviewees have not been able to fully participate in the social structure, mostly socialized within the community for various reasons. The concept of “exclusion” (Morris, 2003), which I will elaborate on later, is also evident here. If a community is formed by sharing the same belief, values, traditions, and customs system in a common environment, as well as sharing the same historical context and memory (Kaymak, 2017), sharing similar behavior patterns and having a common consciousness can also be added to this equation (Oran, 2018: 98-99). As seen in the pre-university socialization processes of my interviewees, families have tried to keep their daughters within the community as much as possible, created opportunities for them to socialize with their peers from the community, and thus tried to protect them from discrimination and exclusion. Additionally, clustering around churches and schools has been preferred. The tendency of Armenians to settle in “minority neighborhoods” historically located in İstanbul is also a behavior observed in parents, and is proportional to their capital (Kaymak, 2017: 131). This is related to staying within the community, being inside, remaining closed for the safety of their children, and therefore being associated with adopting the culture of the community and ensuring its continuity. It would not be wrong to say that the *closed* structure of associations or churches creates fluid spatialities, despite the fact that the boundaries of the public space are not clearly defined (Bora, 2004). It can be said that the activities of inward-looking community parties or the practices of the community members in churches on the days of worship, as well as the areas where the community gathers, such as islands, are semi-public spaces where the community creates *safe spaces* (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013). As Fraser suggests, it can be said that “public spaces” are created where alternative safe spaces are formed, rather than a single public sphere (Acar-Savran, 2019: 157). Finally, Örs & Komşuoğlu’s (209:

332) concept of “imaginary community” can be applied to the spatial construction of being Armenian, in explaining the socialization experiences of my interviewees in “safe spaces”. These spaces where “being an Armenian” is practiced are safe spaces that exclude the outside.

4.2 Life As a Single Armenian Woman

In this section, the unique experiences and emotions of women as unmarried individuals belonging to a minority community will be discussed. Firstly, my interviewees’ first memories about their ethno-religious identities will be shared. Here, the spatiality of the first encounters with the wider community will be revealed. Then, the experiences, thoughts and emotions of these young and unmarried women within the community will be presented. Their individual approaches to marriage will also be highlighted, along with the patriarchal structure of the community.

4.2.3 Being a Minority

The first memories of realization of the ethno-religious identity are actually the earliest moments of positioning oneself against “the other”. These moments manifest themselves in direct or indirect contacts with the wider society in the public space or within the household. Most of my interviewees shared memories from their pre-school years of becoming aware of their ethno-religious identities, some more vividly than others. I saw that these women’s identity awareness began to form with the questions they directed to their mothers after encountering interactions in streets, even in areas with a high Armenian population like Kurtuluş. The interviewees who shared their experiences from their memories has deeply shattered me. At the age of three or four, one interviewee remembered children she played with in the street, leaving her after learning her name, while another remembered children making snowman and telling her she would burn in hell when they learned she went to church, and she ran crying to her mother. Another interviewee did not remember any “bad” encounters but shared that whenever she played outside with *other* children, her mother’s face would appear in the window. Similarly, some of my interviewees who did not have summer houses in Kınalı or Büyükkada, remembered their experiences from summer vacations. One of my interviewees, who shared that her

aunts and cousins usually gathered there, recalled that her mother only wanted her to play with her cousins. Similarly, they remembered that they were not allowed to call their mothers “mama¹²” or speak Armenian in front of other children. One of my interviewees, who said that, in retrospect, she could not be angry with her mother, shared that she did not know how other children would react and how it would affect her because she herself had also experienced similar situations. On the other hand, these interviewees remembered realizing that their names were different from other children through these encounters.

You always notice that because you are raised that way. (...) You are a child, 3-4 years old and you shout out ‘mama’, and your mother says don’t call me ‘mama’. You ask why not. Or your friends’ names are Ayşe, Merve, Ahmet, and when you say your name, it’s X. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)¹³

Some of my interviewees who went to Armenian schools have shared their first encounters in elementary or middle school when they went to dershanes. They have subjected to discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes from their peers who asked for their names. Furthermore, they have particularly been exposed to discrimination from history teachers. Children who asked for their names would not believe that they lived in Turkey, and history teachers made racist remarks about 1915 incidents. One interviewee shared an experience where a student tried to convert her to Islam, while another remembered that even questions asked out of curiosity but not discrimination, were tiresome. After these experiences, many interviewees emphasized that they hated going there. Another example was the experience of an interviewee’s brother that she remembered. When she was in elementary school, her brother had a traffic accident and was not given medical attention for a long time because the doctors saw his Armenian name on his ID at the state hospital. My interviewee heard about this at home from her parents and realized her identity for the first time. I observed that the more violent the first encounters with Muslims in the public sphere were, the more intensely and painfully women experienced feeling “othered”. The ways in which children express and internalize their nationalist

¹² Armenian word meaning mother.

¹³ Ya onu hep fark ediyorsun çünkü öyle yetiştiriliyorsun. (...) daha çocuksun 3-4 yaşındasın ve maman sana diyor, sen mama diye bağıryorsun, maman sana mama diye bağıрма diyor. E ne diye bağırayım diyorsun. Ya da işte arkadaşlarının adı Ayşe, Merve, Ahmet sen adını söylüyorsun X. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

sentiments from a young age can be explained by Çağaptay's (2002: 76) dimensions of Turkishness. Armenians are seen as a threat to the nation because they are excluded on both ethnic and religious dimensions. Encounters in institutions such as state hospitals also serve as evidence of the validity of this ideology.

In addition to these experiences, I have seen that the murder of Hrant Dink had a great impact on my interviewees. Many of them, who were in high school or middle school at the time, said they did not know who Hrant Dink was before his death, but they realized that the murder caused a great deal of sadness and mourning at home. They began to research Hrant Dink, some by asking their families and some by doing their own research. They shared that they discovered who he was, what he said, what he stood for and who was responsible for the murder, and started reading the newspaper *Agos*. These experiences demonstrate how the traumatic dimension of collective memory operates. As Kaymak's (2017) findings on traumatic collective memory suggest, this situation shapes individuals' memories and reproduces their connections with the community. One of my interviewees, who had attended mixed schools rather than Armenian ones since primary school, recalled a dialogue about Armenians among students which made her feel alienated for the first time. Two other interviewees who attended mixed schools in high school remembered being exempted from religious classes made them feel *different* in both good or bad ways. Finally, there were interviewees who had attended Armenian schools until high school, never went to dershanes, and had realized their identity to some extent in the university. As they began to answer the questions directed at them, they shared that they had become more aware of their identity. Some interviewees stated that when they could not answer a question, they went back home and made some researches, and that they started to use the word "minority" frequently for the first time.

In addition to public encounters, three of my interviewees stated that they became aware of their identities at home. One interviewee shared that she had lived with her great *yaya* who had experienced the period of 1915 and learned some things from her. Additionally, she shared that the issues of identity were always discussed at home, nothing was hidden from her, and she was encouraged to keep her identity open. Another interviewee remembered, in Diyarbakir, when her grandfather spoke some words in Armenian while playing with her and her sister. Unable to understand

this language that did not resemble either Turkish or Kurdish, the interviewee said she attributed these “ramblings” to his old age, and shared that she learned this was Armenian in college and spoke with her mother about that. The third interviewee remembered a dialogue with her father from when she was little. When she told her father that she wanted to become a police officer, her father said, “you are a Christian, you can’t”. It was the first time she realized that she was different in the eyes of the state. Perhaps for this reason, she added, since childhood, she went towards more verbal and artistic fields and had never considered a civil servant position for her future profession. As Morris (2003) emphasized in the context of being a minority, the experiences of exclusion and not being able to fully participate in social life are evident here. Through these spatial encounters shared with me, I saw that spatial encounters in the public space were more blurred in the memories of my interviewees compared to those in the private space. Many of them realized this during the interview that their memories were blurry and said, “I must be deleting bad things”. As emphasized by Maksudyan (2005), Göl (2005), and Çağaptay (2002), the encounters of Armenian women with Muslims in the public spaces reproduce their position as “others” in ethnic and religious terms in front of state ideology and wider society. In addition, I observed that these experiences leave deeper scars compared to the first experiences of otherness within the household, as they are often more intense.

I observed three tendencies among my interviewees in their public encounters with the wider society. The vast majority of them were in favor of not hiding their identity. When meeting someone new and not feeling threatened, almost all of them would reveal their name. They believed that their identities, which they considered an important component of who they are, should be known and not concealed. This stance can be explained by the equality and freedom ideas adopted within the changing social structure, as emphasized by Kaymak (2017). One of my interviewees, who used to be hesitant about revealing her name when she was younger, said that she had changed since and now believed that hiding her identity was not the right thing to do; an identity should not be hidden. My interviewees now wanted the person they were meeting to reveal “their true colors” right from the start. My interviewees wanted them to know who they were dealing with and how they thought, so that they could adjust their behavior accordingly. Thus, they demanded

that the other person know them and position themselves accordingly. Many of my interviewees mentioned that they could understand the intention behind the way the other person asked for their name, and the words they chose. A few of my interviewees, who encountered discriminatory individuals, preferred to use Turkish names instead of their own names for writing on Starbucks cups or in similar places. According to them, the common feature of these cafes and relationships with discriminatory people was that they were temporary and did not require continuous interaction. They shared that they preferred to use a Turkish nickname because they were tired of repeating or even spelling their name to those who did not understand it. On the other hand, the vast majority of my interviewees, as they put it, “stubbornly” emphasized their names without getting tired.

You go to Starbucks, buy a coffee, and I insist on saying my name because I want it written down. If you can say Frappuccino, then you should easily be able to write my name. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)¹⁴

All of my interviewees who revealed their identity, also added that they still remained cautious. I noticed that they were all attentive when facing someone where the majority of the wider society was present, such as in a store while shopping, they did not object their mothers called them by a Turkish name. Women also mentioned that they carefully examined the person, including their gaze, choice of words, facial expressions and the body language. All of these emotions and experiences are disguise strategies employed to protect oneself as a minority. As Brink-Danan (2011) points out, it is the erasure of difference in the public sphere against the danger that language may create in the public spaces. As most of my interviewees emphasized, what the person thought and said about the “other” was a warning signal to them. This “other” could be anyone, from women to LGBTI+, immigrants to non-Muslims. They highlighted that they distanced themselves from anyone who produced divisive and discriminatory discourse about marginalized groups. They added that, as women, they paid particular attention to the person’s gaze and body language. If they noticed that a man was staring at them too much, scrutinizing them, or looking at them from behind when they went to the bathroom, they quickly moved away from that man.

¹⁴ Starbucks’a gidiyorsun bir kahve alıyorsun, adımı söylüyorum ısrarla çünkü yazdırtmak istiyorum yani sen Frappuccino diyebiliyorsan benim adımı haydi haydi yazman lazım. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

Those who shared their experiences of flirting with someone noted that the vast majority of Muslim men they met, behaved in a way that implied or even said directly they were requesting sexual relations by saying, “you are a Christian anyway”. These men could be work colleagues, someone they met while out at night, or a friend of a friend. My interviewees, who had been exposed to this approach since they attended middle school, shared some of their very disturbing and unsettling personal experiences. On the other hand, they emphasized that they could protect themselves now because they could tell at a glance what a man’s intentions were.

Regardless of which class they belong to, the spatial encounter experiences of the women I have spoken with were both unique and similar. Although they were subjected to different layers of discrimination in all levels of life, I saw that they did not remain silent. One of my interviewees described the older generations as the “silent generations” (“*sus kuşağı*”). The description made by some of my interviewees can be explained by Brink-Danan’s (2011: 452) concept of minorities being “low-profile”, which will be further discussed later. The majority of parents premonished their children to hide, to avoid discrimination and violence. However, my interviewees insisted on speaking out. They defended who they were fearlessly mostly against everyone, from their teachers and schoolmates to their bosses, coworkers, and people they flirted with. Through their struggles in different spaces of the public space, they have “acclimatized” themselves to the people there, as revealed by the interviewees. These people started to apologize to them or demonstrate changes in their speeches. Likewise, my interviewees who struggled against their history teachers have been able to touch many classmates and teachers. On the other hand, the state’s institutions, which they always felt anxious about, were spaces that made them feel “other” and “marginal”. Women, who were aware of the Sunni Muslim Turkish perception attributed to those spaces, mostly felt uneasy, defensive and helpless when they entered. As mentioned above, their own experiences and/or experiences shared with them, make them feel like they do not belong there. This raises the uncertainty of the need for “sense of place” and “sense of belonging”, concepts that Gholamhosseini et al. (2018: 19) referred to. Experiences of exclusion make the meaning of this need ambiguous. Unlike other spaces, I saw how state’s institutions have fixed and unchangeable boundaries based

on how my interviewees experienced them. While some spaces could change where my interviewees existed and fought, these spaces were solid.

4.2.4 Being a Single Woman from an Ethno-Religious Community

Except for one interviewee who was a university student, all the women I interviewed with, who had been working for years and declared their economic independence from their families, shared memories of being told to get married, whether within the community or by their parents. My university student interviewee, on the other hand, was advised to focus on establishing her own economic stability before getting married. Half of the other interviewees heard comments from their parents that it was time to get married, while the other half heard them from extended family members, married friends, elders or community while gathering in the church, asking “are there no suitors?”. It was mostly mothers who emphasized marriage to their children, while the interviewees felt their fathers were so devoted to them that they did not bring up the topic of it. Additionally, some parents seemed to have the idea that if their older children were not married, it was not yet time for their daughters. Three of my interviewees over thirty, shared that they started hearing these comments once they passed the age of twenty-six. However, all my interviewees were raised and heard expressions that emphasized their independence and not being reliant on a man, even if they were encouraged to get married. This experience aligns with the norm of women within the community ensuring the continuity of culture through marriage, as Ekmekçioğlu (2016: 34-35) emphasizes. Although today, women’s attendance at university, work, and gaining economic independence is supported, the role of *protectors of tradition* remains unchanged in the eyes of older generations (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 35).

All the messages about marriage were oriented towards endogamy. This can be explained by the continuity of culture and the survival of the community (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016). The transfer of memory through centuries of oppression and exploitation can legitimize the discourse and practice of endogamy. These families were strongly opposed to their daughters marrying outside their culture, based on the trauma of previous generations’ experiences of mixed marriages and its lasting effects on their memories. Many from the older generation had been rejected by their families, took a long time to be accepted, and some were still not accepted by some

members of the families. Additionally, some parents were strongly influenced by examples they saw within the community. For instance, three of my interviewees shared that their parents had attended a mixed marriage, and told their daughters that it was like a funeral rather than a celebration.

Well, inevitably, I mean, what they actually tell us is that they grew up in very difficult conditions and survived, and the message passed on to us is for us to continue the survival of [our ways]. There aren't many of us left, and they think it's the right thing for us to be marrying people like ourselves, but they pass it off as a subtle message and like, you know, of course, if I were to say something like, 'There's this person and they are so and so, but also they are Muslim', then, of course, it would inevitably be a little, you know, we have those kinds of moments. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)¹⁵

On the other hand, I observed that if one of their children did marry interculturally, the families of my interviewees who had this experience were still hesitant but more likely to accept it. Among families where parents were divorced or had mixed marriages, there was a tendency to accept a son-in-law from different cultures as long as he was not Muslim. Finally, I observed that gossip had an impact on their stance against mixed relationships. Within the community, the fear of “spread of the word” created a motivation for parents who had close relationships within the community to prevent and oppose mixed relationships. The function of gossip in maintaining the continuity of culture by keeping individuals *under control* in various ways has also been demonstrated in Kaymak's (2017) comprehensive research.

I observed that the tendency of parents to prevent or approve of pre-marital mixed relationships was reflected in some of the warnings and/or advices my interviewees received during childhood. Almost all of my interviewees adopted them. The motivation to maintenance of the cultural and religious practices was evident in the interviews. This situation can be explained, as emphasized in the studies conducted by Kaymak (2017), Örs & Komşuoğlu (2009), and Karakaşlı et al. (2009), by the inevitability of internalization of transmitted memory. Even if their own families

¹⁵ Şöyle ki ister istemez hani nasıl anlatayım, aslında onların bize anlattığı şey, hani biz çok zor şartlarda büyümüşüz hayatta kalmışız ve survive olmuşuz, hani söyledikleri bir şey değil ama verilen mesaj bu, sizin nesil bunları devam ettirin. Zaten kaç kişi kalmışız kendimiz gibi insanlarla evlenmenizi doğru buluyoruz ama bunu hem mesaj olarak veriyorlar şey olarak da hani tabi ki desem ki şu şu var, Müslüman birisi, o zaman tabi ki ister istemez bir şey olur, öyle bir sürecimiz de var. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

approved mixed relationships and marriages, some interviewees believed the other part's family would not approve a Christian bride. Also, they had a very strong desire to continue rituals such as passing on the language to their children, baptizing them, or continuing *the table culture* and traditions such as painting eggs in easter.

You both have different religions, you may understand each other but the families will clash at some point. Some will say, maybe the child should be baptized, while the others will not want it. It is reasonable to not want it. If one party is entitled to wanting it, then the other party also naturally has the right to not want it. (Margot, 30, university)¹⁶

Because after I had a Muslim boyfriend and other friends like that, I realized that I really love my own core culture. I mean, I want to get married in that church, dye those eggs, decorate that Christmas tree, go to that society, that party ... I love this very much. All by myself. Of course, my father's influence is also very important, but I realized this in myself. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)¹⁷

Additionally, some interviewees said that there were limited options within the community. They pointed out that knowing everyone's childhood in the community was both an advantage and a disadvantage, as they could not have romantic relationships with these "friends". In addition, one of my interviewees mentioned that she has seen Armenian men in their social circle who were in relationships with Muslim women:

But there are no men. No men, all the men are almost always with Muslim girls as far as I can see. Yes, I had an Armenian boyfriend, but for example, the reason why it didn't continue was not me. It was the other side. What can we do though? It's hard to find a match. It's like a limitation within a limitation. You are already in a society, you need to first separate from that while also trying to find the right fits. You have to pick fitting options from a very

¹⁶ İkinizin de dini farklı, sen anlaşırsın ama aileler bir yerde kapışır. Kimi diyecek benim çocuğum vaftiz olsun belki öbürü istemeyecek. Haklı olarak istemeyecek. Makul bir sebep. Sen diyebilirsin ben istiyorsam senin de istememe gibi doğal bir hakkın var. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

¹⁷ Çünkü şunu fark ettim, Müslüman bir erkek arkadaşım olduğunda daha bu tarz arkadaşlarım olduğunda, ben kendi çekirdek kültürümü çok seviyorumu fark ettim. Ben o kilisede evlenmeyi, o yumurtayı boyamayı, o yılbaşı ağacını süslemeyi ki o tabi ki çok tartışılan bir şey ama şey için diyorum o kiliseye gitmeyi o dernekte o partiyi... ben bunu çok seviyorum. Kendi kendime. Babamın etkisi de çok büyük tabi ki ama bunun değişmesinde kendimi fark ettim. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

limited pool and it's difficult to pick and choose. (Luys, 28, university)¹⁸

Furthermore, four of my interviewees complained about young unmarried men in the community. They observed that these men could not stand on their own feet, were overly attached to their mothers, and were raised to be spoiled, as well as finding them quite masculine. One of these four interviewees, who, like all my interviewees, sought an egalitarian relationship with their spouse in all levels of division of labor, emphasized that the Armenian men she knew could not even wash a piece of laundry. As emphasized in the studies of Ekmekçioğlu (2016), Karakaşlı et al. (2009), and Örs & Komşuoğlu (2009), in traditional gender roles within the family, women are responsible for transmitting culture from home to children while men are associated with the public sphere. However, the young women I spoke to are in favor of equality within the home, in line with changing times, as also found in the study by Kaymak (2017).

I still think they all remain very conservative. All the Armenian boys I come across are either very... You know those macho types who always go about asking, what are you doing what did you do, who are you with, where are you, what are you wearing... You know like, woah there hold up a minute. I've always met such people. Maybe if I were to come across somebody different, why not? (Lala, 27, graduate student)¹⁹

Except for the three interviewees, every woman I spoke with, had been in relationships with men from other cultures, including Muslim ones. Interviewees who had never a romantic relationship with a Muslim, emphasized that they had developed self-control in this regard. On the other hand, women, who had been with a Muslim, shared that most of their romantic relationships with Muslim men ended abruptly with sudden demands for sexual intercourse, with these men having the perception of “you are Christian, you will be fine with it”. Some of my interviewees

¹⁸ Ama erkek yok. Yok, erkekler, kimi görsem mesela çoğunluk hep Müslüman kızlarla beraber. Ben Ermeni erkek arkadaşım oldu evet ama mesela hani devam etmemesinin sebebi ben değilim. Karşı taraf. Ne yapabiliriz? Zor denk gelmek. Hani bir şey içinde bir şey. Sen zaten bir toplumun içindesin, onun içinden de ayırıştırman lazım ve doğruyu bulman lazım. Sınırlının içinde doğruyu bulman lazım, seçenek zor. (Luys, 28, üniversite)

¹⁹ Yine çok conservative kalıyorlar bence hepsinin içinde diye düşünüyorum. Karşıma çıkan bütün Ermeni çocuklar çok... ya vardır ya böyle erk erk, hani ne yaptın ne ettin kimlesin nerde oturuyorsun ne giyiyorsun hani arkadaş o kadar da değil gibi. Hep öyle insanlarla karşılaştım. Belki aksini görürsem neden olmasın. (Lala, 27, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

indicated that when these men did realize they were Armenian, they expressed statements such as, “this is against us” (“*bize ters*”) or “I want to send my child to a Muslim school”. The three interviewees also shared that they were left by their Muslim partners because their relationship was not approved by his family. Other interviewees said that they knew deep down that their relationship with a Muslim would not work out, but they also added that they were willing to endure any obstacle if the right person came along. Despite the desire to maintenance of the culture, they acknowledged that they were ready to face any challenge if they found someone they were willing to risk everything for.

I observed that some of my interviewees had contradictory views on mixed relationships and mixed marriages, but they had very clear and straightforward thoughts about marriage. Eleven of them emphasized that they were not against marriage, but it should not restrict their social lives. Among these interviewees were women who were previously against marriage, but they did not want their mobility in public space to be limited.

I used to be against it, yes, partly because of you know, I used to say and actually still say that it will limit my freedom. I won't be able to move as freely as I want... This is also valid for men, by the way. I think if I were a man, I would still think the same way. You limit yourself in some way. When you want to do something, you are just going to have to think for two people. Maybe it's not necessarily a bad thing, but it depends on your expectations from life. You won't be able to move as freely as you used to. You may not be able to go out and have fun like you used to, so of course, it's all different when you decide to go down that road. (Margot, 30, university)²⁰

All of these eleven enjoyed exploring the city by walking alone, going to exhibitions after work, and having routines such as having meal alone in a café or enjoying a glass of wine by themselves to relieve the fatigue of the day. Some of them loved the night life more often, while other enjoyed getting together with their friends to

²⁰ Eskiden karşıydım evet o da şeyden kaynaklı biraz, söylüyordum hala da söylüyorum uf mesela evlilik özgürlüğümü kısıtlayacak istediğim gibi rahat hareket edemeyeceğim... bu erkek için de geçerli bu arada. Erkek de olsam aynı kafada düşünürdüm diye düşünüyorum. Bir yerden kısıtlıyorsun kendini. Bir şey yapacakken iki kişilik düşünmen gerekecek. Kötü bir şey değil belki de ama biraz beklentiyle alakalı hayattan. Rahat kafana göre hareket edemeyeceksin. Eskisi gibi çıkıp gezemeyeceksin belki o şeyin olmayacak. İş o yola girdiği zaman tabi başka olur. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

unwind the tiredness of the week/month. They were going out with people they wanted to be with, while taking precautions but always found a way to dress as they wished when going out at night, and returned home at the desired time. The interviewees, who believed that someone who would restrict their lives would certainly not be suitable for them, shared that the person they chose would respect their space and take on an equal share of the division of labor in the house. Women under thirty who were at the beginning of their careers, indicated that they prioritized their careers. For instance, one of the interviewees who was a junior executive shared she did not dream of getting married before achieving her goal of being self-sufficient within several years. In addition to women who were against marriage as long as they were not restricted, four women stated that they believed marriage would certainly restrict them. These women, who thought of getting married before reaching a reasonable age to have children.

Almost all of my interviewees, with whom I discussed their marital status and romantic relationships, shared that they observed a perception within the community that being single was something that must be changed. Based on their life long intuitions and observations, rather than concrete examples, they described a widespread perception within the community that marriage was something that must be present a woman's life. Although they observed that the population of single women was increasing and becoming more and more visible, my interviewees noticed there was such a *whisper* circulating within the community that there was *something wrong* with these women. This situation can be explained by the norm within the community that associates womanhood with motherhood, as emphasized by Ekmekçioğlu (2016: 35). Motherhood, which is an essential phase in a woman's life, can only be possible through marriage. The preferred type of marriage here is endogamous. Although today, the families of the women I interviewed with support their education and careers, I also saw that almost all of them have the desire their daughters to get married when *the time comes*.

Being single, unfortunately my parents would be quick to label them a spinster. By the way, I hear a lot of this, because there are many single women. I have an aunt who is single, for example. She didn't get married. We never heard about any relationships either. (...) Most likely, people label her like that too. But I also hear a lot of things like, 'She's such a beautiful woman despite becoming a

spinster' or 'Can you believe that one is a spinster too' or I hear a lot of things like, 'She became a spinster because of her family, they didn't let her meet someone'. Marriage you know... It's always about marriage. People have to be shoved into a marriage. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)²¹

A similar approach was also present towards younger women. If a young single woman did not have a relationship or did not have long-lasting relationships, it was somehow implied that the problem was with this woman. So much so that most young women were asked questions in this regard, in spaces like churches, such as “what are you going to do about marriage?”, “when will you get married?”, “do you have someone?”.

21 Bekar olması, evde kalmış derler yani bizimkiler maalesef. Bu arada çok duyarım ya çok var çünkü bekar kadın. Benim bir tane teyzem bekar mesela. Evlenmedi. Hiçbir ilişkisini de duymadık. (...) Büyük ihtimalle insanlar da onun için öyle diyor. Ama ben de şeyi çok duyarım mesela hani 30'lu 40'lı yaşlarında şu an çevremizde çok var evlenmemiş kadın, 'ya o da güzel kadın ama evde kaldı' ya da işte, 'bak şu da evde kaldı'. Ya da şeyi çok duyarım, 'ailesi yüzünden evde kaldı, karşısına şu çıktı izin vermediler'. Evlilik hani... evlilik olacak. O insan atılacak oraya yani. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

CHAPTER 5

EMOTIONS SURROUNDING SAFETY IN İSTANBUL

The feeling of safety is often associated with feeling comfortable in spaces, places and locations that are perceived as safe in the public space. My interviewees consistently described feeling safe in places where they felt at ease. Here, Roy & Bailey's (2021) concept of familiarity was key in creating a sense of safeness, as getting to know the local shopkeepers and maintaining good relationships with them made my interviewees feel secure. I found it significant that those living in Kurtuluş immediately responded without hesitation that they feel safe there. Whether Armenian or not, the fact that the neighborhood's shopkeepers had remained unchanged since their childhood made them feel comfortable and safe.

Kurtuluş. I feel like I belong here. Taksim is like that too. My childhood passed here. I know everybody from the grocer to the shoemaker on the street. They know me too. Many of them know my childhood. Even the supermarket. (Margot, 30, university)²²

On the other hand, another interviewee pointed out Kurtuluş as an example of feeling close to the community and thus knowing that she is not alone. She emphasized that being a part of a close-knit community in Kurtuluş provided her with a strong sense of support and belonging, which in turn made her feel safe and secure. Knowing that there is a church, school, Armenian residents, and shops meant that there was a sanctuary available in case of any danger. Kurtuluş, as a part of the community's "Relief Map" (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013: 17), is in a way an area that separates the inside from the outside (Örs & Komşuoğlu, 2009).

²² Kurtuluş. Ait hissediyorum. Taksim de öyle. Gerçekten burada çocukluğum geçmiş. Bakkalından caddedeki ayakkabıcısına kadar tanıyorum hepsini. Onlar da beni tanıyorlar. Çocukluğumu bilir birçoğu. Marketi bile. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

But what makes me feel safe in that neighborhood is not actually the neighborhood being that neighborhood, it's having something that belongs to us. Our people being there, our institution being there. A church... Maybe it's more accurate to say, the part where I have something to take refuge in if something happens to me. For example, if I scream, no one may hear me, but if I shout something in Armenian, someone may come to help. It might be easy to find an Armenian among that crowd. Or if someone is following me, for example, being here [Üsküdar coast] is risky for me, but if I am in Kadıköy coast, I can run to the Aramyan School Association. Or I can take refuge in the church there. (Solin, 31, master's)²³

Another prominent tendency was to emphasize their home. Throughout generations, for non-Muslims who hide their difference in order to avoid discrimination and violence in public spaces, home becomes a place where identity can be lived freely (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 39). Most of the women put their homes and rooms first, sharing that they felt unconditionally safe there. Their responses, starting with indicating their private spaces, then shifted to public spaces where they could feel like they were at home. For example, one interviewee living in Kurtuluş shared that she felt safe in Nişantaşı because it was close to her home. The feelings of belonging and comfort were related to being surrounded by people and places where they did not feel the need to hide or be made to feel bad about their identities. People and places where they could talk openly about almost anything, sit and stand comfortably, and not have to resort to self-censorship strategies to avoid discrimination were always on their minds. At this point, people who were compatible with their own age groups and coherent ways of thinking, and places that included them, were emphasized. Places where Armenians often gathered in their own neighborhoods were usually cited as examples. Some of the owners of these places were also Armenian.

You know how there are some people who make you feel at home, it's about those people. (...) Because we love each other because we are human. Of course, you need to know their identities, you need to know yourself, maybe you need to explain yourself, but you

²³ Ama yine hep güvende hissetmemi sağlayan şey o semtin o semt olması değil aslında, bize ait bir şeylerin bulunuyor olması. Bizim insanımızın olması, bizim kurumumuzun olması. Bir kilise... Belki de şöyle toparlasam daha doğru olur, başıma bir şey gelirse sığınabileceğim bir şey var kısmı. Atıyorum çığlık atarım duymazlar ama Ermenice bir şey bağırap söylersem biri yardıma gelebilir. O kalabalığın içinde Ermeni birini bulmam kolay olabilir. Ya da biri beni takip ediyorsa atıyorum şimdi burada [Üsküdar sahil] olması benim için risk ama Kadıköy sahilde olursam Aramyan Okulunun derneğine kaçabilirim. Ya da oradaki kiliseye sığınabilirim gibi. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

feel good in an environment where you are not excluded when you do that or treated differently because you are a woman. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)²⁴

My interviewees shared that their needs of safety could be met in spaces with a dense public transportation network, plenty of shops and cafes, even if they were unfamiliar with the location. The determinant factors were the centrality of the area and the reassuring availability of amenities. Additionally, even if they were in an unfamiliar place, being able to recognize that it was a neighborhood where families lived was another factor that made them feel safe. Another notable aspect in terms of safety was the preference for branded, or what could be called “established” places such as Midpoint or Cookshop. Some of my interviewees emphasized that even if they were in an unfamiliar place, entering a Starbucks, for example, gave them a sense of security. One of my interviewees with a high socio-economic level shared, this expression I noted down, that, “I feel safe because people from the lower segment do not come to upper segment places”. Therefore, to feel safe, my interviewees who were economically advantaged preferred to go to “upper segment” or “fancy” places. The concept of the “third space” that Kern (2019: 122) refers to could be used in explaining this experience. These spaces, with their designing manners, become a part of women’s daily lives as places where they feel safe and comfortable. In addition, these spaces, which Bookman (2013) defines as “a home away from home”, are semi-public spaces.

In addition to the data I gathered, I found that frequenting a place, becoming a regular there, and making a habit of going there creates a quality among my interviewees that they can say “it is my place”. Furthermore, knowing the employees, managers or owners of the place gave them confidence. The belief that if they reported someone who was bothering them, that person would be kicked out was very effective. Quoting Samsara, “if I am going somewhere, it is because I know those people and I am going there for them”. For many of my interviewees who think like Samsara, attachment to a place is established through the people there. When we talked about belonging, the places where they spent their childhood, grew up, and

²⁴ Hani böyle bazı insanlar seni evinde gibi hissettirir ya hani, biraz o insanlarla alakalı. (...) Çünkü insan olduğumuz için birbirimizi seviyoruz. Hani tabi ki kimliklerini bilmen gerekiyor insanın kendini tanıması bilmesi anlatması belki gerekiyor ama ondan dolayı dışlanmadığın veya kadın olduğun için farklı bir şekilde davranılmadığın bir ortamda iyi hissediyorsun. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

had memories were emphasized. Women generally feel a sense of belonging to the places where they were born and raised, and they added that they know these places like the palm of their hand. “Knowing” and “being known” stood out. Here, Rodode-Zarate’s (2013: 17) concept of “safe space” can be borrowed. The strategy of creating their own safe spaces, which my interviewees resort to in order to eliminate the fear of violence within the city, manifests itself as a way of coping with violence.

Some of my interviewees added that they feel a sense of belonging when they enter a church. On the other hand, most of my interviewees shared that they do not feel like they belong anywhere. While being seen as a foreigner in Turkey and being seen not enough Armenian in Armenia, upset and angered them, some interviewees who did not feel a sense of belonging like others who did, also cited Büyükada as a close option that enables them to experience this feeling. Büyükada and Kınalıada were described as a place where they can freely live their identities, just like in their own homes. The answer given in association with belonging, Büyükada, was provided by only three out of seven women who have a summer house there, which has surprised me quite a bit.

Ada. Obviously. The church, yes, but I'd say Ada. Not the central places, but the unknown corners. Because we know those places. I love them. It's nice to have discovered the undiscovered. (Bunny, 31, university)²⁵

I really feel like I belong to Ada. Anything related to the island, the people I'm with when I go there, the nature... I love everything I do there. Above all, I feel peaceful, happy, and free there... (Luna, 28, master's)²⁶

I observed that knowing, being known, and thus being visible, and being familiar are associated with feeling safe. Feeling safe is used interchangeably with feeling comfortable. The feminization of spaces and their transformation into more cozy, comfortable and thus home-like ones, as emphasized by Bookman (2013), serves as a way of *ensuring* safety in public spaces. However additionally for my interviewees,

²⁵ Ada. Tabi. Kilise tamam evet, ama Ada. Merkezi yerleri değil de daha köşe bucak bilinmeyen yerleri. Oraları biz biliyoruz çünkü. Buraları seviyorum. Keşfedilmemişi keşfetmiş olmak güzel. (Bunny, 31, üniversite)

²⁶ Ada. Adaya ait hissediyorum gerçekten. Adayla ilgili herhangi bir şey yani, oraya giderken takıldığım insanlar, doğa... yaptığım herhangi bir şey çok hoşuma gidiyor. Orada huzurlu hissediyorum en önemlisi, mutlu, özgür... (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

in such spaces, it is necessary for women to not feel like the “other”, not be reminded of their identities, not be a subject of such discussions, and to be able to behave as they wish an speak Armenian. The sense of security, safety and belonging that my interviewees feel within their inherited or self-created circle of security is different for those who are economically more advantaged. They have the privilege of frequenting the city’s more luxurious neighborhoods and venues, which they describe as the “upper segment”, and draw their own circle of security from there. Experiencing the city in this way actually brings to mind the visibility of some women in “proper-to-women” spaces, while keeping them as far away as possible from the *ugly* sides of the streets (Kern, 2019: 118). It can be related to my interviewees who are in a privileged position, ensuring their own safety by staying away from the *ugliness* as much as possible. Compared to the other group, I observed that the majority of interviewees in this group do not seek an ethno-religious affiliation with the place or community they inhabit. For them, it was not necessary to have familiar people around to feel safe (Koskela, 1997). However, I found that both groups did not stay too far from their own places of residence.

5.1 Dreadful Places and Dragging Heels: Involuntary Journeys

Spatial emotions in the context of mobility and visibility in public spaces of the city is sharp and clear in neighborhoods, areas and places women do not want their paths to cross with, where they made to feel like the “other”. Along with unwanted visits from relatives and invitations, government offices were among the top answers for some interviewees when it comes to places that come to mind. These interviewees expressed feelings of stress, fatigue, anxiety, and reluctance when they have to enter a government office, and they prefer not to enter one unless it is absolutely necessary. These interviewees encountered suspicious and scrutinizing gazes from the other side, as well as questions such as “why is your name like this?”, “where are you from?”, “you must be a foreigner?”. Even if their national ID states “Turkish citizen”, their names were also repeated multiple times. My interviewees who even encountered similar behaviors during the passport renewal process, stated that they were not surprised by what they encountered, as similar experiences were shared with them within their family and friends. These experiences can be explained by the way Armenians are positioned in the state ideology (Çağaptay, 2002: 77). In

addition, women's experiences can be seen as a mapping of danger and fear through memory, experience, and sharing in certain places of public spaces, such as government offices (Valentine, 1992: 27-28).

When we talked about neighborhoods and regions, the common response from every interviewee was Muslim conservative areas. My interviewees who felt uneasy as women when they went to those areas, often felt the need to hide their crosses. One of my interviewees used to work in an area that was cited as an example such as Fatih, Eyüp, and Halkalı, and shared that, while going there, she had to pay attention to what she wore and what time she left work every day. Additionally, areas where explosions occurred came to mind, and Taksim was at the forefront of those areas. I talked extensively with many of my interviewees about Taksim. In addition to explosions, my interviewees, who were also complaining about the demographic and spatial transformation of the area, shared that as women, they could not even walk comfortably during the day. Taksim, which was a place where some had attended high school and where many had spent their entire high school and university life on its streets, had become a place they no longer recognized and wanted to visit. The streets they used to wander had changed, the cafes and bars they used to frequent had closed down and were replaced by shopping stores. As someone who was born and raised in Taksim and still lives there, I deeply shared their sadness. I had been to the same places and spent the nights on the same streets as many of them. Taksim had become a place where no single woman was found at night, where male tourists could not get their eyes off the few women there, and where they deliberately walked towards them. While some of my interviewees described Taksim as a Muslim conservative place, for others it was described as mixed-up, strange, and chaotic. The areas mentioned above, such as Taksim, Eyüp, and Fatih, have a complex cultural and class structure, as they are both touristic and likely to encounter immigrants or refugees. Simmel's (2013: 26) emphasis on complex social networks and crowds when defining the metropolis comes to mind. As Massey indicates (1994: 179), the increasing population density, changing demographics, and decreasing number of familiar faces negatively affect women's relationships with these areas and indirectly affect their access and mobility.

5.2 “No way I’m Living There!”: Uninhabitable Locations

Muslim conservative neighborhoods were undoubtedly among the undesirable places to live. The top of these places was Fatih, followed by Balat, Tarlabaşı, Halkalı, Gaziosmanpaşa, Zeytinburnu, and Ümraniye for the Asian side. One interviewee shared that when she walked around Balat wearing ripped jeans one summer, men wearing skullcap who looked obviously religious stared at her with disapproval regardless of their age. She had had the urge to hide her cross so that they would not see it. Similar experiences were shared in other interviews as well. The interviewees who did not feel safe primarily as a woman shared that they felt tense, anxious, angry, and scared. In addition to not feeling comfortable as a woman, they also stated that if they had to live there, they would not want their Armenian identity to be recognized, out of fear. One interviewee shared that it would not be possible to stay there when these identities are combined:

There used to be a Wednesday marketplace there [in Fatih], and I love marketplaces. Usually, it’s just me and my mama, or me, my mama and my aunt because they know that market. Women there all wear headscarves. The three of us stand out among them. Old men sitting in coffee shops, staring... I would never live there. It’s too conservative. They look at you like they could cut you up with a machete at any moment. Why would I want to go to that marketplace if I could help it? People’s profile there is very bad, their gaze almost hints at murderous intent. I’d much rather go to the one in Yeşilköy. I say this having both identities, woman and Armenian. I would never feel comfortable there with my Armenian identity. Imagine. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)²⁷

The way the demographic structure of a place affects its transformation is highlighted once again in this quotation. Azad Gin, who loved the bazaar there, felt the need to change location and go to another one farther away to feel safe, as the locals there made her uncomfortable with their staring gazes. Other interviewees with similar experiences have added that they would not want to live in any place

²⁷ Çarşamba pazarı olurdu orada [Fatih], çok severim pazar. Genelde ben mamam ya da ben mamam teyzem, çünkü onlar biliyor o pazarı. Zaten şey yani kadınlar falan da hepsi kapalı. Biz arada sırıtıyoruz zaten üçümüz. Üç açık. Dedeler falan kahvede oturuyor zaten hepsi şey. Orada asla yaşamam. Çok kapalı. Her an seni satırla kesecek gibi bakıyorlar. Orayı evet hiç tercih etmem diye düşünüyorum. Ne gerek var niye gideyim ki o pazara? Başka yere, Yeşilköy pazarına giderim. Çünkü insan profili çok kötü yani, bakışıyla öldürüyor adam seni. Diyorum ya burada bu arada da her ikisi beraber, kadın ve Ermeni kimliğim. Bir kere Ermeni kimliğimle orada hiç barınmam. Düşünsene. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

where there is no church and community. In addition, others emphasized that they would not want to live in places that are Muslim conservative, such as Kumkapı, even though there is a community there.

We are close-knit in Kurtuluş, it's warmer and more family-like in Kurtuluş. Much safer too. Thereabouts of Fatih and Kumkapı... Those places are foreign to us. Even if our community is larger there, they are still foreign to us. (Zabel, 31, university)²⁸

In fact, we have our main church in Kumkapı. Especially imagine going there by walking or public transportation. The area has a very mixed population. The area around the Armenian church is like heaven, with beautiful sidewalks and everything, because the Patriarchate is located there. It's incredibly beautiful. Continue walking past that sidewalk though, and you'll see that it's like two different worlds, there's no gray, only black and white. There are a lot of Africans, Afghans, Pakistanis - mostly men unfortunately. There are lots of street vendors and so on. We do have our Armenian church there, as well as our school but despite all that, no. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)²⁹

It has been observed that, in addition to Muslim conservatism, these regions that host a large number of immigrants with their associated uncertainties create endless fears. As Kern (2019: 173) highlighted, the disorder and chaos of the crowds, added to conservatism create unlimited insecurity for single Armenian women. These women I interviewed, almost all of whom have a desire to go out at night, cannot see the end of what could happen to them in the streets. Therefore, at the end of the day, having a church in the region does not mean much to most of my interviewees, as who lives there becomes more important. One of my interviewees shared that she loves the streets of Üsküdar but is scared away from there because there are too many hodjas there. The symbolic meanings that change and transform parallel to the transformation of spaces are intertwined with the space itself. Women who do not want to be in places with religious and Muslim conservative connotations, both as women and as Armenians, cannot establish a sense of belonging there (Fortuijn,

²⁸ Kurtuluş'ta biz iç içeyiz, daha sıcak kanlı daha aile gibi Kurtuluş. Çok daha güvenli. Fatih tarafları, Kumkapı... Oralar bize yabancı. Cemaat fazla olsa bile yine de. (Zabel, 31, üniversite)

²⁹ Kumkapı'da ana kilisemiz var bir de yani. Hele bir yürüyerek git ya da toplu taşımayla. Çok karma bir nüfusu var. Yani Ermeni kilisenin etrafı böyle kesinlikle cennet gibi böyle kaldırımları falan çok güzel çünkü Patrikhane var orada. İnanılmaz güzel. O kaldırım geç, hani gerçekten iki farklı dünya, siyahla beyaz yani grilik yok. Çok fazla Afrikalı var, Afgan var, Pakistanlı var, genel olarak maalesef ki hepsi erkek. Sokakta satıcılar bilmem neler falan çok şey. Ki Ermeni kilisemiz var yani, okulumuzda var ama ona rağmen hayır. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

Horn & Ostendorf, 2004: 215). So much so that, experiencing almost total exclusion by *voluntarily* choosing it due to the emotions created by the fear of violence (Massey, 1994: 179). In addition to all these sharing, most of my interviewees emphasized that they do not want to move away from the city centers, citing Bayrampaşa and Beylikdüzü as examples. Although these areas are quite deserted, secluded and therefore unsafe, and the public transportation networks are sparse, they shared that they think living there would end their social life. These experiences can be explained by the concept of fear of violence, which Navarrete-Hernandez et al. (2021: 3), like many theorists, focused on in the context of urban mobility and visibility. When this fear is combined with the phenomenon of women estimating dangerous places and times to violence, which Valentine (1992) studied, the intersecting aspect of Armenian women's experiences becomes more apparent. In the interviews, I saw that the spaces and places my interviewees did not want to live in and did not want to go back to actually overlapped with each other. Women were aware that they would not be *accepted* in these areas, although they did not want to be associated with them or wanted to keep their relationships to a minimum. On the other hand, these places differed in terms of potential time spent there. Women distinguished between going to a place for a specific task and living there permanently. The idea of living in a place where they only had to go occasionally, but constantly, was like a nightmare. They could go there reluctantly during the day but had to return to their safe spaces in the evening. Maintaining this was actually a matter of survival.

5.3 Dream Locations to Live In

After listing the reasons above, when I asked my interviewees where they would like to live, the answers I received were not very surprising. These answers clearly demonstrated their perceptions of the city and urban life. While some of my interviewees living in Elmadağ and Kurtuluş complained about the increasing overcrowding of their neighborhoods and the tightly packed buildings, but not their homes they lived in. Their homes and rooms were their safe spaces. Nevertheless, when I asked them about the places they dreamed of and longed for, the majority of the interviewees mentioned a place different from where they currently live. This difference was primarily in the context of urban design. The interviewees who

dreamt of living in places with spacious streets and wide sidewalks, where buildings are not adjacent and have gardens, were looking for order in urban structure. The longing for places near the sea, with plenty of green areas and lots of trees on the streets where they would not have to go to parks to see greenery, was palpable in each of them. The interviewees living in the neighborhoods of Kurtuluş, Bomonti and Elmadağ were tired of the chaos and bustle of the city. They did not want to give up the advantages of being in the city center, but they wanted a slightly more peaceful life.

[For Yeşilköy], there is no chaos, no disorder. Houses are spacious, streets are airy, and there is no garbage on the streets. (Zabel, 31, university)³⁰

I love the other [Anatolian] side. We used to go back and forth more often because of our family friend. It seems more organized to me there. For example, the wide streets and sidewalks give me a sense of peace. Because here [Bomonti], everything is cramped. (...) Yes, Bomonti is close to everywhere, but there is no green area here, no area where you can find peace. That's why I would prefer the other side because of its wider and more spacious environment. But, of course, if I could find a house in Yeşilköy without going as far as the other side, I wouldn't say no to that. On the other side, I mostly go to Bağdat Avenue, Suadiye, and Moda. I love those places too. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)³¹

On the other hand, the interviewees who lived in neighborhoods a bit further away such as Yeşilköy, Akatlar and Çekmeköy mentioned that they might want to go to more central areas like Kurtuluş, Cihangir, Bomonti, Fulya, Bebek and Arnavutköy, while Bostancı, Moda and Göztepe on the Anatolian side were among their preferred options. I was surprised that only one woman considered Kınalıada as an option. Meanwhile, the interviewees living in Samatya, Nişantaşı, Bakırköy, and Ortaköy stated that they did not want to move away from their current neighborhoods, but if

³⁰ [Yeşilköy için] Kargaşa, kaos yok. Evler geniş, yollar ferah, sokaklarda çöp yok. (Zabel, 31, üniversite)

³¹ Karşı tarafı seviyorum. Eskiden daha sık gidip geliyorduk işte bu aile dostumuzdan kaynaklı. Orası bana daha düzenli geliyor. Mesela o caddelerin sokakların daha böyle geniş, kaldırımların daha geniş olması bir huzur veriyor ister istemez. Çünkü burada [Bomonti] her şey sıkış tepiş. (...) Burası [Bomonti] evet çok her yere yakın vesaire ama burada o yeşil alan yok, insanın huzur bulacağı alan yok. Onun için karşıda işte o genişliğinden belki daha ferah olduğundan tercih ederdim. Ama hani o kadar gitmesem Yeşilköy'den bulsam evi belki şey olmam, hayır demem yani. Karşıda tabi benim gittiğim yerler daha çok şey Bağdat Caddesinin tarafları, Suadiye tarafı, Moda tarafı. Oralar da çok güzel çok hoşuma gidiyor. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

they had to, they would like to move to neighborhoods like Yeşilköy, Cihangir, Moda and Gümüşsuyu. Another popular option on the European side was to live in a house on the Bosphorus. It is clear that the preferred and desired areas are those with a high socio-economic status. The class dimension of these areas creates a sense of security in my interviewees (Kern, 2019: 118). In addition, there were other symbolic meanings associated with these areas; in light of my interviewees' narratives, more cultured, enlightened, and open-minded people lived in these neighborhoods, and thus, this created their relief maps and identified safe spaces by considering less likelihood of experiencing violence in these areas (Roy & Bailey, 2021: 7). At this point, my interviewees were almost evenly divided into two groups; some stated that they wanted Armenian community where they would like to live, while others did not require it. The interviewees who did not require a community emphasized that there should be intellectual and secular people in the area where they would live and that they did not want to be discriminated against based on religion. Hence, citing Kumkapı, Bakırköy and Samatya neighborhoods as an example, even if people from the Armenian community live there, they would not want to live there because, according to them, those areas are "closed" in terms of both mindset and socio-economic aspect, consisting mainly of conservative Muslims. Many women who considered alcohol and nightlife as criteria when evaluating these regions shared that a place where alcohol is consumed and where cafes and bars are open at night seemed more livable to them. Some stated that their answer may be considered as a caricatured response, but unfortunately, they emphasized the need to take these criteria into account in today's Sunni Muslim conservative Turkey.

If it were to be this side, it could be around Caddebostan, because that area is more relaxed, more... it's like alcohol and progressiveness go together, but yes, everyone seems to be minding their own business over there. But in Ümraniye, everyone is in everyone else's business. You know that saying, 'to have a finger in the pie'? Ümraniye is such a place, everyone has their fingers in each other's pie, it gets to you. One day, they might even come up to me and say, 'You have a cross around your neck, you're setting a bad example for our children.' (Solin, 31, master's)³²

³² Bu yaka olmuş olsaydı Caddebostan tarafları olabilirdi çünkü o taraflar daha rahat, daha... alkolle aydınlık bağdaşiyor gibi olacak ama, evet benim için herkes kendi derdinde orada. Ama Ümraniye'de herkes herkesin derdinde. Hani derler ya milletin derdi seni mi gerdi gibi, Ümraniye öyle bir yer,

5.3.1 Relationships with Church as a Physical Space: Emotions Indoors and Outdoors

The relationship with the church was primarily shaped by the frequency of visits and the preferred location. Most of them who said they went every Sunday when they were younger, now go to the church either on special occasions like easter and Christmas, or just occasionally without a set period. Almost all of them go to the church for rituals such as weddings or baptisms. While some women go to the church to pray and make wishes by lighting candles during difficult times, others find peace by entering a church on their way home from work. Some even take their Muslim friends to the church. Almost all of the women I spoke to were attached to cultural practices and traditions, but the majority did not identify themselves as religious. Those who identified themselves as a religious did not consider themselves as fanatical and stated that they just valued some religious traditions more than others. Most of the interviewees who go to the church less frequently after the death of their elders shared that they question religion as an institution. While emphasizing their attachment to their culture and ethnic background, some also expressed their concern about how religions can be both unifying and divisive.

Sometimes, I think it would be better if there were no religions. We would be more comfortable. I have a more modern perspective. None of us knows anything, nobody dead has ever come back to tell us. They pretend about this idea that there's some place somewhere and that Muslims go there while Christians go elsewhere... But there is no such place. We are all the same, we are human beings. There's no difference between how Armenians are buried and how others are buried. We all go under the same ground when we die. We all breathe the same air, walk the same earth. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)³³

In addition to this rightful criticism, I talked to women who criticized gossiping, closed-mindedness, and conservatism in the community. Some of my interviewees

geriyor. Bir gün bana şunu bile diyebilirler, boynunda haç var çocuğumuza kötü örnek oluyorsun diyebilirler. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

³³ Bazen şey diyorum keşke dinler olmasaydı diye düşünüyorum. Daha rahat olurmuşuz. Daha modern bakıyorum ben şeye bakmıyorum hani kimse ölüp oradan buraya gelmedi, kimse bilmiyor, hani şey varmış gibi yaratıyorlar, Müslümanlar şuraya Hıristiyanlar şuraya... böyle bir yer yok ya. Hepimiz insan olarak aynıyız yani. Hepimiz öldüğümüzde toprağa gömülüyoruz Ermeniler farklı gömülür diye bir şey yok yani aynı toprağın altına giriyoruz. Ve aynı yeryüzünde nefes alıyoruz. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

who said they distance themselves from the church because they were tired of gossiping also shared that tradition and closed-mindedness limited their freedom, and they were uncomfortable as women with religion putting them in a secondary or even tertiary position. On the other hand, these women embraced their ethno-religious identities by embracing some cultural practices like painting eggs for easter without discomfort. In addition to a few interviewees who said they wanted to study Armenian history and the 1915 incidents, almost all of them said they never missed family meals every week or during holidays and they found their sense of belonging there; in language, in food, in gatherings. Four of my interviewees who tried not to miss going to church every Sunday shared that this activity kept them alive. Zabel, one of them sharing this, said that this action connected her to this country. According to the notes I took during the interview, she said, “if I also break away from there, then I will feel like I have no purpose in this country, and I cannot establish a sense of belonging”. Consistent with Kaymak’s (2017) doctoral research findings, my interviewees were quite critical of religion as an institution and the community, compared to older generations. Shared values and memory resulted in most interviewees valuing ethno-cultural practices over religion itself. The concept of belonging that Örs and Komşuoğlu (2009: 331) associated with explaining the state of being a community comes to mind.

My interviewees mostly preferred to go to churches concentrated in their local areas. This tendency can be explained by not only the easy access dimension but also the dimensions of staying within safe spaces (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013) and staying close to the community for the sake of feeling safe and secure. Those living on the European side of İstanbul went to churches on the European side, while those living on the Anatolian side went to churches on the Anatolian side. The Üç Horan Church in Beyoğlu, the Surp Vartanants Church in Feriköy, and the Meryem Ana Church in Kumkapı were among the most preferred ones. In addition to Surp Hovhannes in Narlıkapı, churches in Unkapanı, Ortaköy, Bomonti, and Kuruçeşme were also popular choices. As for the Anatolian side, the Surp Garabet and Surp Hac were among the most preferred churches. A large majority of the interviewees went to the church with their families and then visited relatives’ homes afterwards. On the other hand, they preferred to go to the nearby churches during the day when they were alone. In the interviews, I observed that this behavior was to avoid any discomfort

around the church's surroundings. Additionally, going to the churches located in the areas where the community is concentrated helped alleviate any concerns or discomfort.

No, I never felt like that because Ortaköy is a very free place in that regard. We grew up this way. Everyone here is very knowledgeable about the Armenian life, all the locals. It doesn't matter if they are Armenian or not. Therefore, everyone knows the church and the school and about who is who and who goes where. So, I never felt uneasy. If there was someone around, we would even say good morning or good day to them before entering and they would say it back too. (Samsara, 28, university)³⁴

Look, there are many Armenians in here [in Kurtuluş], and even the Muslim people, the shopkeepers, they all know our holidays. They know about our festivities. For example, they make paskalya çöreği [easter breads] for us on Easter. So, I feel like I'm living in a small Armenian camp. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)³⁵

Some of the interviewees who shared that they usually attend large ceremonies such as weddings or baptisms at the church in Unkapanı, prefer to go to Ortaköy or Kuruçeşme by car because they find the surrounding area disturbing. These interviewees, who have the privilege of owning their own cars, stated that they can come to these areas on their own any day. The interviewees who said that they find the surroundings of the churches in Ortaköy and Kuruçeşme “decent”, stated that they prefer those areas for this reason. Another strategy adopted to avoid feeling uneasy was preferred by some of my interviewees, which was choosing to go to churches inside schools. For instance, one of my interviewees who went to the church inside Esayan expressed that they did not appear as “an Armenian who came to the church” from outside when entering the school. Additionally, another strategy employed by families besides using the cars was to instruct the taxi driver to drop them off at a nearby location instead of the church or any space of the community as their destination.

³⁴ Yok hiç öyle bir his olmadı çünkü Ortaköy çok o konuda özgür bir yer. Biz öyle büyüdük yani. Buradaki herkes o Ermeni hayatına çok hakim bütün yerliler. Ermeni olmasına gerek yok. Dolayısıyla işte herkes kimin ne olduğunu bilir, kiliseyi de bilir okulu da bilir kimler gider onu da bilir. O yüzden hiç tedirgin hissetmedim hatta birileri oldukça günaydın iyi günler deyip gireriz onlar da söyler zaten. (Samsara, 28, üniversite)

³⁵ Bak burada [Kurtuluş] çok Ermeni var ve buradaki Müslüman halk esnaf da biliyor, bayramımızı biliyor seyranımızı biliyor hani Paskalyada çörek çıkarıyorlar bir sürü bir sürü, o yüzden ben kendimi küçük bir Ermeni kampında yaşıyor gibi hissediyorum yani. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

*Reminds me of the last time we went to the cemetery. My father always watches what he says in the taxi, he would say, 'There is this gas station, do you know it? We'll go there.' He would never mention the words 'Armenian cemetery' in a taxi. (Luna, 28, master's)*³⁶

Many of my interviewees emphasized that they entered the church quickly and did not spend time outside the church after the ceremony. Similarly, they moved together before heading back home. One of my interviewees who had their own car, Şuşan, shared that when she was returning alone, she would slow down at bus stops and if there were people from the community, she would stop to drop them off at their homes. It has been observed that individual and collective tactics and strategies such as these have reduced the uneasiness of my interviewees. When I asked them in which situations, they felt uneasy around the church, many of them shared that the first reason was the fear of being stigmatized due to standing out too much when dressing up for ceremonies such as weddings and baptisms.

*For example, sometimes there are weddings or baptisms at the Three Horan Church by the fish market. Shopkeepers and people working close by know that you are going to the church by looking at you because they can tell that there is a wedding or something else going on with all the dressed-up women and men. You have to pass by them to get to the entrance. It can feel like I'm in a somewhat secure area when I finally enter through the doors of the church, but not if I'm right outside or far from the entrance. Especially since I'm going there as part of a certain profile of people. When people normally see me from the outside they don't think about my Kurdish or Armenian identity. But when it's evident I'm going to the church, they can tell for sure that I'm not a Turkish Muslim. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)*³⁷

One of my interviewees shared that on days when they stayed late for choir rehearsals, she and her friends would ride back with their teacher's car. She also

³⁶ Mesela en son mezarlığa giderken, Ermeni mezarlığına, takside babam hiçbir zaman şey demez, 'şurada benzinci var biliyor musun oraya gideceğiz' bilmem ne der, Ermeni mezarlığı diye bir kelimesi geçmez hani hiç. (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

³⁷ Mesela balık pazarındaki Üç Horan Kilisesinde orada falan bazen düğünler falan olur, kiliseye gittiğin belli yani biliyorlar çünkü oradaki kısım da biliyor yani, süslenmiş kadınlar erkekler varsa ya bir düğün vardır ya bir vaftiz ya bir şey vardır ki onlar oraya gidiyor, böyle şey olur yani, gittiğin belli olur oraya. Ya da tam önünden gireceksin oraya bir sürü çalışan falan var. Girdiğinde belki biraz güvenli bölge diyebiliriz oraya. Girmeden uzağındaysam falan değil ama oraya gidiyorsam hele bir de şey olarak, daha belli bir profille gidiyorsam, hissedebilirim. (...) Hani dışarıdan bir insan beni gördüğünde Ermeni Kürt bir şey demiyor ama o kiliseye girdiğimde, 'evet gelmiş oraya demek ki Türk Müslüman değil yani' oluyor. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

mentioned feeling anxious when going to the Taksim church alone after work around 7 pm. Getting off the bus at Tarlabası, she felt uneasy due to the surroundings and the late hour. She felt like anything could happen at any moment. Many of my interviewees also shared feeling anxious in Unkapanı. Both being a woman and Armenian, my interviewees expressed feeling uneasy due to the stares of the local shopkeepers. As a result, they often choose not to go there intentionally. This experience can be explained by the concept of fear of violence that women associate with spaces and places, which is in line with Massey's (1994: 179) idea that places contain and reproduce symbolic meanings that evoke fear of violence in women. Accordingly, women's mobility and access are limited, and at the same time, the ways of *living* their identities are restricted (Massey, 1994: 179). Arev, one of my interviewees, added that during times of bombings, the police waiting outside the church added extra stress to her already anxious state. Like the shopkeepers, the police's presence created a sense of unease, making her want to leave the area as soon as the mass ended. On the other hand, Şuşan, another interviewee, shared feeling no anxiety in Unkapanı. She said that the shopkeepers knew them, and she could even tell the parking attendant that she was there for the church and would leave in two hours. However, like Arev, Şuşan also felt stressed by the police waiting at the door. As Maksudyan (2005), Çağaptay (2002) and Göl (2005) noted, encounters with individuals, apparatuses, and institutions representing the ideology of the state, along with their ideological labeling as "the other," serve as a reminder of this position and make the individual feel uneasy. Another interviewee, Samsara, who stated that she never felt particularly anxious outside any church, added that she had never seen her family anxious around the church since childhood, perhaps why she also was not anxious.

5.3.2 "One church, one school. Where there is a school, there is a community"

The interviewees, who wanted to have a community in their desired location, emphasized the necessity of more secular individuals sharing the spaces they want to live in, and stated that having at least a few members of the community, a church, a school, would make them feel more peaceful. According to them, having a church, a school, and therefore a community in an area can mean that local Muslims will be more likely to *accept* them. In addition, being close to family members or knowing

that trusted people are living in the neighborhood would make them feel safer. Women who wanted to be close to their families were women who lived close to their cousins, aunts, uncles, and yayas in their current neighborhoods. They shared that they wanted to maintain these family ties because they had the habit of stopping by family members' house when they went out. Some of them emphasized that they never wanted to be too far away from their mothers and fathers. All these statements and narratives were actually based on the need to create a safe space. It was an effort to bring/build their safe spaces to the places they dreamed of.

I would feel more peaceful if there was. Because having a church means having a community. (Luys, 28, university)³⁸

Interviewees who did not consider the requirement of being with the community emphasized the importance of being open-minded and living among secular people, stating that those who have cars can go to church when necessary. Other interviewees who emphasized the importance of neighborly relations cited Kurtuluş as an example, stating that everyone knew each other and they would immediately come to each other's aid if something happened. Having such neighborly relations in places they would like to live makes them feel much safer. Another aspect emphasized by my interviewees was the centrality of the desired living location, meaning the abundance of transportation networks and areas where cultural and artistic activities can be found. Lastly, only one interviewee stated that she would like to live close to her workplace, but only if the place meets the factors listed above.

Ending this section, I saw that regardless their class, women wanted to live not in fear, but with joy. This experience can be explained through Carr and Francis' (2006: 231-233) definition of public space. According to this definition, individuals with different needs are able to relax in a public experience that suits them. Carmona's (2014) concept of "good public spaces" refers to a balanced, diverse, visible, social, free, safe, and meaningful public realm, which evokes the kind of public space that women envision in their narratives. These young and single Armenian women who had a desire to live while enjoying the city, wanted to walk on tree-lined streets on

³⁸ Olsa daha huzurlu hissederim. Çünkü kilisenin olması bir cemaatin olması demek. (Luys, 28, üniversite)

their way to work, spend time in green areas without spending any money in their free time by taking their chair, coffee and book and go to the seaside to sunbathe, without being harassed by anyone. They did not want anyone to look or interfere when they lay on the grass wearing shorts, or to feel obliged to hide the cross around their neck. They wanted to live in a place where they had access to transportation to be able to go to exhibitions, cinema, and theater when they could afford it. Almost all the women I spoke to shared that they were financially constrained by cultural and artistic activities, but they wanted to live in a place close to them. They wanted to be able to reach those places easily when they had the opportunity. Although the answers given to me by my interviewees may seem no different from those that any urban dweller could give, in fact, they differ in terms of the origin of their answers. As single Armenian women, they all have given, consciously or unconsciously their answers based on the potential negative experiences they could face in the future as a result of their own experiences and/or what they have witnessed from the firsthand.

The interviewees who do not insist on having a church or a religious community in the place they want to live, would like to live in areas where open-minded and educated people can be found and where *prosperity* can be felt. On the other hand, some of them wanting to have a religious community in their area shows their relationship with the community, while also explaining the class dimension of spatiality (Kaymak, 2017: 131). Thus, I can summarize the two most critical aspects of this section as follows: (1) Women wanted to live in places where they were not made to feel like the “other” and were not reminded of any disadvantaged position, and (2) those places had to be safe to walk around at night without any fear.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS OF “LAYING CLAIMS TO URBAN SPACE”

In this section, I will discuss the relationships of the women I interviewed with the public spaces of the city in their daily lives outside of work/school. Firstly, I will discuss the influence of class on the relationships established with the city. Then, I will delve into the topic of “walking”. Followingly, I will discuss how they spent their free time outside the home, who they preferred to go with and what the limitations were in these places. Additionally, I will explore whether they spent time alone in public spaces of the city, how they felt during those times and what they did in those places. The final section will discuss focus on their participation in street protests, their frequency, and how they received reactions from home.

6.1 The Class Aspects of the Sense of Appropriation and Belonging

There are different aspects to the relationship established with the city. Along with those who began to consider feeling appropriated of the area they live in; some interviewees also mentioned the Bosphorus as coming to mind. Others thought about the people living in the city. Only one interviewee gave the answer of Kınalı. However, the majority of them based their sense of appropriation and belonging, which they said this expression evokes, on their own neighborhood, and spoke from there. When I asked about the situations where these feelings arise, I received answers containing different experiences and emotions. One common answer among a few women was the knowledge of the history of the neighborhood or area where they were born and raised, and where they witnessed its changes and transformations.

I spent my childhood here, when I was small I used to walk this street, and now I'm 30 and still here as a young woman. I know all

the places, many of them have opened and closed over time, when you know every little thing it feels very... For example, you look around and you think, 'That one closed down, this one opened up'. And you know this place, you can count almost every little thing on the sidewalk by heart, it's all in my memory. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)³⁹

In addition to Tinker Bell's picturesque description, it can be said that most of my interviewees' memories are related to those places. Some recalled their memories in the places they have had a sense of appropriation, such as being together with loved ones during difficult times, having good news, celebrations, laughter and tears. In addition to the connections they have established with the places they live, their likings were also evident. For example, one of my interviewees living in Akatlar emphasized that she really liked the urban texture of the area. The low-rise buildings surrounded by green areas made him feel like she was living in a small town. Coming here and walking on these streets after a long workday gave her peace and relaxation. Others, while answering my question, recalled the longing they felt when they were away from the place they lived in. One of my interviewees, who went to a relatively distant place from the city center like Ataşehir, shared that she did not feel connected to that place and wanted to return to her own neighborhood, and she realized that she missed it when she returned home.

When I come here, I feel like I'm home, the smells carry an air of nostalgia reaching out from my childhood... (Luna, 28, master's)⁴⁰

Luna's account undoubtedly points to the memory, along with feelings of longing and appropriation. The majority of my interviewees emphasized that they knew many people in the place they lived, had good relationships with shopkeepers, knew and recognized their neighbors, in short, grew up, in their words, with "neighborhood culture". My interviewee Samsara described this culture as being able to take an apple from the fruit stand without paying and have no problems. Everyone in the neighborhood already knew where she lived, and no one made a big deal out of

³⁹ Ya benim çocukluğum burada geçti, küçüktüm bu yolda yürüyordum 30 yaşına geldim genç bir kadın oldum hala buradayım yani. Her yer bildiğim yer, daha bir sürü yer açıldı kapandı, her şeyi biliyorsun ya, o yüzden sana çok şey geliyor. 'Bu kapandı bu açıldı' mesela diyorsun. Benim bildiğim yer, neredeyse kaldırım şeylerini sayabileceğim kadar yani hani artık ezberimde. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

⁴⁰ Böyle geldiğimde evime geldiğimi hissediyorum böyle, bir kokusu var küçüklüğümden beri gelen bir nostalji duygusu... (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

taking just one apple. In this culture, which is based on personal relationships, what is critical is being “known” and “being acknowledged”. Being recognized, respected and *accepted* were key concepts for many of my interviewees. As Zabel put it, “the more they can accept you, the more you can just be yourself”. Therefore, I realized that the sense of appropriation comes from not only knowing the history and surroundings of the place they grew up in but also from not being marginalized. In addition, two of my interviewees remembered moments when they felt a sense of appropriation towards their neighborhood and “took responsibility” for it. One of them said it was noticing something missing in her neighborhood saying “we need a technology store here”, while the other described it as keeping a watchful eye on every detail, from the bus stop to the sidewalk and the lamppost. This interviewee shared that being able to report to the municipality by taking videos of burnt-out streetlights or the need for a bus stop triggered a sense of appropriation. So, this was, in a sense, being able to interact physically and materially with space. In addition, this can also be explained as an intervention made to feel safe (Kern, 2019: 172).

On the other hand, some of my interviewees who could not feel a sense of appropriation and belonging argued that it was impossible to think of the city independently of the people living in it. They emphasized that when they stepped out of their comfort zones, they encountered discriminatory people. On one hand, considering the country’s history, my interviewees could say “it actually never belonged to us”. Some interviewees who loved İstanbul geographically shared that they could even consider leaving the country due to racist and divisive people, policies and political discourses of government. Some of them felt a sense of appropriation towards the neighborhood they lived in. They could feel a sense of appropriation towards the streets they ran as children, the shopkeepers and neighbors who knew their childhood, or the mosaic history, architectural structures of the city and memories within, but they could not feel the appropriation towards the people. One of my interviewees shared that the thought of “they will kick us out any minute”, never left her mind during the slightest political crisis. Another one asked, “has the city owned me for me to own it?”. Here, they emphasized the bitterness of being othered, discriminated, and exposed to racism. Additionally, most of my interviewees emphasized that the changing texture of the city was related to the political climate. According to them, the increasing visibility of police and the

transformation of the city into a concrete jungle evoked authoritarianism, leading my interviewees to feel alienated from space. Arev, one of my interviewees, shared that the closure of the places she used to go to frequently on İstiklal Street, the transformation of Galatasaray Square and Süreyya Opera House into police headquarters, made her feel the loss of the sense of appropriation. Another interviewee, Şuşan, mentioned that the first thing that came to her mind when answering my question was the Bosphorus, but then she felt that it was captured by the concrete buildings around it. Later, she mentioned her participation in the Gezi uprising, and as someone who knew it used to be an Armenian cemetery, she said, “it never belonged to us”. I have seen that the visible transformation in the texture of the city due to the government’s intervention destroys created a feeling of “being taken away” for these politically inclined interviewees, destroying their sense of belonging.

I have observed that the sense of appropriation or urban space is related to the sense of belonging, which is established mostly through the area where my interviewees live. The tendency of them to answer my questions based on the space they defined as safe and comfortable was actually an attempt to establish a relationship with the city. Many of them stated that they could not establish a relationship with İstanbul as a whole due to their forced marginalization, which seemed like a longing for a city life where they would not be marginalized. The safe spaces of the community where they were born and raised were directly related of urban belonging (Örs & Komşuoğlu, 2009: 331). However, areas like Akatlar, Ortaköy and Nişantaşı, are relatively livable in terms of socio-economic welfare, so the urban experiences these spaces provide to my interviewees living there, can approach the spatiality described by Carmona’s (2014) concept of good public spaces. It is understandable that the interviewees who have this privilege do not want to leave these areas. On the other hand, although the interviewees from the middle and lower classes complain about the urban texture, changing demographic structure, and overcrowding, they still do not want to move away from locations close to their communities. These areas, which provide them with a comfortable breathing space, constitute their safe zones; in most of the cases their “third space” (Kern, 2019: 122). Their experiences of exclusion are minimized as much as possible. These interviewees actually approach and relate to the city through their relationships with their communities.

In addition, I observed that the more politically inclined interviewees, regardless of their class, were aware of the political aspects of the city's transformation and therefore could not have any sense of appropriation or belonging. However, the interviewees with a higher socio-economic level who described themselves as apolitical, emphasized that they embraced İstanbul as a city, not just their own neighborhood. Two of them who owned their own businesses shared, if I were to quote from my notes, that they were "able to enjoy the cream of the city, such as dining in a restaurant with a Bosphorus view any time they wanted without worrying about the cost". For them, İstanbul was limited to Yeşilköy. Another interviewee who belonged to the same social class as them but was more politically inclined, on the other hand, said that she could not have any sense of belonging and thus appropriation of İstanbul due to her political stance. Hopkins & Dixon (2006) associate individuals' sense of belonging, attachment, and feeling at home in a place with political visibility, stating that political imaginations such as nation, state, and community are constructed through political consciousness established in a place and space. However, based on the experiences of my politically inclined interviewees in terms of their sense of belonging and appropriation of the city, this situation was different. It is clearly seen that these emotions and experiences contain power relations within themselves. The traumatic collective memory (Kaymak, 2017) in my interviewees causes them to take a more critical approach and weakens their sense of belonging by reminding them of state's ideology of Turkishness whenever they encounter it.

6.2 *Flaneuses and Walking at Night*

The reason I want to emphasize on the act of wandering around the city as another way to spend leisure time is because walking and exploring are experiences that women share solely with themselves. When feeling overwhelmed or wanting to clear their minds and organize their thoughts, walking was a common method used by twelve out of fifteen of my interviewees, especially during difficult times. These women often got lost in their thoughts while listening to music with the headphones, on while taking walks around the city. Kern (2019: 105-106) argues that headphones are part of the "survival kit" in the city and also highlights that they prevent unwanted interventions from men, thus being a means for women to protect and

claim their own spaces. The other two interviewees mentioned they had a habit of spending time alone at home and only walked outside when they needed to go somewhere. As they put it, they “always had a purpose” when they went out. On the other hand, one of the three women shared she could not walk in İstanbul out of fear. She used to take walks frequently, regardless of the time of day, when she was studying in Eskişehir. Since it was a “student city”, it was possible to see groups of students on the streets at any time, which made her feel safe.

No. Especially when my head is full, I never walk outside because even when your head is clear and you take a walk it is by chance that you survive, and I don't feel safe because I can't predict what could happen to me when my head is full. I used to walk outside in Eskişehir a long time ago when I was a student, but it was safe for me. It was a student city, and students were hanging out in the streets no matter what time it was. But since I came here, I always think about going straight to home and I keep telling myself, 'You're alone, don't stay outside.' (Solin, 31, master's)⁴¹

One of the women who had a habit of walking around the city shared that she did not spend time alone outside like other interviewees, and walking was just a habit of her. When she wanted to spend time with herself, she would stay in her room. Again, my interviewees talked about the strategies they used to feel safe while walking. Not walking in the dark was one of the most common ones. When it got dark, they would only walk on well-lit streets with streetlights. While some women were home by seven pm, others might not return until ten pm. Additionally, if a street was well-lit but empty, some interviewees would avoid that street and increase their pace when they felt uneasy. Another common response was to choose a safe route. All of these are strategies that women use to avoid violence, in line with the symbolic meanings contained in gendered public space, as emphasized by Massey (1994: 179). We talked about this in detail with almost every interviewee. I found that every woman who had a habit of walking preferred to walk in places they knew and felt safe. Again, familiarity (Roy & Bailey, 2021: 7) evokes safety. While most of them walked in their own neighborhoods, some were able to walk in places they did not

⁴¹ Yok. Hele kafam doluyken dışarıda asla yürümem çünkü zaten kafam yerindeyken yürüdüğünde şans eseri yaşadığım için, kafam doluyken dışarıda başıma neler gelebileceğini kestiremeyeceğimden güvende hissetmem. Kafam atikken dışarıda, çok eskiden Eskişehir'de yapardım üniversitenin orada ama orası güvenliydi benim için. Öğrenci şehriydi ve gece saat kaç olursa olsun öğrenciler ortalıkta fink atıyordu. Ama buraya geldim geleli şey düşünürüm hep, teksin eve git, dışarıda kalma. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

live in, such as Moda and Cihangir. According to them, those places were walkable because they were, with their words, “secular”. In the streets they walked, my interviewees’ eyes searching for crowds also looked for open cafes. Interviewees who lived in Kurtuluş and Bomonti shared that even on side streets in their neighborhood, cafes and bars had opened up, and this made them feel safer while walking. They added that the people who lived there came and had a beer in the evening, and there was no other disturbing crowd. Seeing them there, I saw that it made my interviewees more attached to their neighborhoods and made them feel safer. Another factor that gave them confidence was walking on familiar, busy and secular main streets and areas. They mentioned places like Rumeli Avenue, Nişantaşı, Teşvikiye, Maçka, Beşiktaş and Şişli as examples, while emphasizing that they avoided Dolapdere, Harbiye and Kuştepe. Loose groups of local and/or tourist men wandering around there would scare them. This experience brings to mind Spain’s (2015: 13) emphasis on changing demographics. This factor affects women’s sense of belonging to the city, as well as their participation in public spaces and the time they spend on the streets. Because they feel uneasy, they always informed their families or friends before leaving the house. If their time outside was going to be extended, they would notify them again. One interviewee shared that her partner, who lived very close to her, accompanied her when she wanted to walk at night. She said she had no fear when he was with her.

During the field research, I noticed that many of my interviewees who had experienced the city alone often performed their own *rituals* outside the home. Some women, who sought peace within the city on their own during busy work schedules, ate alone on their days off, while others read books in a café or even frequently crowned their walks with this activity. My interviewee Antigone, who often went to a café to read her book or spend time on her laptop, shared the criteria that would convince her to go inside if it was an unfamiliar café. According to her, the inside of it must be modernized, there should not be large groups of men inside, and there must be women. In addition, most of my interviewees have shared that they walk through crowded and central areas like Beyoğlu or Beşiktaş when they have free time or energy on their way home from work, they enjoy visiting museums and exhibitions that come across their path. My interviewee Arev, who said she likes to visit exhibitions alone, also spends time in these areas while waiting for someone.

Referring to my notes taken during the interviews, she added that “we need such safe spaces”. As another example of activities done alone, my interviewee Lala said she loved going to the cinema alone and if she had a tough day at work, she would go out alone to have two glasses of wine in the neighborhood where she lived. This activity made her feel strong. These experiences can be explained by the phenomenon conceptualized by Kern (2019: 115) as the “right to be alone”. Spending time alone in the city and practicing to be flaneuses may not always be a pleasurable experience due to the gendered structure of public spaces. Excitement, pleasure, joy and anxiety are intertwined.

I have gone out for drinks a lot before. But again, those are neighborhood bars. I am generally a person who hangs out near my own locale. I do this if I get bored. Or if I want to feel confident. For example, if I have had a bad day, if I am beating down, if my ego is broken, then I tell myself that I have to go out for recovery and I kind of act like I'm achieving something in my own way. (Lala, 27, graduate student)⁴²

The feeling of “achieving something” that Lala described above has also been expressed by many of my interviewees. The one that impressed me the most was the night walks of my interviewee Antigone. Referring to her night walks, Antigone, who said “we are living the normal as a reward”, proves herself every time she returns home from her walk by saying, “look, you have achieved this too”. Night walks are undoubtedly a very sensitive issue for most women and LGBTI+. Walking with fear at night but still walking, not giving up, brings many emotions as fear, pleasure, freedom, panic, and happiness. My interviewee, with whom I shared this intense experience while sharing her powerful experience, shared that, putting fear aside, every night walk made her feel strong and free. These experiences can be explained by Koskela’s (1997) concept of “bold walks”. Women’s courage is formed with the awareness of experiencing a fearful experience. These bold and anxiety-filled walks prove the gendered structure of public space and the flaneuse experience. On the other hand, by making women aware of challenging this gendered structure, it reveals the emotions that come with daring to do so. In most of my

⁴² İçki içmişliğim vardır çok. Ama yine o mahalle barları. Kendi lokasyonumda takılan bir insanım genellikle. Canım sıkılırsa yapıyorum bunu. Ya da kendimi özgüvenli hissetmek istiyorsam. Atıyorum işte kötü bir gün geçirmişim, literatürde ezilmişim, bir egom kırılmış, okay hani benim kendime gelmem lazım deyip hani böyle sanki kendimce bir şey başarıyormuşum gibi yapıyorum aslında. (Lala, 27, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

interviews, I observed that walking in the city evokes strong emotions for many of my interviewees. For instance, Antigone mentioned how she finds and hears herself, while others shared how they particularly feel free. I also noticed the desire of these women to observe, feel and explore the city. Many of them have routines of visiting areas where there are historical buildings such as Balat and Karaköy. Women who enjoy walking and examining the architecture of these areas feel that they discover new things. I will leave the floor to them as they express their experiences and emotions beautifully:

When I walk, I feel stress free, I listen to my music at that moment, I walk and breathe at the same time. That's why I feel very comfortable. I feel happy, I feel like I am releasing the stress of the day, I feel like I am throwing away the tiredness and stress of the day. (...) For example, I always as a woman... Well I say, 'I am glad I am a woman'. I walk upright and confidently. I feel free. It's a very beautiful feeling. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)⁴³

When I walk, I feel that I am free, unlike in a taxi, where I am forced to have a dialogue with someone. I go wherever I want, perhaps I take this way, or maybe that one. I also listen to music, especially if the weather is nice, I look around, observe... I see that life flows, and I like that. I become aware of the outside world. Someone passes by, maybe I like their style, or maybe sweet-looking couples are passing by, I like that. I like encountering different scenes. (Luna, 28, master's)⁴⁴

Well, I tell myself I want to sightsee. I like discovering streets and especially my favorite areas. It makes me feel happy. For example, I love walking through the backstreets in Emirgan. There are structures like old ramparts in those streets and they feel more nostalgic, beautiful, and different... They feel peaceful. (Luys, 28, university)⁴⁵

⁴³ Ben yürürken stres atıyorum yani, o anlarda müziğimi dinliyorum, yoldayım hem yürüyorum hem nefes alıyorum. O yüzden çok rahat oluyorum. Mutlu hissediyorum kendimi, daha rahat hani stres atıyorum günün yorgunluğunu stresini atıyor gibi hissediyorum. (...) ben mesela kadın olarak kendimi her zaman... diyorum ki iyi ki kadınıym ya. Böyle dik yürüyüp özgüvenli yürümek hani... (...) Özgür hissediyorum. Çok güzel bir hissiyat o. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

⁴⁴ Yürürken özgür olduğumu hissediyorum yani böyle taksidedeki gibi sıkışmış, birileriyle zorla diyalog yerine istediğim gibi, istersem oradan giderim istersem buradan giderim bir de müzik dinliyorum böyle hava güzelse özellikle, böyle etrafa bakıyorum gözlemliyorum... böyle hayatın aktığını görüyorum ve bu çok hoşuma gidiyor. Dışarının farkına varıyorum. Biri yanımdan geçiyor, belki tarzını beğeniyorum hani belki sevgililer geçiyor çok tatlı görünüyorlar falan ne bileyim böyle farklı manzaralarla karşılaşmak hoşuma gidiyor. (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

⁴⁵ Bir şeyler göreyim derim. Keşfetmeyi seviyorum böyle sokakları, sevdiğim yerleri özellikle. Mutlu hissediyorum. Mesela Emirgan'daki böyle ara sokakları gezmeyi de seviyorum. Sur gibi böyle yerler

The strong emotions and shared experiences of my interviewees correspond to the concept of “empowered female flaneur⁴⁶”. According to Munt (1995: 125), spaces are not fixed and unchangeable structures. They always conceive new possibilities, intersections, routes, and twists. Seeing, experiencing, and even creating these possibilities emphasizes the vital importance of being there, i.e., being present at the scene. I clearly saw this in the women I interviewed. This also brings Rose’s (1993) emphasis with it, on the liberating potential of spaces. Additionally, the fact that my interviewees felt safe in the routes, areas, and times where they *flaneuse* can be explained by Simmel’s (2013: 26) point of one’s tendency of self-preservation by reducing contact with the crowds that create uncertainties in metropolitan life.

6.3 Parks, Malls, Nightlife and the Public Space in Between

One of the activities that my interviewees especially enjoyed doing in their leisure time in public spaces of the city was going to parks, particularly during summer months. It is undoubtedly an effective factor that the late sunset has provided a great advantage for my interviewees who work during the day. Some interviewees who regularly went for walks during the spring months and pandemic period stated that feeling close to nature refreshed them. Some who complained about crowds, on the other hand, would gather with their family or friends and go for day trips to Polonezköy or Belgrad Forest, away from the city center, to go hiking and have picnics by taking their own cars. Those who did not have this opportunity mostly spread out on the grass in Maçka, Bostancı or Moda on cool summer evenings, and chatted with their friends while holding cold beers. Some shared that they often stayed up all night together. Most of my interviewees living in Kurtuluş shared that they preferred Maçka Park because it was close to them. One of them who lived in Bakırköy but usually went to Bostancı shared that she preferred there because she could easily take the last ferry from there to Kınalıada. Some interviewees who did

oluyor sokaklarda, oralar daha nostaljik geliyor, güzel geliyor farklı geliyor. Huzur veriyor. (Luys, 28, üniversite)

⁴⁶ This concept is derived from Munt’s (1995) concept of “lesbian flaneur”. Challenging the heteronormative patriarchal structure of the public space and standing against the “male gaze”, this concept helps to construct Munt’s (1995: 115) own lesbian identity in public spaces. This concept enables the lesbian identity to become an active agent in the process of constructing the temporal and discursive dimensions of space. The “lesbian flaneur” proposes a challenge to the male flaneur and it emphasizes the transformative power of individuals being present in public space, at the scene of the event. Therefore, this concept has a contribution to this study in this regard.

not feel safe in crowds and darkness in Maçka shared that they preferred Moda because they always found it safe. Three of my interviewees shared that they found parks uncomfortable and allergic, so they preferred not to go often. As seen from these narratives, they are concerned about the darkness, overcrowding and isolation in parks. To say that women develop certain imagined dangers in such situations would be explanatory (Valentine, 1992: 22). In response, going in groups, avoiding dark spaces while walking alone, and being cautious about the time are among the strategies they use. In addition, one of my interviewees emphasized that she always kept an eye on the time while sitting with her friends in parks far from home. She felt always alert not to be too late for public transportation, often giving up on fun by leaving friends no later than 8pm. She explained that the reason for this is to overcome the anxiety caused by being alone late at night on public transportation. Another factor that concerns women I interviewed is the attacks that occur in parks:

For example, when a seemingly drunk man passes by with wine in his hand at a late hour, you feel uncomfortable, and in fact I had this happen before, I remember saying to the person next to me, 'This is not a very safe place'. Take that instance on the news a few years ago, where some guy harassed people, I mean, he hurt them. When I see that kind of news, I don't feel safe in Maçka Park. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)⁴⁷

Similar experiences and emotions to Yeraz's narrative have been shared by several interviewees. On the other hand, other interviewees who are familiar with the crowds in parks said that they feel safe due to knowing the crowd and do not feel uneasy. Some interviewees who feel uneasy but long for nature shared that during the summer months, they can go for walks in the forest or on the road, regardless of whether it is day or evening, when they go to their summer houses on Kınalı or Büyükkada, and they feel safe.

When we talk about shopping malls, only four out of fifteen interviewees shared that they enjoy using them, while the other eleven prefer not to go unless they have to. According to them, shopping malls are enclosed, suffocating, and for some, even

⁴⁷ Mesela özellikle geç saatlerde böyle içkili işte elinde şarabı böyle yanından bir adam geçiyorsa rahatsız olursun ve yaşamışlığım da vardır yani, burası çok tekin bir yer değil demişimdir yanımdakine. Veya haberlere çıkıyor, geçen senelerde gitmiş birisine musallat olmuş. Yani zarar vermiş vesaire. O tarz haberleri görünce bana Maçka Parkı güvenli gelmiyor. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

phobic spaces that are more disturbing than calming in terms of their features. In comparison to parks, where they feel they can find peace and breathe freely, shopping malls provide a cramped and crowded experience. Some interviewees prefer those that are close to their homes to finish their shopping quickly, while others prefer open-air malls such as Kanyon that are easily accessible by metro. Among these interviewees, who said they felt completely safe, only parents with small children expressed concerns about security, as shopping malls are places where families can leave their children to play comfortably. Therefore, those who have security concerns and small children are the only ones who prefer shopping malls. Most of the interviewees said they generally go to City's, Kanyon, and at most Zorlu Center alone, finish their shopping and leave quickly when they have to. Cevahir was the last choice for almost all of my interviewees. It was considered to be quite crowded with a lot of tourists.

On the other hand, shopping was a daily practice that some interviewees enjoyed doing in their free time, and they felt comfortable rather than anxious in shopping malls. For some interviewees, browsing through stores or shopping malls was a pleasurable experience. Among this group, some of my high socio-economic level interviewees preferred shopping malls such as İstinye Park, Emaar Square and Akasya, which they considered to be exclusive venues. Shopping in these places stands out in socio-economic terms compared to other shopping centers. This space has class and symbolic meanings in terms of the privileges it evokes, connoting a higher cultural and economic level. For these interviewees, these places turn the act of shopping into a more pleasure-oriented, *exclusive experience*. Interviewees who did feel anxious in shopping malls shared that this anxiety was mostly caused by incident such as theft. Some interviewees on the other hand, also emphasized that the security measures taken at the entrance of shopping malls no longer meant anything to them and did not make them feel safe, following the Atatürk Airport attack.

During my field research, I observed that women were pretty active in the public spaces of the city. Women, who have work and/or school lives, go out in their free time to refresh in the parks during the summer themselves and they have a nightlife regardless of the season. Undoubtedly, nightlife was the area where class limitations

were most visible. While some started to going out at night regularly since high school, the vast majority used to go out two or three times a month before the pandemic. However, this frequency has decreased significantly with women starting to work and the worsening of the economy. Women who said they work very hard, may not feel as energetic as they used to be and may feel tired most of the time, but they have shared that they could still go out every two weeks if the economy was not so bad. Therefore, it can be said that economic reasons were the main factors limiting women. On the other hand, two of my interviewees who are self-employed continued to go out regularly every week. These women shared that they preferred luxury venues when they go out at night. Most of my interviewees go out with their friends, while only one interviewee prefers to go out with her aunties and cousins regularly. Those who go out with their friends usually belong to two different groups; one consists of childhood friends from Armenian community, while other one is mostly made up of friends from the university or from work. Many of my interviewees who live in Kurtuluş prefer places in Taksim such as “45’lik”, while others choose Joker in Nişantaşı. Those who do not prefer dancing mostly go to “new generation taverns” (“*yeni nesil meyhane*”). These taverns in Kurtuluş, Karaköy and Sarıyer were among the preferred places. Some of my interviewees, who want to dance and drink, prefer clubs in Pera, Kuruçeşme, Bebek and Arnavutköy. On the other hand, interviewees who do not like going to clubs but want to drink, prefer pubs in Taksim Nevizade, Cihangir, Kadıköy and Moda. These referred venues are differentiated socio-economically.

During the interviews, while discussing nightlife, we focused on tactics and strategies that women use to feel safe rather than where and with whom they go. Some of my interviewees shared their experiences and thoughts at length, giving examples of what they have been through. Most of the women I spoke with fearlessly shared their accumulated experiences. One thing stood out was that most women preferred to go to places they knew. For my interviewees, having good relationships with the staff was an important part of feeling safe while enjoying themselves in a closed space at night. In addition to specially reserved tables and discounts, knowing that they would be thrown out if they complained about any male who bothered them, gave them confidence. One of my interviewees shared that when she went to places where she had made friends with the bartenders, they looked after

her to make sure she did not drink too much, which worked very well for her. Another strategy used was to research and ask around beforehand. Most of my interviewees mentioned that being recommended the place by people they trust, mostly within the Armenian community, created a perception that the place was reliable. On the other hand, some interviewees emphasized that they inspected the place from outside before entering if possible. According to them, a place being a “safe zone” depended on not having too many young or old men inside, as they evoke the image of “dangerous men” (Valentine, 1989: 386). Additionally, the majority of the people inside were women in their age group or one generation above them, and seeing them having a good time was a convincing factor for my interviewees to enter the place.

Another strategy commonly used was to choose a place near their home, which gave them a sense of security. Some of the interviewees, who were able to walk to nearby places, preferred Nişantaşı, for example, because they felt closer to their homes. This experience can be explained by referring to the phenomena of staying within the “Relief Map” (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013: 17) they constructed within their safety circle and being close to the community (Örs & Komşuoğlu, 2009: 332). When they had to take a taxi, the short distance was also another factor. The interviewees who usually went out in groups of at least four shared that moving together made them feel safe. Going to the place together, sticking together inside, and walking or taking a taxi together made them feel secure. Some interviewees always included a male friend in the group, to make the group more crowded and diverse. My interviewees who went out with their female friends shared that they did not need a man in the group, but they were constantly on guard and looked out for each other. Some middle-class interviewees who wanted to go to the more luxurious clubs in areas like Kuruçeşme, Bebek or Arnavutköy said that they could not take a taxi back as a group before, due to economic reasons, but one of them always had a car and would stay sober to look after everyone. The cultural, class, and symbolic meanings evoked by these areas affect the preferences of economically advantaged women (Fortuijn, Horn & Ostendorf, 2004: 215). More financially advantaged interviewees could drink and take a taxi without worrying about the cost and could call for a ride using apps like Uber or BiTaksi, if they could not find a taxi. Interviewees who went to nearby places and returned by taxi together said they would take turns dropping each other

off at their homes, and the last person would share their live location on their WhatsApp group.

In addition to staying together inside, fear of getting too drunk and losing control was something I observed in many of my interviewees. Many of them said they never lost self-control, even when they drank as much as they wanted, because they constantly had in mind that they would either have to walk or take a taxi home. Some added that they had adopted their parents' warnings about not getting drunk when they went out. Only one interviewee recalled being so drunk that she did not remember anything the day after, but even she said that her trusted friends never let on that she was drunk. It seems that even if she could not remember, not losing control was a learned behavior. Some of the interviewees who chose to have fun in places far from their homes, such as Moda, said that they felt safer staying with trusted friends who lived nearby and going home in the morning. Additionally, I noticed that almost every interviewee communicated with their family, mostly with their mother, to let them know where they were and who they were with. Lastly, as mentioned multiple times before, women also dressed in layers to protect themselves from any violence they may encounter in nightlife.

Based on the narratives of the interviewees when asked how they spend their free time in the city, most of them were complaining about being confined to parks in midst of İstanbul's intense concrete *jungle* and feeling suffocated by the invading structures of shopping malls. It can be observed that in capitalist societies, the confinement of "appropriate women" as "appropriate consumers" to shopping spaces (Bondi & Domosh, 1998) is inversely proportional to the political tendencies of the interviewees. The more critical the interviewees can look at the city's structure and texture, and the more aware they are of their relationship with state mechanisms, the more they tend to stay away from shopping centers. Many women who long for walking in a forest and breathing in fresh air cannot afford to go there due to economic constraints. The class divide in urban mobility is evident in the narratives and daily practices of the interviewees. On the other hand, nightlife is the most distinct level where class divisions are observed. It is evident in the frequency of going out at night, preferred places, and transportation to and from these places. Urban mobility in the context of nightlife reflects more class restrictions than

daytime practices. During the day, even if women do not have a car, they can use public transportation to go to work, meet friends or go to a school far away from home, and their circles of urban mobility can be wider. However, at night, they can cut off their mobility by *choosing* not to use public transportation, even if it is available. For example, a woman who can go to school beyond Beylikdüzü during the day chooses to stay at her friend's place in Moda at night, even if there is a dolmuş to Taksim or a metrobus all night long, because she does not feel safe. Taking into account economic reasons, they have to either rely on a friend with a car who has to sacrifice drinking, or choose short distances within walking distance or by taxi. Interviewees who do not have these constraints can and do go out every week at night, go to Sarıyer from Bomonti by taxi, have a drink, and come back by taxi. Therefore, the intersection of class and gender is most evident in urban mobility in the context of nightlife.

6.4 Political Use of Public Space

Out of my fifteen interviewees, six actively participate in street protests, including the commemorations of January 19 Hrant Dink and April 24, the March 8 feminist night march, and the November 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women march. One of the two interviewees who used to be politically organized but stopped after entering the work life mentioned that she still attends protests individually. One of the interviewees who actively participates in political protests also mentioned attending Pride marches. Almost all of my interviewees, including those who currently do not participate in street protests, shared that they were present at Gezi Park during the Gezi Uprising. Only one of my interviewees who could not attend mentioned that she was living outside the city at that time and could not participate, but she stated that she would definitely participate if she was in İstanbul. In addition to interviewees who prefer to attend protests with friends they feel safe with, there are also those who attend protests with their families. Generally, the entire family gathers to attend commemorations. On the other hand, for feminist protests and Pride marches, interviewees preferred to go with friends.

From what I observed, most of the attendees of these protests were outside of their community and generally attended with feminist and/or activist friends they made during their university years. I observed that women who participated in the protests

were motivated by their desire to assert their rights as women and defy patriarchy. In the commemorations, their Armenian identity was highlighted. However, it would not be entirely accurate to draw sharp distinctions between those two identities. The women I interviewed did not overlook their Armenian identity while participating in the protests as women. They shared that raising their voice together during commemorations and marching with all women and LGBTI+s on March 8th and Prides made them feel empowered. I also noticed that for many of the interviewees who only attended commemorations, these events created a perception of being less “dangerous” compared to other protests, which reduced their anxiety and became a source of motivation to participate. On the other hand, I observed a sense of solidarity with any *minority* group among women who participated in protests other than commemorations.

If there was a march for Hrant Dink, I would join. If there was something related to Armenians, I would participate. If there was something related to the LGBT community, I would join. I would participate in anything related to minorities, anything that is ignored or overlooked. Because there are critical points where that I needs to become 1000, and when one realizes things can change when a thousand people come together, one becomes willing to participate. (Solin, 31, master’s)⁴⁸

I have observed that the reactions of the interviewees’ families towards political activism vary. Families who approve of political activism are often those who discuss political issues at home. Some of my interviewees in these families have shared that politics has been a part of their household since childhood. Some approving families even participate in protests or commemorations with their daughters. On the other hand, families who disapprove of political activism are divided in to two groups; those who, even if they discuss politics at home, do not want their daughters to participate due to fear and anxiety, and those who do not discuss politics at all and raise their children to be apolitical. This “apolitical” definition is made by three of my interviewees in these families to define their political stance. They also added that they feel the lack of political activism in their

⁴⁸ Hrant Dink’in yürüyüşü olur katılırım, Ermenilerle ilgili bir şey olur girerim, LGBT bir şey olur katılırım... Azınlık gördüğüm, o yok sayılmaya giden ne varsa giderim ona katılırım. Çünkü o 1’in 1000 olmaya ihtiyacı olduğu kritik noktalar oluyor ve 1000 olunca bir şeylerin değiştiğini bilince kişi, katılmaya istekli oluyor. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

lives. Most of these interviewees have shared that they have adopted their family's anxieties and fears. In addition to them, almost every interviewee had concerns about the fear of death and/or the uncertainty of what could happen to them if they were detained. At this point, during the interviews, I could clearly see the stress, discomfort and anxiety that being an Armenian woman created.

It is not meaningless to be there, especially since no protest is allowed to be carried out the way they are supposed to be; on the contrary, I find it very meaningful to be there. I really appreciate those who can do it. I would like to be able to do it too, but I can't somehow, I'm afraid of the things that could happen to me... Many people experience bad things, but some people can experience extra bad things especially because of their Armenian identity. (Samsara, 28, university)⁴⁹

The sense of empowerment that I observed in my interviewees as Armenian women through their solidarity with other minority or marginalized groups, the feeling of safety and increased courage that comes with being with people who share similar feelings and experiences, affects the relationships with spaces even in situations where there is a high risk of violence. In addition to Koskela's (1997: 304) emphasis, the potential for liberation in spaces is experienced in all dimensions and aspects of women's daily lives, as well as in the political use of public space. At the same time, with the opportunities and possibilities brought by metropolitan life, as Massey (1994: 180) underlines, women's rebellions, their refusal to give up the streets by resorting to various tactics and strategies, and the political use of public space can be seen as a rebellion against the patriarchal structure itself. It was clear from the narratives of my interviewees.

To summarize this section, the sense of security and safety plays a determining role in the relationship between my interviewees and the city. Consciously or unconsciously, they construct relief maps to create safe spaces where they will not be subjected to violence and/or discrimination due to their gender or ethno-religious identity, and which are free of dangerous men. These spaces can consist of neighborhoods where they live or socio-economically luxurious areas. Sense of

⁴⁹ Çünkü burada zaten hiçbir protestonun gerektiği gibi yapılmasına izin verilmediği için bulunmanın anlamsız olduğu değil, bence çok anlamlı, yapabilenleri çok takdir ediyorum yapabiliyor olmayı çok isterdim ama bir şekilde çıkamıyorum korkuyorum. Yani neler gelebilir başıma... birçok insanın başına bir şeyler geliyor ama bir de şimdi Ermeni kimliğiyle ekstra başına geliyor bir sürü insanların. (Samsara, 28, üniversite)

belonging is often established with the neighborhoods they were born and raised in, but they do not feel a sense of belonging to the city as a whole, in most cases. This feeling can vary depending on the political tendencies of my interviewees; some, who define themselves politically and have a political use of public space, tend to look at the urban structure and texture more critically, while some who define themselves as apolitical and have a high socio-economic position can establish an affiliation with İstanbul through its luxurious and therefore safe spaces. All of my interviewees, who seek an enjoyable urban experience in the city's public spaces outside of work and school, are searching for spaces where they can feel this experience. Some of my interviewees who have cars go to areas outside the city, such as forests where they can feel nature and relax, while those who do not have this privilege try to have a pleasant experience by going to parks and the seaside. In addition, almost all of my interviewees enjoy spending time alone and have ritualized habits. In light of all this data, as elaborated in this section, it can be said that my interviewees do not have a "task-oriented" public space use.

CHAPTER 7

STRATEGIES IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

In this section where themes such as disguise, hiding, concealing, and security come to the forefront, among my interviewees, thinking about the advices they received from their elders, some of them pondered while others answered quickly with anecdotes. Women being sunk in thoughts seemed to be busy sorting out what they had internalized and turning them into answers, because usually the first thing I was told was, “they did not have to say anything, actually, we knew everything”. In their article, Valentine (1992: 23-24), emphasizes that even though experiencing domestic violence is higher compared to the public space, parental warnings and everyday arguments have shaped the place of fear in women’s public lives socially and ideologically. Disguise as a public space strategy that manifests itself in almost all interviews was an information given to their daughters and/or grandchildren by parents and family elders. To hide the religious symbol, especially in the more conservative districts of the city; not wearing the cross or “throwing it behind” was a fairly common strategy. This case can be related to Burchardt & Grier’s (2018) article on the visibility of the headscarf in Europe. The visibility of religious symbols that evoke otherness can affect individuals’ use of public space and can be explained as reproducing otherness. In the advice given in this direction, the feelings of distrust, uneasiness and fear of the upper generations towards the Muslim society in general increase in more conservative places such as Fatih:

They still say things like ‘Be careful’, for example, when I go to Fatih, they tell me not to change or put away my cross. They say, ‘Be careful, take off your cross or put it away’. I don’t get mad at them for this. Because some really could attack you if they see your cross. Someone could say something or do something. They have valid reasons for warning me, and I agree. I don’t always put my

cross away in certain places, but I don't have the habit of wearing a big cross just so everyone can see it. They talk about this a lot, my father also says it a lot, 'Be careful with your cross, be careful as a woman'. These warnings from my elders have gone beyond the 'religion' aspect though they don't bring that up as much anymore, the warnings are more about being careful as a woman. In fact, both of these together were at an ultra-level, but nowadays the warnings have even gone beyond those. Now it's 'Walk with the crowd', 'Stay away from secluded places', 'Don't be walking late at night', 'Always keep your phone on', 'Are you coming or going, what time will you be back?'... These things are done for a reason, and they are rightful. If I were in their shoes, I would do the same. (Margot, 30, university)⁵⁰

As can be seen in the quotation, the interviewed women generally cannot predict what might happen to them when they are those places. Feelings of uneasiness, fear and insecurity formed by warnings, advices and/or personal experiences lead to the need for disguise and concealment of the Armenian identity. After a while, some women have begun not to wear large crosses, even if they were to wear them. Therefore, the crosses worn can be shrunk, tucked into clothing, thrown back or removed so that they do not attract attention. The concealment and disguise of Armenian identity by covering or removing religious symbols has also manifested itself in the context of political stance. During interaction with the Muslim community, it was seen that Armenian women were warned by their elders not to do politics in front of anyone. This experience brings both the erasure of differences in the public spaces (Brink-Danan, 2011: 452) and the problematics of not being able to exist in the political space (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 380-381) as a way of self-protection.

I think they don't need to say anything anymore because they always brought us up with a paranoid mindset. In the past 10-15 years, in our first 15-20 years of childhood, we were always reminded about things like 'be careful, don't talk about anything in

⁵⁰ Şey ağırlıklı diyorlar, hala derler, mesela Fatih'e gittiğimde haçımı değiştirmem ya da arkaya atmam gibi, aman derler. Dikkat et, haçını çıkar ya da arkaya at. Kızmiyorum bu konuda onlara. Çünkü hakikaten orada haçı görüp saldırı da bilir. Bir şey diyebilir bir şey yapabilir. Haklı sebeplerden diyorlar, tamam diyorum. Bazı yerlerde atmıyorum ama yine de özellikle aman herkes görsün diye göze de sokmam, böyle kocaman haç takma huylarım da yoktur. Bunu çok söylüyorlar, babam da çok der, haçına dikkat et aman diyeyim vesaire. Büyüklerin uyarısı artık dini geçti, dini çok söylemiyorlar da kadın olarak aman dikkat diyorlar. Sıra orayı geçti. İkisi birlikte ultra bir seviye tabi ama sıra orayı geçti, şimdi bu 'kalabalıktan yürü', 'tenhaya girme', 'geç saatte yürüme', 'telefonun açık olsun muhakkak', 'geliyor musun gidiyor musun kaçta geleceksin'... bunlar yapılır ki haklılar. Ben de olsam ben de yaparım. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

*front of anyone', 'don't get involved in politics, don't do this or that'. (Solin, 31, master's)*⁵¹

The possibility that Armenian women speaking and engaging in dialogue in public could become a target by attracting attention through politics was a cause for concern by elders. As Brink-Danan's (2011: 452) concept of remaining in low-profile can be referred in this direction, disguise was encouraged. Another advice given was the concealment of the mother tongue. Since their childhood, most of the interviewed women have been strictly instructed not to call their mothers "mama" in public. It is considered dangerous to reveal identity through the mother tongue while walking on the street, shopping, or on the beach in holidays, in spaces and places where one is intertwined and/or interacted with the wider society. As Brink-Danan (2011) emphasizes, the perception of otherness nurtured by languages other than the language of dominant ideology poses a threat, leading to the silencing of different voices and the erasure of different identities in the public space. The overwhelming majority of women who learn Armenian at home, know from childhood to hide their mother tongue after stepping out of the house. Armenian should not be spoken, especially when being alone with the *other*, such as in taxis. It would not be wrong to state that taxis are not safe spaces in this respect. The thought of not being understood is another element of anxiety in the context of safety and security. Limiting the interaction with Muslims as much as possible was encouraged by the upper generations. An example of this is the statement of an interviewee from her family that "do not tell too much, they will not understand anyway". Some parents warn against staying away from the Muslim community and not communicating. All of these experiences are strategies for self-protection by staying within one's own community and not venturing out, in order to avoid exclusion and discrimination, but they are also a part of the experience of being a minority (Morris, 2003: 5).

Young women who grew up with their "yayas"⁵² at home remember that yayas warned them not to share everything with everyone. Not knowing how and which reaction will come from the other side creates anxiety and fear, and they are advised to be cautious when approaching the Muslim community in this regard. The vast

⁵¹ (...) çocukluğumuzun ilk 15-20 yılı, 'aman dikkat edin kimsenin yanında bir şey konuşmayın', işte 'siyaset yapmayın, şu olmasın bu olmasın' gibi şeyler illa konuşuluyordu. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

⁵² Armenian word meaning grandmother.

majority of women I interviewed, who made clear that they do not hesitate to speak up for others in public, have grown up with the advice of their parents to “keep a low profile”, “stay quiet”, and to “lay low”. These concepts, which are also used by Brink-Danan (2011: 447) in their article, result in the erasure of differences within İstanbul’s cosmopolitan structure. In the field, some women shared that they do not hesitate to seek the rights of other women, that they can argue, if necessary, but that the sense of seeking justice fades when it comes to them because in their ears, they have these words of their parents. A woman I interviewed, who grew up with her great-yaya, shared with me the fear of the Muslim society in her memory. Triggered by every siren great yaya heard on television, she hid behind the sofa and said, “Turks are coming, hide”. I was deeply shattered that this fear, which has a behavioral expression, took place in the presence of a small child in this way. Later, this interviewee, who shared the municipality’s illegal confiscation of the land they owned and selling it to someone else, heard her great-yaya’s saying “the land is the state’s, the house is yours⁵³”. At a very young age, women, who learned to avoid discrimination and violence as much as possible due to security concerns, also learned that their ethno-religious identity practices are *free* in the private space, not in the public space. While one of my interviewees shared that she received advice from family elders to “do not be friends with Turks, do not let them into the house”, another remembers that she was told to “stay away from ‘*dacik*⁵⁴ boys”. Taking an untrusted, unknown stranger to the house, which imagines the *interior*, has connotations of privacy and secrecy, and is the only place where identity can be lived freely, creates security concerns. In addition, association with *dacik* boys has been shown to cause concerns of mixed marriage and thus assimilation (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 356-357).

Parents who are worried about their daughters being alone in the public space make certain warnings in the context of safety. Warnings such as “walk through the crowd”, “do not go into seclusion”, “do not walk late” were followed by keeping cell phones switched on. Some interviewees remember that the elders were worried about their grandchildren spending time outside and that they told them not to linger on the

⁵³ “Toprak devletin, ev senin.”

⁵⁴ The word used in the meaning of Muslim Turk.

street and go straight home. Parents, often fathers, who were worried that their daughters would lose control and become more vulnerable, so bad things would happen to them, often reminded their adolescent daughters, who started to spend time, that they should not get drunk. The fathers of some interviewees, on the other hand, interfered with their daughter's clothing and forced them to dress more conservatively. In addition to these situations created by fear, anxiety and worry, the advice was about getting along with the Muslim community. Parents experience the city again in their memories loaded with the history of their ethno-religious identity. Therefore, as Kern (2019: 25) emphasized, the urban experience is not only physical but also mental. These experiences can be explained by Navarrete-Hernandez et al.'s (2021: 3) concept of fear of violence. The restrictions that parents impose on their daughters due to their sexual identities, by considering the possibility of them experiencing violence, have actually been discourses that affect the visibility and mobility of women in public spaces. In order to avoid discrimination and violence, one of my interviewees, who was advised to approach every issue carefully, remembered the phrase, "as long as you are good, everyone else will be good". One of my interviewees, who was taught again to assume a humble attitude so that nothing would go wrong, shared that by an elder endlessly repeating, "sweet talk, smiling face" every time they met, it almost made her tired. In vast majority of other interviews, women were advised not to respond, not to answer, and ignore it if someone said something, so that nothing would happen to them. In this way, silence and speechlessness are encouraged, even if it is done for safety reasons (Brink-Danan, 2011: 447). Here, the discourses imposed by parents actually reveal the multi-layered nature of my interviewees' identities. When the fear of violence that women may face in the streets and the possibility of discrimination they may experience due to their Armenian identities are combined, the position of my interviewees in public spaces becomes quite unique. This situation can be conceptualized with the "minority within minority" status of Armenian women within the community (Karakaşlı et al., 2009: 379).

Since we always went to crowded places, and they knew everyone's mama and father, or knew they were like-minded people, we never had any problems during that time. They still know many of the people I talk to by name or they have personally met them. They

are more comfortable since I'm around similar people. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)⁵⁵

The interviewees, who mostly went to Armenian schools in the neighborhoods they lived in, stated that since primary school, they had been meeting and moving together with other children who went to the same school. As seen in the quotation above, this made both children and parents feel relatively safe and secure. This behavior, which later turned into a habit, created a security shield. This case can be explained as a strategy of spatial clustering for non-Muslims to stay within a circle for security (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 39) (Kaymak, 2017). However, it eventually restricts urban mobility. In the interviews, it was seen that women developed their own strategies against the advices and admonitions of the elders. Interaction was not denied, and it was stated that communication could be established by creating a suitable language for different people:

My yayas [grandmothers] say things like, 'Don't trust anyone, don't share everything with everyone, you never know what people are capable of, many people smile to your face and stab you in the back... You trust everyone and share everything, but times have changed...' I reply that 'I won't burn down the whole tree because one apple is rotten.' (Tinker Bell, 31, university)⁵⁶

But I don't think as they do. Everyone can understand with a clear enough language. I could talk to you in one way and a completely different way to another, since there are so many cultures and real differences in mannerisms between each one. (Bunny, 31, university)⁵⁷

The interference and restraint of their parents in their clothing was embraced by most of my interviewees and became a strategy to avoid violence. Hatuka & Toch's (2015: 2) concept of visibility can be related here to making gender associations as invisible

⁵⁵ Hep kalabalık gittiğimiz için bir de herkesin mamasını babasını tanıyorlar, ya işte bizden onlar ya da işte kafa olarak aynıyız oldukları için, o dönemde öyle bir şeyimiz olmamıştı yani, şimdi hala birçok insanı tanıyorlar görüştüğümüz. Veya ismen tanıyorlar, işte benzer insanlarla görüşüyorsun onun için daha rahatlar hani. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

⁵⁶ Yayalarım şey der, kimseye güvenme, herkesle her şeyini paylaşma, kimin ne çıkacağı belli olmaz işte, senin yüzüne gülüp arkandan kuyunu kazan çok insan olur... işte sen herkese güveniyorsun her şeyini anlatıyorsun devir böyle değil... ben de diyorum ki ben bir elma çürük çıktı diye bütün ağacı yakamam. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

⁵⁷ Ama ben onların düşündüğü gibi düşünmüyorum, doğru bir dille herkes anlayabilir. Çünkü bir sürü kültür var ve sana farklı anlatırım onlara apayrı bir dille anlatırım çünkü gerçekten görgü farklılıkları da var aralarda. (Bunny, 31, üniversite)

as possible against the dangers that being visible as a woman in public spaces may create. In İstanbul, women started to cover their bodies in the spaces and places of the city, as they did not feel comfortable and safe with clothes that would expose their bodies, such as mini-skirts, especially at night. Despite the interviewees expressing their reluctance to wear those clothes, the others stated that they dressed in layers to be able to wear what they wanted. For example, one interviewee shared that if she wants to wear a blouse with an open chest, she can *stay out of sight* on the road by wearing a sweater that will cover her chest, and thus she can take it off after arriving. Another said that when she wears a short or slit skirt or dress, she keeps her coat long, so that she feels comfortable and safe in public transportation, including the taxi. One of my interviewees, who stated that they felt very comfortable in Kınalı or Büyükaada and that they could wear whatever they wanted, shared that by creating two separate wardrobes, she separates what would be worn on Ada from what would be worn in İstanbul.

Symbolic meanings inherent in places and spaces reproduce the gendered structure of public spaces through emotions such as fear of violence. The experiences listed above can be explained in the direction of both limiting and restricting mobility and identities in public spaces, as Massey (1994: 179) pointed out. Being close to areas where the community is clustered spatially, moving collectively, and resorting to various clothing tactics and strategies clearly demonstrate this. Another finding that made me shattered during the interviews in the field research was that women were exposed to verbal abuse, that is, sexual violence, because of their religion. This approach and perception of Muslim men was because Armenian was because Armenian women were Christians:

*Be careful, don't let anyone take advantage of you, because sometimes that happens. It can also involve sexual exploitation, 'You must be comfortable since you're Christian, you must be okay with...' There is always a be careful part to it. (Solin, 31, master's)*⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Etrafına iyi bak, kimseye kendini yedirme, kullanılma, çünkü bazen onu yapan da oluyor. İşte cinsel anlamda sömürülmeye giriyor, sen rahatsız sen Hıristiyan'sın yaparsın... Hep böyle aman dikkat kısmı vardır. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

7.1 Being Alert

The public spaces of the city, as spaces and places of encounter with the wider society, affect the Armenian women I interviewed in many ways. While some shared anxieties, fears and desperation they had to go through because of being a woman, others shared that the extent of violence they exposed to or could be subjected to would increase by being an Armenian. Some women, who started their narratives with their uneasy experiences as a woman, ended with scenarios about what would happen to them if they were found out to be Armenian. These experiences are the layered and intersectional experiences in public spaces that Karakaşlı et al. (2009: 379) describe as being a “minority within a minority”. It was seen in the interviews that the uneasiness felt in the public spaces of the city was quite complex, multidimensional, unique but also familiar.

I feel uneasy as a woman. Not because of my religion. As a woman. Of course, when I walk on the street after a certain time, I involuntarily flinch. I check if someone is following me or if someone is walking behind me. Maybe the person is just walking normally, but there are so many incidents happening now, especially in İstanbul or let's say Turkey, that it always keeps me on my toes. Sometimes I enter a shop just to test and see if the guy is really just passing by or if he's waiting around... (Tinker Bell, 31, university)⁵⁹

Tinker Bell undoubtedly touched upon a situation that we have to face every day like all women and LGBTI+s, which deeply affects and shapes the relationship established with the public space; femicides. According to Valentine (1992: 26), media representations of violence play a significant role in shaping women's perceptions of the “geography of fear” and reinforcing their fear of male violence. These representations often focus on cases of violence, femicides and depict women as passive victims, reinforcing the idea that violence against women is a normal and inevitable part of life. This situation can also be associated with Navarrete-Hernandez et al.'s (2021: 3) concept of “perceived safety”. Even if crime rates are

⁵⁹ Ben kadın olarak tedirginlik yaşıyorum. Dinimden değil yani. Kadın olduğum için tabi ki de belli bir saatten sonra sokakta yürürken ister istemez bir irkiliyorum. İşte arkamdan biri geliyor mu diye kontrol ediyorum ya da biri yürüyorsa, belki adam normal yolunda yürüyor oluyor ama artık o kadar çok olaylar oluyor ki artık İstanbul'da yani Türkiye'de diyeyim yani, acaba mı sorusu oluyor, ya bir dükkâna giriyorum test ediyorum adam yolunda gidiyor mu yoksa orada bir yerlerde bekliyor mu... (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

quite low in the neighborhoods where women live, there cannot be a decrease in women's fears. Living in a country where dozens of women and LGBTI+s are murdered every month does not always remind itself in the flow of daily life, but this information is owned by all women and LGBTI+s. When a murder takes place, this knowledge, which is covered by all the rushes of daily life, comes to the surface by shaking the dust off it. In general, this dust does not accumulate much... Many of the women I interviewed stated that they were affected by the news of women being murdered or subjected to violence in public. This news creates situations where women feel extra uneasy in public. They often have to remember their disadvantages position again and again as they see the news of femicides and violence against women in the public spaces of the city, which they already stated to be uneasy.

Not because I'm Armenian, but because at that time there were a lot of women's murders. Actually, they are still happening, but this was during the period of the Özgecan case. It made me really worried. (Margot, 30, university)⁶⁰

I used to speak up back then. Now, you feel like you have to keep quiet (...) Because for example, a man, or the driver of a dolmuş [minibus] starts beating up a woman for wearing a skirt and drags her off while harassing her. Or some random guy makes a fuss about a woman in shorts in some other place, while another harasses a woman even if she's wearing pants. I don't want to get into an argument because I can't keep my mouth shut, and it might cause trouble. I don't want to deal with that. I don't know what the person might do. Will they take out a knife or what else? (Samsara, 28, university)⁶¹

As a result of the interviews, it was seen that the increasing femicide and violence and the uneasiness and fear felt in the public space are actually directly proportional. This phenomenon, which is one of the main veins of the women's struggle with patriarchy, has become more integrated into daily lives as policy production increases without slowing down and therefore its visibility in the media has

⁶⁰ Ermenilik üzerinden değil ama bir süre sonra, kadın cinayetleri çok oluyordu gerçi hala oluyor da o ara Özgecan dönemiymi, onun tedirginliği çok oluyordu. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

⁶¹ O zaman susmuyordum. Şimdi artık susmak zorunda hissediyorsun yani. (...) E çünkü abi adam dolmuşta kadın etek giydi diye kızı dövüyor indiriyor laf atıyor bilmem bir şey yapıyor şoför. Öbürü bilmem nerede şort giydi diye bir şey yapıyor. Diğer işte pantolon bile giyse laf atıyor bir şey söylüyor. Yani artık münakaşaya girmek istemiyorum çünkü ağzımı tutamadığım için sıkıntı çıkacak orada, gerek yok o sıkıntıya da çünkü uğraşmak istemiyorum ne çıkacağını bilmiyorum adamın. Bıçak mı çıkaracak bir şey mi çıkaracak? (Samsara, 28, üniversite)

increased. This is on the agenda of every interviewee who has to use public transport and/or walk frequently, and who is active in the public space for working, as well as those who have to use public transport frequently and/or walk. Some of the interviewees, like Samsara, who said that they used to respond men who used to catcall them, stated that they were becoming more and more nervous due to the effect of the news, and shared that they were afraid that the people they met might try to kill them at any moment. It has been observed that they are aware of the fact that they are no different from the women they do not know but have seen in the news they feel the pain of, who have been murdered or subjected to violence. In this context of femicide and violence, in addition to most of the interviewees who shared that their uneasiness in the public space stemmed from being a woman, some added their Armenian identity to the end of their narratives.

*Sometimes, they look at you because you're a woman, but when you have a cross around your neck, they look at you because you have a cross. That's mostly how I feel. So, on public transportation or during walks, I feel uneasy when I wear a cross or anything like that... My mom often says, 'Why don't you wear a cross on your neck, it's bare'. I don't wear it, I can't. When you go to church on Sundays and pass by the shops, the shopkeepers turn and look at you. Maybe they mean well, but still it makes you uneasy. You start wondering, 'Why are they looking at me like that?' (Solin, 31, master's)*⁶²

When being Armenian is added to feeling uneasy as a woman in public, some interviewees, who shared that they did not know what to feel where and how, stated that they were often unsure of the intention of the other person. Perhaps the most distinct and clear answer to uneasiness and anxiety was to be alone in the streets. During the interviews, I could see that even the idea of it made the women sitting across from me, opening their hearts, feel uncomfortable. They shared that they tried to throw themselves into the crowd as soon as possible while walking alone on the street or waiting alone at the bus stop. In this direction, it has been seen that crowded environments rather than seclusion can give can give confidence to women who are

⁶² Şimdi bazen kadınsın diye bakıyorlar ama boynunda haç olduğu zaman boynunda haç olduğu için bakıyorlar. Ben ağırlıklı böyle hissettim. O yüzden toplu taşımalarda ya da yürüyüşlerde boynumda haç maç... annem çok sefer mesela, boynun açık haç taksana gibi der, takmıyorum takamıyorum. Pazar günü kiliseye gidiyorsun, kilisenin yakınından geçerken oradaki esnaf dönüp sana bakıyor. Belki iyi niyetle bakıyor ama ister istemez tedirgin oluyorsun. Bu bana niye bakıyor, şeklinde. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

alone in the public spaces of the city and reduce their anxiety. Here, Kern's (2019: 38) emphasis on how the city's crowds provide women with invisibility and thus freedom can be referenced. By expanding this emphasis, it can be said that this invisibility provides them with an advantage in avoiding violence. Similarly, urban crowds provide women with "anonymity" (Kern, 2019: 39), allowing them the opportunity to move around freely.

Many women have expressed their concern that if they encounter a man while they on their way to somewhere in public and there is no one else around, these conditions will reveal any bad intentions in that man. However, they think that if they had a friend or cousin with them, such a probability would be less, and they would be able to fend off any incoming threats more easily.

Again, it's the fear of being alone. I always feel uneasy. If I'm alone at a bus stop, I'm always on high alert depending on whether it's late at night or very early in the morning. I say to myself, 'Let me get on the crowded bus', but things happen even in a crowd in this country. Still, I feel more comfortable if there are other people around me. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)⁶³

As we continued the interview to resolve the anxiety caused by being alone on the street, I saw that this anxiety and fear had more than one dimension. As can be seen in the quote above, the fact that the street is not crowded but secluded and the weather is dark are the main cases that can trigger those feelings. Women shared that they often look behind them while walking on a secluded and quiet street. Others said that when they saw this street or road, they directly decided to change their way. This is the most often case when no one is with them. They stated that other women were attacked during daytime in the crowd, in public transport, and shared that it would be insane to enter such a street in this country. Another dimension, darkness, was another dimension that showed itself without hesitation in every interview. Walking alone at night and being on the street alone especially at night evoked very intense emotions, and it was seen that women shaped all their plans accordingly in order not to be in this situation. The fear that someone might come out of the

⁶³ Yine yalnız kalma olayı yani. Hep tedirgin hissederim. Bir durakta tek başımaysam yine akşam ya da sabah çok erken saatine göre mesela böyle tetikte olurum hep. Bineyim de şu kalabalığa girsem derim ama kalabalıkta da bir şey oluyor bu ülkede. Yine de girsem de birileri daha olsa yani. O daha rahat hissederim. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

darkness showed itself in every interview on the field. The idea that someone is hiding in dark corners waiting for the women to come is quite common. Some interviewees think that in such a situation, they may be exposed to harassment and rape, and that if their crosses are seen, they will be murdered. Here, the intersection of Navarrete-Hernandez et al.'s (2021: 3) fear of violence and Massey's (1994: 179) gendered meanings of place and space is affecting women's mobility in public spaces directly. It was quite intense to see that this fear was something that some women would never forget. Another aspect that was shared in only one interview but caught my attention was that walking by the wall was an unsettling situation. This interviewee, who pictured that she was walking alone at night in a secluded street, shared that she would feel more fear if she walked by the wall, although she did not know exactly why. The emotions created by the high walls, dark streets, underpasses, and empty stops in the experiences of my interviewees clearly reveal urban design that ignores their experiences (Jiang et al.: 2017). This is undoubtedly one of the biggest barriers for women to move freely and fearlessly in the city.

Another case that is uneasy in the public space and mentioned in the majority of the interviews was the fear of immigrants. The increase in the visibility of immigrants and refugees in the places they are associated with triggers different emotions than the one that is familiar. Most women shared that not seeing "Turks" around them creates a new form of anxiety, especially when in public transport or walking on the street. They shared that with the changing environment in which they are familiar with, hearing different voices and feeling the gaze of immigrant men on them causes uneasiness. Additionally, the majority of the women I interviewed said that while they were walking on the street, tourists, who appeared to be particularly wealthy and were mostly stated to be Arabs, deliberately walked towards them. Observing that as the demographic structure on the roads they walk everyday changes, the places change as well, they woefully shared that the *limited* ties they have established with these places are gradually unraveling. Similarly, it has been regretfully stated that the demographic structure of Kurtuluş has also started to change from place to place. The vast majority of my interviewees emphasized that the presence of immigrants does not specifically bother them, but only that men's gazes and/or catcalls make them particularly uncomfortable. Women's experiences can be related to Spain's (2015: 13) concept of barriers to women's participation in the public

spaces. Demographic instability, socio-political change, mass migration, and violence are the barriers that affect women's relationships with the public spaces of İstanbul, and they can be explained by relating them to those experiences.

It has been observed that many women, who grew up with warnings of their parents and family elders not to get drunk outside, have the same fear of losing control. For many of my interviewees, who like to spend time outside, it is quite worrying that it has come to the point where they will not remember anything, blackout. Some of them stated that they were worried about how they would deal with a drunk friend or cousin who they went out with. They shared that men see drunk women as an *open target* and it is terrible to fall into this situation. Losing control made them much more fragile and thus vulnerable. These experiences can be explained through Tanyeli's (2020: 303) concept of the "bad woman" and Ryan's (1990: 74) concepts of the "dangerous" and "endangered" woman. The perception in patriarchal society that a woman alone on the street, especially late at night, is *immoral* and therefore *deserving* of any kind of violence, creates fear in women, whether consciously or unconsciously. When I looked at the data I collected in this context, I saw that women have never had an experience where they lost control, no matter how much they drink. They have always emphasized that they are always self-controlled. I have found that even women who are privileged to go out and drink all night a few times a week and get really drunk are never drunk enough to get into a state they do not want.

But it's because of living life on high alert, always being self-controlled. I'll give you a simple example, maybe it's illegal, but substances used in Holland are also used here, but I think women who use here are more self-controlled. They don't get as high that they'll lose themselves. Even if they do, they quickly recover. Because you know, 'I have to get to home somehow, I have to quickly compose myself and get going.' Men are carefree, they just let go of themselves. But women somehow always manage to keep enough composure to the point where they can get themselves back home. Even if they had a lot to drink. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ama işte o hep hayatı tetikte yaşamaktan kaynaklı, hep otokontrollü olmaktan dolayı. Çok basit bir örnek vereceğim, belki legal olmayan bir şey ama hani işte Hollanda'da kullanılan şeyler burada da kullanılıyor ama inan burada kullanan kadınlar daha otokontrollü. Kadını çarpmıyor bence. Çarpsa bile bence hemen ayılıyor. Yani çarpsa bile ayılıyor. Çünkü ben eve gideceğim, hani hemen toparlanayım da bir evime gideyim yolum var. Erkekler laçka gibi hemen bırakıyor kendilerini. Ama

Another uneasy case in the public spaces of the city was encounters with men. In each interview, different dimensions of this situation were mentioned, but this was definitely the case in all of them. Meeting different men in different contexts created fear, anxiety, insecurity and uneasiness in the women I interviewed. These feelings and experiences can be explained through Gill Valentine's (1989: 386) concept of "dangerous men". Examining the relationship between male violence, fear of violence, and women's perceptions of the use of space, Valentine (1989) emphasizes that not all men are intimidating to women, therefore, women must make assumptions about when and where they might encounter these dangerous men. While drunken men do not evoke anything in most women, some have mentioned that they want to get away. These women, unlike others, emphasized that the drunk men were able to do anything under the influence of alcohol. Others stated that alcohol actually stuns men so that they can easily walk away from this opportunity; "what can they do, at worst, I run". On the other hand, coming across men fighting on the street or on public transport was almost a common occurrence in many interviews. Some of my interviewees described these men in two different ways, some as crazy and some as quite conscious, all of them underlined an uncontrollable aggression. Navarrete-Hernandez et al.'s (2021: 3) concept of fear of violence can be associated with these emotions. When they see men fighting, they instantly change their ways and quickly walk away. Even if they are not alone, women who experience this tension and stress stated that they feel the need to touch the person next to them; one of my interviewees took her cousin's arm tightly and dragged her away. Besides men fighting with each other, I also had interviewees who said they were quite triggered when they saw men fighting with the woman next to them. While some of them said that they could not stand this image and moved away from the overwhelming feeling of sadness and anger, others shared that they felt the need to stay close to the woman the man was shouting:

People are afraid to help. I mean, sometimes I come across this too when I'm outside, maybe they are a couple or siblings or maybe just friends, I don't know. I see the man yelling at the woman, insulting her, and I stop there and wait. If I have someone with me, I tell them to wait for a couple minutes. Could I do anything?

inan kadın bir şekilde kendini eve gidecek durumda bırakıyor. Her ne kadar çok alkol de içse. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

Maybe the man will attack me too. If he were to hit me I may be knocked out or maybe he could pull out a knife on me. I don't know. These could all happen, but at least I feel like I should just stop and see what's happening so I could maybe call the police, or gather a few people to help at least. (...) Nonetheless, I can't just remain silent because I empathize with the woman. If it were another man, perhaps I might not think about interfering. But when I see a woman something comes over me and I start picturing myself in her shoes. Inevitably, I feel like I could be that woman in that moment just as easily. (Margot, 30, university)⁶⁵

This valis empathy with a woman they do not know indicates the existence of the knowledge that they know maybe without experiencing it. The information, "I could have been in her place" was present in almost every interviewee. Here, the lack of Habermas' (2018) claim that the public space is open and accessible to everyone can be seen. As a woman, urban visibility and mobility are restricted in order to avoid violence. The possibility of being subjected to violence at any moment is on women's minds, and noticing another woman and paying attention to her in the direction of this possibility brings to mind Gillian Rose's (1993) emphasis on women's strategies that challenge hegemonic masculinity. They may be feeling helpless, aware of the damage they will receive while intervening, but I also see in them the infinite potential of immense power. Despite everything, there were many women I interviewed who took a break from whatever they were doing at that moment in order not to leave this woman alone whom they did not know, ready to intervene.

One of my interviewees stated that being alone with a man in a narrow and confined space as an elevator gave her goosebumps. She said that many times when she was alone in the elevator, when a man came in, she came out. Another interviewee laid stress on being alone in the cinema, which is also a closed, confined but this time a dark place, would make her very nervous. She even shared that because of this

⁶⁵ İnsanlar da yardım etmeye korkuyorlar. Bir şey demiyorum, ben de şu an dışarıda mesela bazen denk geliyorum belki karı-koca belki sevgili belki abi-kardeş bilmiyorum. Bakıyorum adam bağılıyor kadına, hakaret ediyor vesaire, duruyorum orada bekliyorum mesela. Yanımda biri varsa onu da durduruyorum bekle iki dakika diyorum. Bir şey yapabilir miyim? Belki o an adam bana da saldıracak orada. Bir vursa belki ben de düşeceğim ya da belki bıçak çekecek. Bilemem. Hepsi başıma gelebilir ama en azından bir dur, belki en azından polisi arasın ya en kötü birkaç kişi toplarsın o an. (...) İnsan sessiz kalamıyor yine de çünkü aynı kefeye koyuyorsun kendini o kadınla. Belki başka bir erkek olsa, belki orada müdahale edeyim yapmayacağım. Ama bir kadını görünce şey oluyor insan, orada ben de olabilirim. Şu an onun yaşadığını ben yaşıyor olabilirim kafası oluşuyor insanda. İster istemez... (Margot, 30, üniversite)

uneasiness, even though she wanted so badly, she could not experience going to the movies alone. She is afraid that a man who takes advantage of the dark may come out of a place she cannot see and inflict all kinds of violence on her (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021). Emphasis is placed on the stress that comes from being alone and not being able to seek or receive help. Another aspect that caught my attention in counters with men in public was encountering men who were obviously Muslim conservatives from the outside. The hostile gaze of these men, who are usually over 50 years old, with a beard and a robe, makes women uncomfortable and uneasy. The fact that other men, who are younger and looked religious, have their backpacks and hoodies on, raises reasonable suspicion, especially during the periods of explosions, and causes women to walk away quickly with fear. Encounters with conservative Muslim men raise the possibility of being marginalized both as a woman and as an Armenian identity. This situation can be explained through the concepts of seclusion and concealment borrowed from Rodo-de-Zarate (2013).

Another reason for uneasiness appeared in the interviews as women feeling the male gaze in the public spaces of the city. Some of the interviewees, who said that they felt anger as well as uneasiness, stated that they could raise their voices during the daytime, but they distanced themselves from that man at night because of fear rather than anger. We can see from here how the previously discussed reasons are actually intertwined with each other and are in constant interaction. The emotions created by the fear of violence (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3) and exposure to the male gaze are intertwined. The dominant feeling of anger in women during daytime can be explained through Ponterotto's (2016: 147) approach to the concept of "male gaze". The female body becomes a site of power relations. The *conquest* and *ownership* of the female body through the gaze is a situation that denies women's agency and leads to anger. If it is dark and secluded, my interviewee thinks that there is no limit to what can happen to her by raising her voice. Another interviewee stated that if she does not feel this gaze on her in a place where there are men around her, she does not have a problem. However, she shared that she will be very afraid if she constantly or periodically feels the gaze of men, or if she sees him looking at other women.

As a woman, like all women, if there were an empty place and a man were to be placed in there with me, it would immediately start making me nervous. I don't know what it is. I don't trust anyone.

Appearance does matter in some cases, like if they're the same age as me or if I get the same impressions from them as I do from my friends, then it's not a problem for me. You never know what will happen, so it's still a bit scary but less so. But if it's just some random guy and he keeps looking at me every five minutes, then I try to move away. (Luna, 28, master's)⁶⁶

Being in an unknown place was almost always mentioned in interviews, when talking about fear and stressful cases. When they feel uneasy in a place they know, women have emphasized that they can enter the shops they know and/or trust, but there is no place they can take shelter in a place they do not know. Not knowing who to trust and what's where, causes a lot of stress at a time when they need to protect themselves. These experiences can be explained by Roy & Bailey's (2021: 7) concept of "familiarity". Accordingly, women feel much safer in spaces, places and neighborhoods where they are familiar. When this nervousness was also affected by being in a Muslim conservative region, women shared that they will feel very helpless and afraid. Here, being a woman and being an Armenian are intertwined. Here, Fortuijn, Horn & Ostendorf's (2004: 215) approach of how symbolic meanings revealed through the design or construction of a city affect the sense of belonging can be mentioned. The experiences of women who feel fear and anxiety in places with religious and Muslim conservative connotations can be interpreted as feeling marginalized and unable to establish a sense of belonging in these places. More than one of my interviewees think that in these regions, the angry looks and condemnation can turn into physical violence and even they will be murdered if they are found out to be Armenian. One of my interviewees shared an experience that happened to her while she was passing through Ümraniye, which she describes as conservative, one day she took the bus to work:

Once, someone looked at my cross and made disapproving noises like 'tsk tsk'. And I thought, what could this Hodja do to me if I get off here? What could he be imagining in his head? It made me

⁶⁶ Kadın olarak da işte her kadının yaşadığı gibi, boş bir ortam olsun bir tane adam koy yanıma direkt tedirginlik sebebi. Ne olduğunu bilmiyorum. Kimseye güvenmiyorum. Görünümünün bir önemi olabiliyor bazı noktalarda hani yaşıtımızsa ve hani benim çevremdeki arkadaşlarımın tiplemesindeyse benim için sorun yok. Ne olacağı belli olmaz yine ama tedirginliği azaltan bir şey. Ama yani böyle dayının tekiyse ve bana bakıyorsa, sürekli 5 dakikada bir bana bakışlarını çeviriyorsa o zaman ben direkt uzaklaşmaya çalışıyorum. (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

*uneasy, what if he was meditating on the parts of his belief where killing [non-Muslims] is considered halal? (Solin, 31, master's)*⁶⁷

It is understood from Solin's narrative that, beyond being in an unknown place, being in an unknown and conservative place directly affects the mobility of Armenian women in the city and creates their spatial emotions. Another of my interviewees openly shared that she thinks she will be killed if it is understood that she is Armenian when she becomes the focus for any reason that is deemed inappropriate as a woman in these regions. The concepts of familiarity (Roy & Bailey, 2021: 7), fear of violence and perceived safety (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3) are intertwined in women's intersectional experiences. The closure and concealment of ethnic and religious identities can result in the restriction of urban mobility.

While interacting with state institutions and apparatuses such as the police, the majority of my interviewees explained that they were experiencing stress and anxiety because of their Armenian identity. One of my self-employed interviewees shared that she was in and out of government offices and banks a lot as part of her job, and she felt uneasy in unfamiliar banks. In the banks she went to for the first time, she tried not to say her name, unless she had to, until it was her turn, and when she had to say it, she said it in a low voice. This interviewee also added that she hides her cross around here. A different interviewee emphasized that she feels the gaze of those around her, when she was at the places of the state like notary. Additionally, another significant finding was the anxiety and fear that women felt when threatening messages came to the institutions of the community. In such cases, these spaces and places make Armenian women remember their disadvantaged position(s) layer by layer and are forced to live it, due to their visibility (Hatuka & Toch, 2015: 2).

Once or twice it was written on the walls when I was there. Once it was written on the walls at Kalfayan, on the school's wall. There was some uneasiness then. I told my mom that it was just us two women there and maybe one other, the female cook. Then, besides us, there was just one [male] worker. There were only four of us in total, so what could we do if someone decided to bust through the door? But then I thought, this would be even easier at Kalfayan, for

⁶⁷ Ya bir kere haçıma bakıp cıkcıkçıy yapan olmuştı mesela. Ve şeyi düşündüm, bu hoca ben inersem bana bir şey yapabilir kafasında ne kuruyor acaba çünkü katli helaldir kısmına girdikleri için tedirgin hissettiriyor bana. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

*example what if they showed up with machetes and jumped the fence, they could easily just chop everybody to bits. I started having trouble sleeping, what if something would happen to the kids? (Solin, 31, master's)*⁶⁸

In addition to the threatening e-mails sent to the institutions of the community such as schools and churches, the graffiti written on the walls are symbolic violence towards the Armenian community. This interviewee, whose narration I quoted above, who worked at the school in Üsküdar for a while, could not even sleep for a long time due to the violence the school, the community and thus she was exposed to. It was seen in the interviews that, after these threats, the police waiting outside the churches also caused anxiety. More than one of my interviews shared that the police waiting outside during the Sunday rituals watched them uneasily and did not make them feel safe even though they were there for protection. In addition, a general distrust of the police was clear among the interviewees. The emphasis on Turkishness by Maksudyan (2005), Göl (2005), and Çağaptay (2002) and Morris's (2003) use of the concept of exclusion are intertwined. These are experienced through encounters with Muslims in public spaces, the disadvantageous position felt by my interlocutors, questions, discourse, gazes directed at them, intersections with state apparatuses such as the police, and attacks on the institutions of the community.

7.2 Protective Shields

I have seen women use many tactics and strategies in the face of the worrisome situations they are exposed to in public. My interviewees, who used them in different ways in different contexts, shared that they were very nervous when they were alone in the public space, especially when it was dark, as it was emphasized above, and that they first determined a safe route before they set off. The strategy being used here brings to mind the symbolic meanings emphasized by Massey (1994: 179) regarding the gendered structure of the public sphere. Within the scope of this strategy being employed to avoid being excluded from the public spaces through

⁶⁸ Oradayken 1-2 kez işte o duvarlara yazıldı, 1 kere Kalfayan'ın duvarına yazılmıştı okulun. Orada biraz bir tedirginlik olmuştu, anneme şey demiştim, kadın başına ikimiziz, yanımızda bir tek öteki aşçı kadın var onun dışında bir tane görevli var, 4 kişi falanız dedim yani biz ne yapabiliriz ki biri kapıdan içeri girse falan. Sonra ama şeyi düşündüm, Kalfayan'da şey daha kolay mesela çiti atlasan zaten birileri elinde satırla gelseler bizi doğrarlar yani. Bir ara çok böyle uyuyamama başlamıştı bende. Ya çocuklara bir şey olursa diye. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

violence, the most common strategy was to walk down the main street. Among the women I interviewed, those who left school or work late especially avoided side streets, underpasses and overpasses when they had to walk on the route, they had determined on their way home. For example, one of my interviewees said that after work when she wanted to stop by her partner, who lives in the back street of her workplace, she always went to the main street and walked from there. In this way, a five-minute journey would take fifteen to twenty minutes. Another said that when she was going to get off the public transport and walk home after work, she preferred the bazaar rather than the coast. Again, the road became quite long. Forced to take long distances, walk more and get more tired to feel safe, the common point that these women avoided was male violence in the secluded and dark spaces of the city after the sun went down. As Jiang et al. (2017) also pointed out, the dark and deserted areas, streets, and neighborhoods of the city limit women's freedom of movement in the city, highlighting that women's experiences are invisible in urban design and construction. Although working women could go out at the same time as their colleagues after work, they generally had to travel alone because their routes were different. However, on the days when they were not working, they would always move together when they went out. Additionally, they mentioned that when they commuted to work early in the morning and when they moved alone after work, they moved quickly. They would usually take fast steps to reach their destination without stopping anywhere on the way.

Three of the women I spoke to, used to carry self-defense tools, but they have since stopped. One of my interviewees, who had developed a habit of carrying pepper spray, started doing so after experiencing intense and suffocating stress, anxiety and fear when someone followed her home during her first year of university. Over time, feeling the pepper spray every time she put her hand in her pocket was exhausting and caused additional anxiety by reminding her of her disadvantaged position, so she gave it to her younger cousin. Another interviewee, who used to carry a knife, said that she stopped doing so because she feared that she might kill the attacker. She explained that using self-defense would not mean anything to the justice system, and she did not want her life to be ruined because of it. At this point, my interviewee became aware of her own contradictory situation and drifted into thought, saying, "I guess it's about how you choose to die". We both fell silent for a while in the face of

this sad and anger-inducing situation. Other interviewees who shared similar moments of silence with me said that when they feel uneasy walking alone on the street, they stay close to other women in the area. One of my interviewees explained that she did this both to feel safe and as a reflex to protect those women in case of a possible harassment:

Or, you know, you're walking on the street, and there are a lot of men around. I would rather be close to a woman. I would look for a woman or at least want to see another woman around other than me. Because unfortunately, and I say this with great sadness, I would not be the only one who might be harmed then. It means there would be another victim besides me. The idea is that it's not going to be just me who might get attacked. There's another woman who could be the focus and not me. Unfortunately, that's the case. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)⁶⁹

In addition to these, as a self-defense strategy, women have stated that they are always on alert. This state of alertness includes many tactics. One of them is to lower the volume of their music or remove one earbud altogether when they feel uneasy, or even turn off the music completely. Women have shared that they do this to be attentive to their surroundings when they are alone or when an outside noise drowns out the music they are listening to. Some have mentioned that they avoid listening to music if they anticipate feeling uneasy. Others have shared that they feel very paranoid after taking these precautions. This experience can be explained by what Kern (2019: 179) calls "inner reckoning". Kern has found that women's knowledge, memory, and experience of violence, as Valentine indicates (1992: 28), create in them a fear of feeling coward, too timid, and paranoid. Many of the interviewees who have experienced a sense of being followed since childhood have stated that they especially feel this way when walking alone on the street. They frequently check behind them for the feeling of being followed when passing through a quiet and calm place at night. One interviewee shared that she even constantly looked over her shoulder while walking home late from work in the neighborhood where she grew up and knew well. Another shared an experience of running non-stop in fear to

⁶⁹ Ya da ne bileyim, yolda yürüdün, sokaklarda yürüdün çok erkek var, daha kadınların yanına yaklaşırım. Ararım yani bir kadın görmek isterim ya da orada, yalnız değilim. Çünkü neden, maalesef ki bunu çok üzülererek söylüyorum, burada tek zarar gelme ihtimali olan kişi ben değilim. Burada biz, benim dışımda bir kurban daha var. Bu erkek bir şey yapar değil, bir şey olduğunda tek kurban ben değilim mantığı var bence. Başka bir kadın daha var, odak noktası ben değil o da olabilir. Maalesef bu var. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

her home on Kinalı, where she felt very safe otherwise. These kinds of cases demonstrate how even in spaces and places where women know and trust as a safe circle, it can be broken under certain conditions. Therefore, this reinforces the knowledge that one cannot be safe anywhere outside of home. This experience is a situation where ethno-religious identity intertwines with gender identity. Women who, under some circumstances, have their mobility restricted (Massey, 1994: 179) in the public spaces due to the fear of violence (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021: 3), reproduce the knowledge that the house is a safe place (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013: 17) where identity can be freely lived through their low-profile (Brink-Danan, 2011: 452) presence in the public sphere, based on their Armenian identity.

Strategies such as preparing the key in advance, keeping it in the pocket of their coat, and ringing the doorbell even when no one is at home to make the impression that someone is there in case someone is following them were the “classic” strategies that my interviewees said they have been using since forever when they arrive home. When they feel uneasy while walking or waiting at a stop, most of my interviewees said they pretended to be talking on the phone or actually called someone to talk. One interviewee shared that she automatically unlocks her phone every time she feels uneasy. In situations where movement is restricted, such as in a closed space like a bus, some interviewees have stated that they are particularly attentive to their surroundings when they are alone. They constantly check who is around, what they are doing, and if they are looking at them. If they can see the driver, they always make sure to keep an eye on them. One interviewee stated that she never uses the same walking route while moving and she constantly changes the sidewalk and walks in a zigzag pattern rather than walking in a straight line. When they did not want someone to interact with them, they stated that these people were especially men, my interviewees shared that they tried to be off-putting with their demeanor. While some said that by wearing headphones, they made themselves safe by ending the communication without starting, another said that she responded to approaching men with Armenian answers pretending to be a tourist. Another interviewee said that she tried to look unapproachable by shaping her facial expressions, while another added that she was trying to push them away with cold and short answers. Kern (2019: 169-170) explains these strategies and emotions as the “cost of fear”. Endless security measures such as determining safe routes, diversifying the route, prolonging

the path, interrupting the pleasure of listening to music, pretending to talk on the phone, or preparing the key in advance, as seen in the stories of my interviewees, take up women's time and energy.

In that case, I think my despot face might be scaring people away a bit. (Lala, 27, graduate student)⁷⁰

I act cold and give short answers. Especially if I'm not interested, if they keep asking so many questions and invading my privacy, it makes me uneasy. So, I give short answers. At most, I can say 'We are having a girls night out with my friends, please do not disturb'. (Luna, 27, master's)⁷¹

In addition to the tactics and strategies mentioned above, many of my interviewees have shared that they prefer to remain silent and distance themselves when they feel very scared and/or uneasy in public spaces of İstanbul. In such cases, they usually choose not to respond to the other person since they are alone and cannot trust their surroundings. They have shared that the most sensible thing to do is not to respond, and when they move away, they try to protect themselves. Even though she did those to save her own life, one of my interviewees added that she still felt bad. She shared that remaining silent in the face of the attacker, who she thinks can use all kinds of violence, sometimes makes her feel suppressed and intimidated.

But at the end of the day, I prefer to remain silent because I do not know how the people, those who carry this mindset will act out. We can call it repression, or we can call it not being able to show courage. (...) It affects [a person] in ways that changes who they are and want to be. On the one hand, look, I went abroad, this is a very sad thing in itself, look, I went and felt that I was in a very safe place. So, you could be feeling safe all you want but let's say when there was no one on the street, I would still feel the need to look behind me. (...) This learned helplessness part is so ... I can't help it. It's very sad. (Samsara, 28, university)⁷²

⁷⁰ Ya biraz o konuda benim despot suratımın olması biraz insanları kaçırıyor bence. (Lala, 27, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

⁷¹ Soğuk davranırım, kısa cevaplar veririm. Özellikle ilgimi çekmediyse bu kadar soru sorması, özelime girmesi beni tedirgin eder. Ben de kısa cevaplar veririm. Maksimum, 'şu an arkadaşlarımla kız kıza bir gecedeyiz lütfen rahatsız etmeyin' diyebilirim. (Luna, 27, yüksek lisans)

⁷² Ama günün sonunda bu halkın, bu zihindekilerin nasıl hamle yapacağını bilemediğim için biraz artık susmayı tercih ediyorum. Buna bastırılmışlık da diyebiliriz, buna cesaret gösteremiyor olmak da diyebiliriz. (...) [İnsanı] olduğu ve olmak istediği kişiyle etkiliyor. Bir taraftan bak yurtdışına gittim, bu bile çok üzücü bir şey, bak gittim, çok güvenli bir yerdeyim. Yani hissedebiliyorsun ne kadar güvenli bir yer olduğunu. Ama sokakta hiç kimse yokken arkama bakma ihtiyacı hissediyorum

This sense of learned helplessness, described very clearly by Samsara, was an emotion felt in almost every interview. The concept of “learned helplessness”, used in psychology, has been a topic of interest for experimental psychologists studying learning patterns. Through experiments conducted on animals, learned helplessness has been defined as displaying passive behavior in response to an uncontrollable source of stress and being unable to make a connection between necessary actions to eliminate the stressor (Maier & Seligman, 1976: 3-4). Similar experiments conducted on humans have also suggested that people exhibiting less effort to cope with or resolve a stressor are displaying learned helplessness behavior (Maier & Seligman, 1976: 9). However, I do not think it would be appropriate to use this concept in this thesis in this way. Armenian women, despite being aware that they may be subjected to various forms of violence in public spaces due to their identities and feeling helpless in this regard, do not react in the same way as the findings of experimental psychologists suggest. This experience, which is particularly common among women who commute using public transportation and walking, has not been able to make them give up the fight. Although the tactics and strategies they employ are undoubtedly familiar to all women and LGBTI+s, the effects of these and the situations they face, like learned helplessness, are not diminished. In this context, while acknowledging that every interview I have conducted has deeply affected me, I must say that the statements of one interviewee in particular have touched my heart. My interviewee, Antigone, who expressed that every step taken outside is a challenge, also shared that each outing brings along the fear of death. For my interviewee, who never misses the protests on March 8th and November 25th, every time she steps out onto the street feels like going to a protest. Since I conducted the interview without recording it, I will try to convey her statements based on the notes I took. She said, “just like when we go to a protest knowing that we might die, or we do not know what might happen to us but we are aware of the risks and are going anyway, every time we step outside is the same”. Although feelings such as anxiety, fear, worry, and stress are present in their experiences in public spaces, my interviewees have showed me, both in their narratives and in their everyday practices, that they have not given up on the streets.

mesela. (...) Ama bu öğrenilmiş çaresizlik kısmı şey ve bunu durduramıyorum. Çok üzücü. (Samsara, 28, üniversite)

7.3 Anxiety in Public Transport

Public transportation, which is an indispensable part of urban mobility and everyday practice, brings different emotions and experiences to women. For whom public transportation was an essential part of their daily lives, their narratives included more types of public transportation because they did not have a car. On the other hand, women who used public transportation to go to school until the end of high school answered my question based on their memorable experiences. A very small minority used very little public transportation and relied heavily on taxis outside of their own cars. The class divisions were evident in the context of mobility based on public transportation in the city. As highlighted by Navarrete-Hernandez et al.'s (2021: 3) article, women who use public transportation and do not have access to car privileges experience anxiety and fear more frequently in the city. Similarly, my interviewees who actively use public transportation shared that they feel anxious if they are in an unfamiliar place. While they pay attention to not missing their stops, they also feel nervous and stressed because they do not know where to seek refuge if something happens, and they do not know anything about the people living in the area. The concept of familiarity that Roy & Bailey (2021: 7) refer to is manifested in the cultural, demographic, and class dimensions of women's experiences. In addition, another reason for anxiety and uneasiness was the emptiness inside the vehicle. One of my interviewees shared that, in such situations, if there are no other women in the vehicle and there are men present, she pays attention to them without showing it and questions where the vehicle is going. Another interviewee stated that the emptiness inside the vehicle does not scare her if she is in a known area, but it makes her cautious if she is in an unknown area. She said she tries to understand the surroundings without taking her eyes off the driver. In such cases, she would get quite anxious when the vehicle passes under a bridge or through an underpass and the inside of the vehicle becomes dark.

Another interviewee shared an experience she had at her university, which was quite far from the city center. When she had to take the shuttle service to pass through the forest surrounding the school after getting off public transportation, she would not board the service if there were no other student waiting at the stop unless necessary. The darkness of the forest would give her chills, especially in the early hours of the

morning or when it gets dark after school. Having the driver be a school employee did not make her feel safe; on the contrary, she never trusted the driver under these circumstances. Additionally, if the other students on the shuttle were male, she also did not feel safe. When she had to board the shuttle to avoid being late for class, she felt very helpless. This unique but familiar experience points to multiple factors that create anxiety and fear. Moving away from the city center, the unfamiliarity of the forest and the area in general, isolation, darkness and silence (Kern, 2019: 168). One of the interviewees shared that she usually throws her cross back or takes it off in quiet and empty vehicles where she is usually alone. She added that the absence of anyone around, especially women, makes her feel extremely vulnerable. My interviewee also stated that she believes if someone sees the cross on her neck, there are no limits to what they could do to her, and she expressed concern for her own safety in such situations. In the experiences shared with me, almost always, the fear of the night or dark hours have been added. The intersecting experiences can be explained as anxiety created by the visibility of differences in the public space through symbols that evoke otherness (Burchardt & Griera, 2018).

*(...) For example, if there is only one person in the dead of night, I do not feel safe inside, I prefer not to ride. (Luna, 28, master's)*⁷³

Luna's narrative, as conveyed to me, is quite striking in showing how fear affects urban mobility and the use of public transportation. Many women are willing to delay their arrival times significantly by not getting on a coming vehicle, if necessary, in order to protect themselves. This burden, in the context of the fatigue created by the intensity of daily life for working women, can sometimes become unbearable. Koskela (1997: 304) discusses an interesting issue in their article; if someone has a strong sense of empowerment that they are in control of their life, they can show courage even in a risky environment they know about. However, this is not always the case for young, single Armenian women living in İstanbul. Most of the interviewees, who feel disadvantaged as women and do not know the spaces and places where they feel unsafe, are trying to protect themselves with feelings of fear and anxiety in the public spaces of the city, along with the symbolic meanings of their ethno-religious identities that can expose them to violence without limits. Many

⁷³ (...) mesela gecenin köründe tek birisi varsa içeride güvende hissetmem, binmem daha iyi derim. (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

of my interviewees have expressed longing for private cars simply because of such reasons, and those who use their own cars to commute also take those factors into account when driving. The majority of my interviewees who use public transportation described the subway as the safest option, while some also pointed out an important aspect of safety; the ability to escape by jumping out of the vehicle in case of danger:

The lack of evasive space in case of danger, being trapped inside... Well at least the bus eventually stops and the doors open. The metro though, it just keeps going and you can't stop it in the middle of nowhere to get off. (Samsara, 28, university)⁷⁴

For some of my interviewees, the fact that the doors of the vehicle may not open until the next stop, or that they may not be able to run away and protect themselves if the doors do open, made the subway a less attractive option than the bus. However, on the other hand, according to my interviewees, the bus was more socially diverse than the metro, which tends to stay in the city center and not venture into the surrounding areas, and this made them quite uneasy. At this point, some metro routes differed from others. For example, the Yenikapı-Hacıosman route was considered safer than the Bayrampaşa direction. Similarly, the Bağcılar-Kabataş line was considered to be among the worrying directions. In addition, according to some of my interviewees, except for the Yenikapı metro and Marmaray line, buses were filled with uncanny people. These people encountered there were generally described as men who did not take their eyes off my interviewees, “dangerous-looking”, and/or non-Turkish. The crowded and anonymous *nature* of public transportation, as well as their ability to accommodate people from all walks of life, makes them a “problematic point” (Kern, 2019: 173) with the potential to be surrounded by “dangerous men” (Valentine, 1989: 386).

The bus is horrifying. The bus is an unknown for me. There is no segmentation there, it's a shuffled environment. That's the situation [on buses]. (Lala, 27, graduate student)⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Herhangi bir tehlikeye karşı kaçınabileceğin bir alan olmaması, içerde kalmış olman, otobüs en azından bir şekilde durur o kapı açılır falan ama hani metro gidiyor, ortada bir yerde durdurup inemiyorum o metrodan. (Samsara, 28, üniversite)

⁷⁵ Otobüs korkunç. Otobüs bilinmezlik benim için. Çok karma bir ortam, segmentasyon yok orada bir kere. Öyle bir durum var yani. (Lala, 27, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

*The most dangerous one in my opinion would be the bus, because there are more backward people, forgive me but especially among the older population. (...) For example, I am not comfortable at the Dudullu metro. Rather conservative, closed communities more towards Ümraniye etc... Those make me nervous. (Solin, 31, master's)*⁷⁶

The commonality in these narratives was the factor of the unknown created by the chaos on the bus. These environments, which had class differences, housed people whom my interviewee was not familiar with. For example, the fact that those who boarded the bus were also conservative Muslims in a region being conservative Muslim made my interviewee feel uneasy. Another interviewee shared that the very old age group on the bus made her uneasy, but she would not feel so uneasy on a bus with people from her own age group. These experiences can be explained through the dimension of cultural and class differences in unfamiliar places and spaces (Roy & Bailey, 2021: 7). Environments where women are not culturally and socially familiar, can create unease, anxiety, and even fear. Another significant point that my interviewees highlighted was witnessing racist discourse during their journey. One of my interviewees, who said she felt very nervous in such situations, recounted an incident when she heard racist comments directed towards Armenians in the context of the Armenia-Azerbaijan issue while on a bus and was very afraid. She did not want anyone to know that she was Armenian and hid her cross. Another interviewee, who had had to travel through Muslim conservative areas to get to work, expressed concern about her cross being visible:

*I am very nervous, like when I have a cross around my neck. Who is looking at me or why are they looking... For example, I had my cross around my neck and I did not give my seat to an old lady who then scolded me. She thought I was a foreigner, 'They don't give seats', she snapped, 'We are treated as second-class citizens in our own country', and so on. When I responded asking what she was on about, it shocked her. Then she didn't say anything. (...) You are just ignored. (...) You are not there, not even as a second-class citizen, you just don't exist. (Solin, 31, master's)*⁷⁷

⁷⁶ En tehlikelisi bence otobüs çünkü otobüste daha yaşlı bir kesim olduğu için, hani affına sığınarak söylüyorum, geri kafalı daha çok insan oluyor. (...) Mesela Dudullu metrosunda ben hiç rahat değilim. Daha kapalı kesim, daha cemaat, Ümraniye tarafı vesaire. O beni geriyor. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

⁷⁷ Çok tedirgin olduğum, işte boynumda haç varken kim bakıyor ya da niye bakıyor... mesela boynumda haç varken bir teyzeye yer vermemiştım, bana çemkirmiştı. Yabancı zannetmiştı beni, 'yer

7.4 Security Factors of the Journey and Safety Strategies

Many of my interviewees have mentioned that the spaciousness of the movement space inside public transportation is a significant factor that gives them confidence. In this context, they have stated that even if they cannot get out of the vehicle, they have the opportunity to move away in case of a possible danger. Valentine (1992: 22) emphasized that distancing is the primary strategy for women to cope with violence in public spaces. Trains with carriages such as metro and Marmaray, as well as Metrobus which is not overwhelmingly crowded outside of rush hours, and finally ferries are included in this category. In addition, another important factor that gives confidence is that the vehicle is not empty and, more importantly, that there are other women present. Here, we can explain the emotion created by being close to other women through the concept of “boldness” derived from situations where *a strong sense of community spirit* is felt, as proposed by Koskela (1997: 304). This emotion derived from being in similar position through sharing experiences creates a sense of solidarity among women, enabling them to find boldness in these situations.

For my interviewees who ranked the metro as a safer of public transportation, the fact that not everyone has access to it was a contributing factor to feel safe. Unlike buses that constantly run on the streets, accessing the metro requires descending many stairs, and metros are clustered more in city centers. As one moves away from the center, the disappearance of familiarity and the cultural and class dimensions of the risks posed by unsafe crowds become apparent (Roy & Bailey, 2021: 7). In line with my interviewees’ experiences and observations, they encountered people that they were familiar with and felt close to. Despite not forgetting the negative impact of the knife-wielding attacker case on many women, which remained visible in the media for a long time, my interviewees still mentioned that the metro is used more by people who they feel closer to.

Sometimes I am not without uneasiness on the metro, but it's still something, that I can get off if anything happens. Also, the fact that it is faster helps. Also, if anything were to happen, people who take the metro seem to be more aware, they speak up and intervene, or

vermiyorlar’, işte ‘kendi ülkemizde ikinci insan muamelesi’ falan. Teyze ne diyorsunuz deyince bir şoklanmıştı. Sonra bir şey dememişti. (...) Öyle yok sayılıyorsun. (...) Sen yoksun, ikincil insan muamelesini geç yoksun yani. (Solin, 31, yüksek lisans)

at least that's what I've encountered so far. I feel more comfortable in that regard. Also, the range of people who take the metro is really wide. There are students, doctors, this and that and mothers, fathers, children too. When something happens, at least you feel a kind of closeness, in a manner. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)⁷⁸

In addition to being surrounded by familiar people, the frequency of use was another factor that I noticed during the interviews. The public transportation used by my interviewees was close to their homes in the central parts of the city such as Kurtuluş, Bomonti, Nişantaşı, Samatya, and Yeşilköy, and therefore, when commuting to work they often traveled with people who were close to them in respect to class. Feeling safe during accordingly during the journey gave them confidence. These experiences can be explained through Rodo-de-Zarate's (2013: 17) concept of "Relief Maps", consisting of "safe spaces". The spaces and places that give my interviewees a sense of relief and allow them to take a deep breath are marked as safe spaces on the maps, which are the mental reflections of their physical experiences in the city. Additionally, the short duration of the journey was also quite significant:

Of course, there were incidents there [on the metro] too, we have seen it, witnessed knife incidents and such, but for some reason, it still feels a bit safer because there is an additional security check during entry, also maybe because the time you spend in it is very determinate, you know, two minutes between stops, and I'm getting off anyway. It feels safer because if something were to happen to me, I could always get off at the next stop. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)⁷⁹

Another factor that caught my attention in many interviews was being on the sea. The class dimension of sea travel also emerged in my interviews; my interviewee Şuşan, who talked about her travels on the fast ferry, shared that she felt safe

⁷⁸ Metroda da hani bazen tedirgin olmuyor değilim ama onda da hani bir şey olsa inebilecek bir durumdayım hani öyle bir şey var. İşte daha hızlı olması bu arada tabi. Bir de hani ne bileyim bir şey olduğunda mesela insanlar daha bilinçli gibi geliyor metroya binenler, hani daha böyle bir şey olunca konuşuyorlar ediyorlar ya da ben öyle denk geliyorum hani. O yönde bir rahat gibi hissediyorum. Bir de metroya binen insan profili gerçekten çok geniş. Öğrencisi de var doktoru da var o da var bu da var, annesi de var babası da var çocuğu da var, hani daha bir şey olduğu için en azından kendini yakın hissediyorsun öyle söyleyeyim. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

⁷⁹ Tabi ki orada da olaylar yaşandı gördük ettik yani bıçaklı şeyler oldu falan ama nedense böyle bir tık daha, güvenlikten geçildiği için, belki içinde kaldığım süre bile belli olduğu için hani... duraklar arası 2 dakika, ineceğim zaten. Şimdi bana bir şey olsa sonraki durakta inerim şeyi olduğu için daha güvenli geliyor. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

traveling with people of high socio-economic level. During the interview, Şuşan also expressed awareness of her class privilege by stating that, according to my notes, “only a certain class can board the fast ferry because it is unfortunately quite expensive”. The fact that a certain price must be paid to board the fast ferry also shows that there are class privileges in sea travel. Şuşan’s narrative of “very expensive” indicates that sea travel caters to a certain socio-economic level and that other people cannot benefit from it. Apart from that, being in the open-air during ferry trips, feeling the air flow, and watching the Bosphorus made my interviewees feel very good. It made the journey more focused on pleasure than transportation. In their words, it “connected them to İstanbul”. For many of my interviewees, especially the island ferries had a distinctive position here. These experiences can be explained by Carmona’s (2014) concept of “good public spaces”. In these experiences, women can enjoy living in the city, feel free, engaged and comfortable, and establish meaningful relationships with the city. They felt very connected to it, especially during hours when there were no tourists around. My interviewee Arev said that she could tell if someone was an islander or not by the way they sat, looked, and behaved. She shared, quoting from notes that I took, that, “if I opened a book about the 1915 events among these people, no one would turn around to look at me”, and crowned her narrative by describing the island ferry as “like me”. Here, we can consider boldness (Koskela, 1997: 304) that comes from being surrounded by a sense of community, i.e., sharing the space with people who are familiar and even evoke a sense of belonging. In this way, emotions such as fear, anxiety, and stress in public transportation can be overcome.

I have observed that the tactics and strategies for self-protection in public transportation are similar among my interviewees. The most common one was to get on the vehicle with friends or in a crowd. Another was to call a close friend or family member when they were alone and felt uneasy. Among my interviewees, it was quite common to call their mother or their close female friends, no matter what time it was. In situations where communication with the driver is necessary, such as in “*dolmuş*” or minibuses, some women try to take precautions against possible forms of harassment by addressing the other as “*abi*”⁸⁰. In addition, dressing more

⁸⁰ Turkish word meaning big brother.

conservatively was a strategy used by almost all of the interviewees. They mentioned that when it was necessary to dress formally and elegantly for work, they shaped their clothing with a slight compromise. Another common tendency among women during the journey was to avoid standing still as much as possible and to move around, changing cars if necessary to get away from men who made them uncomfortable. When faced with men who were fighting or bothering them, the first strategy most women employed was to move away, but some interviewees reported that they raised their voices and shouted when subjected to harassment. This act, which was carried out with the support of those around them, could evoke fear and anxiety in an empty public transportation, and could lead to moving away or changing seats to avoid the situation. When I asked how they position themselves using the space available in public transport, I observed that women prefer to stand close to the exit to easily move away in case of danger and to have a clear view of the entire space. Some mentioned that sitting in the corners of vehicles like the metrobus allows them to observe their surroundings easily, while others feel safer standing and leaning against something. Women who stand on buses tend to position themselves with their backs against the window in the empty space near the middle door or directly in front of the rear door. On the metro, they usually prefer to stand next to the door. Women identifying and pinpointing the “dangerous places and times” (Valentine, 1992) in the city in order to avoid violence and feel in control of their safety can also be considered in terms of physical spaces in public transportation. In addition to choosing spots where they can easily escape (Valentine, 1992: 22) when feeling vulnerable, helpless, and threatened, women also resort to observing the entire space in order to prevent fear of violence.

Usually, when I get on the bus, I go to the area right in front you when you enter from the middle door, where people stand against the windows in the center of the bus. I stand there with my bag behind me. I put my back against the window. If there's no seat available, I stand like that. When there's a seat available, I sit right by that same area. Not by the door, the other side. (Yeraz, 24, graduate student)⁸¹

⁸¹ [otobüste] Girince genelde karşı taraf, yani, orta kapının tam karşısındaki camlı kısım, ayakta durulan. Ayakta durup orada çantamı genelde arkama alıp o şekilde duruyorsun. Sırtımı cama veririm aynen. Eğer yer yoksa o şekilde. Yer olduğunda da hemen onun yani, o camlı kısım vardır ya oraya oturuyorsun. Kapının tarafı değil öbür taraf. (Yeraz, 24, yüksek lisans yapıyor)

I prefer to stand on the metro rather than sit next to someone. I stand near the door. (Tinker Bell, 31, university)⁸²

When discussing the strategies used by those who use public transportation to feel safe, I noticed that all of my interviewees, except for those who had to go out of the city centers for work, did not venture far from their homes. In addition, I saw that they all preferred not to move away far from the city centers such as Ortaköy, Bebek, Nişantaşı, Taksim or Cihangir, which are relatively safe even at night and where public transportation networks are dense. Along with the ease of transportation, this also eliminates the uncertainties that the surroundings may bring, allowing them to stay within their *safety circles* of their homes, their families, and thus, the community. In addition to not moving away from “Relief Maps” (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013: 17) to ensure their safety, Armenian women can also be encouraged not to move away from the safe spaces that are their “homes”. As emphasized by Ekmekçioğlu (2016: 39), staying close to home as a norm within the community in order to protect against the dangers of differences in public space, was, consciously or unconsciously, utilized by some of my interviewees.

7.5 Taximeter of Anxiety: Tactics and Strategies in Taxis

The need to create this subheading arose because fourteen out of fifteen respondents emphasized that they avoided taking taxis unless absolutely necessary due to the infinite possibilities that come with travelling alone with a stranger. In my opinion, this striking emphasis deserved a separate section. During the interviews, we specifically focused on taxis compared to other modes of transportation due to the emphasis placed on it. Especially, the taxi was noted to evoke feelings such as anxiety, fear, insecurity, stress, and helplessness. One of my interviewees, who stated that she feels safe in taxis, also mentioned that she gets off the taxi ten meters away from her house just in case the driver learns her address. The overwhelming majority of the women I spoke with preferred to take a taxi to avoid being alone on the streets at night. They made this choice out of necessity, speed, a little helplessness, and a need to feel safe. Most of my interviewees emphasized that they sobered up as soon as they got into the taxi, even if they had consumed alcohol before getting in. The

⁸² Ki ben zaten metroda birinin yanında oturmayı tercih etmiyorum ayakta durmayı tercih ediyorum. Kapiya yakın duruyorum. (Tinker Bell, 31, üniversite)

most common strategy adopted by women was to avoid getting into unfamiliar vehicles; in addition to calling for a taxi from a stand or using apps like Uber and BiTaksi, they also included calling and requesting rides from familiar and trusted drivers. Another common strategy I encountered was sharing information about the taxi. Many women shared their live location with their girlfriends on WhatsApp groups, while others wrote down the license plate number. Additionally, if they continued to feel uneasy after getting in the taxi, they pretended to talk on the phone or actually called someone.

I don't feel very uneasy during the day, but if I'm coming back from somewhere alone in the evening, I usually avoid taking a taxi. I'm really scared of taxis. I think they are the most problematic ones. This is not because of my religious identity, but because I'm a woman. Sometimes if I'm scared, I do this: I make sure to take a picture of the license plate, I usually share my live location and I pretend I'm on a call with someone, saying stuff like, 'Are you at such and such corner? Okay, I'll be there in five minutes.' (Margot, 30, university)⁸³

Some of my interviewees tried to minimize communication with the driver, either by staying silent, giving short answers to questions, or pretending to be occupied with their phones. While one of the interviewees emphasized the importance of not contradicting the driving, another one shared that she used a Turkish pseudonym when asked for her name in order to conceal her Armenian identity:

But taxis are definitely the most unsafe option. I always act like I'm in agreement with [the driver's] opinions when I'm in the taxi. If I'm with someone though, I might make myself more visible, not necessarily by disclosing my Armenian identity, but when we're talking about something I might not withhold my reactions or I might express where I stand on the subject matter. I'm too scared to take that risk when I'm alone. (Azad Gin, 23, university student)⁸⁴

⁸³ Gündüz saati çok tedirgin olmuyorum ama akşam bir yerden dönüyorsam ve teksem çok açıkçası tercih etmiyorum taksi. Gerçekten taksilerden korkuyorum. Bence en sıkıntılı yer orası. Bunun dini kimlikle değil, bir kadın olarak. Onda da yapabileceğim şu oluyor bazen, eğer ki o an korktuysam vesaire ki zaten muhakkak plaka ya da canlı konum atmış oluyorum, artı telefon açarım o an konuşuyormuş gibi yaparım. Ya işte falanca köşede misin tamam 5 dakika ineceğim diyorum. (Margot, 30, üniversite)

⁸⁴ Ama kesinlikle en güvensiz taksi geliyor. Her zaman onların fikrindeymiş gibi davranırım takside. Yani yine biriyleysen daha kendimi belli ederim, illa Ermeni kimliğimi demiyorum, bir şey hakkında konuşuyorken duruşumu belli ederim, tepkimi belli ederim. Ama tekken hiç o şeye girmem, hiç o riske girmem. Korkarım yani. (Azad Gin, 23, üniversite öğrencisi)

*(...) When they ask me my name, I just make up something on the spot, something like Defne. I mean, it's clear the conversation won't be a pleasant one. When they ask me where I'm from, it bothers me. It's like, why should I tell this person the truth? He won't understand anyway, he'll just think, 'Oh, she's a foreigner' or whatever. It's better if he doesn't know at all. (Luna, 28, master's)*⁸⁵

The majority of the interviewees who had Armenian identity remembered their mothers' advice to "not say 'mama' in the taxi" and "not speak Armenian in the taxi", and therefore preferred to conceal their Armenian identity while in a taxi alone. In addition to using a Turkish pseudonym, they could also hide or remove their cross. On the other hand, some women who chose not to resort to these tactics and preferred not to conceal their identity explained that they knew they were taking risks by doing so but still never wanted to hide their identity. In their research on women in Helsinki, Hille Koskela (1997) showed that even brave women always feel fear inside them. When considering the situation in a taxi, doing what they know is risky is proof of that. Almost every interviewee as a woman, mentioned that they dress more conservatively when they have to take a taxi. They have made it a habit to wear a long coat cover a short dress or to cover their legs with their bags. Additionally, most of the interviewees stated that they inspect the driver's appearance before getting into the taxi. If the driver appears too conservative or does not seem trustworthy, as we remember Valentine's (1989) concept of "dangerous men", they prefer to wait for another taxi. They also do this for their girlfriends who will take a taxi. In situations where they go out together at night, they prefer to ride together in a group and drop each other off at home. The last person would then share their live location with those who got off the taxi.

In the interviews conducted, different aspects of taking a taxi are clearly evident. While it is a quick option to avoid staying on the streets at night, it also brings dangers such as harassment, rape, abduction, and murder. Therefore, women always prioritize not taking a taxi unless they have to, despite resorting to the tactics and strategies mentioned above. In public transportation, especially at night, taxis

⁸⁵ (...) adın ne dediklerinde direkt Defne diye sallıyorum mesela. Hani hoş yerlere gitmeyeceği belli. Nerelisin sorusunu duymak bile bir adım sonrasında, beni rahatsız ediyor yani neden adama anlatayım ki şimdi boşuna anlamayacak zaten hani bilmesin daha iyi. Yabancıdır diyecek bilmem ne. (Luna, 28, yüksek lisans)

become an option. As Kern (2019: 170) clearly indicates “the economic aspect of fear” is evident in the context of taking a taxi. All interviewees emphasized that finding a taxi is becoming increasingly difficult. While women with high socio-economic status have the privilege of being able to move away from their homes when they go out at night, others have to choose options closer to their homes. Short distances by car or walking are preferred. If they have to travel a longer distance, they do it once a month. On the other hand, for example, taking a taxi from Bebek or Sarıyer to Bomonti and doing this every week does not put pressure on women who have class privileges.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary of the Research

From the very beginning of the design and construction processes, cities have a gendered organization, which is clearly evident in the way daily life is lived. Every level, from the location of homes, workplaces, parks, or public transportation stops to how public transportation networks are woven into the city, affects which groups can access them and how they use public spaces. The gendered structure of the city prompts us to ask, “Who designs the urban spaces?”. Finding the answer is certainly not as easy as asking the question, because the answer, which is related to thinking about who has priority in use and access, will point to the complex and layered structure of cities. It is not surprising to say that streets that are not brightened enough or underpasses left dark give every woman and LGBTI+s goosebumps. These point to the violence and even fear of being killed that every woman and LGBTI+ is forced to experience in their daily lives. While such urban infrastructure problems may not be seen as difficult to predict by some urban designers, planting a tree at the intersection of walking paths, placing a large flower, or designing sidewalks that force people to walk along the edge of a high wall may not easily come to mind. However, these factors shape the urban spatial perceptions of many disadvantaged groups and affect their use of public spaces. These design problems, which create security problems, fear of violence, anxiety, and stress, are moments that turn daily life into a nightmare for many disadvantaged groups. It is thought that women’s spaces are limited to the home. This situation directly affects the relationships that women establish with public spaces. In the public spaces of the city, life often flows as if women are absent. When factors such as ethno-religious

background and class are added to this balance, the issue of use and access becomes increasingly complex and complicated.

This thesis, whose main concern is to reveal the relationship between space and the intersectionality of gender and ethno-religious identity, is challenging the gendered structure of public space. It aims to understand the experiences of single Armenian women in İstanbul when using public spaces, which no other research or thesis has focused on. The thesis asks how their identities affect their choices when selecting areas they want to live in or when spending their free time in İstanbul, or how they develop tactics and strategies to cope with fear, anxiety, and unease that they experience because of their gender and Armenian identity. Additionally, it examines the advantages of urban public space use for educated and urban Armenian single women. Therefore, the relationship between gender and ethno-religious identity in public space, along with intersectionality debates, aims to be expressed through the analysis of field data. The effects of violence fear on urban mobility and visibility have been revealed by mapping the dangers. Furthermore, the relationship between intersectionality and violence have been demonstrated. Based on the narratives of women, the tactics and strategies they use to protect themselves from discrimination and violence have been revealed, and their urban agency will be made visible.

When designing a research question that would meet these goals, the focus was on the Armenian community, having a larger population. As I learned from obtaining insider information about the community's structure from a key person, I saw that parents placed great importance on educating their daughters, no matter how economically disadvantaged they were. Therefore, I took women with higher education as a fixed category among those I would interview. In this thesis, which focuses on the effect of this education on the use of public space, the research question was shaped accordingly. In this context, when designing the sample, two groups were formed. (1) Women who have a high degree of autonomy and control over their work. This includes business owners and executives, who have a high degree of control over their work. And (2) those who have a low degree of autonomy and control over their work. This includes salaried employees who have *less control* over their work. While the fact that the women in the first group either inherit the family business or have the capital to start their own business indicates that they are

at a similar socio-economic level as their families, it can be said that the second group is becoming socio-economically differentiated from their families. While starting the research, it was observed that, in addition to a single main research question, another question was also answered as a result of the field research, and thus a different sub-research question was identified.

Research Question:

RQ: How do the ethnic and gender identities of a highly educated group intersect with the relationality and spatiality in the public space?

Sub-Question:

SQ1: How are the tactics and strategies that single Armenian women use in their relationships with the wider society?

Armenian women and the public space have guided the selection of the sample for the research. In this direction, the age range of unmarried women, who have not yet *settled down*, will be determined. To do this, insider information has been consulted again. According to the information obtained from this key person who is a member of the Armenian community, the rate of unmarried young women over thirty years of age is rapidly decreasing, and the probability of remaining unmarried after thirty-five years of age is very weak. Therefore, the age range has been determined as twenty-five to thirty-five years old, and considering that the number of unmarried women is already quite low, the age range has been left flexible by two or three years to reach them. Since the use of public space is positioned on the axes of access, visibility, and mobility, it is planned to conduct interviews with working and/or studying women. In order to ensure socio-economic diversity, working women are divided into two groups; (1) those who work for others and (2) those who work for themselves. Hence, one group shares a similar socio-economic position with their families while the other is differentiated. In this direction, a total of fifteen women were interviewed, including eleven skilled workers, three self-employed women, and one senior executive.

This thesis is informed by feminist standpoint theory, which emphasizes the importance of centering the narratives, perspectives and experiences of women in understanding the social world. By making women the focus of the research, this

study aims to challenge the patriarchal order not just by giving them visibility, but also by advocating for and effecting change on their behalf. Gender relations are closely intertwined with spatial perceptions, emotions, and experiences. Through this research, the impact of ethno-religious and gender identities on how İstanbul's public spaces are perceived and experienced is revealed. Consequently, this study opens up the possibility of exploring how concepts such as marital status, level of education, gender, and ethno-religious identity can be used to better understand social and spatial relations. Additionally, it brings to the forefront women's struggles for existence by revealing their tactics and strategies in the public spaces, as well as their mechanisms for coping with ethno-religious discrimination and male violence.

The literature that informs the research is composed of different aspects. First, discussions on the public space have been conducted. This section is aimed to challenge the theoretical discussion that there is a universal, objective, neutral, single, and homogeneous public space. It has been discussed that everyone's access and use are not equal. Therefore, visibility, difference and counter-public spaces have been discussed in this section. In another aspect where gendered public space discussions are made, first and foremost, gendered spatiality has been considered in the context of class to explain differences in the use and access to the public space, and then main concepts that emerged in the context of gendered spatiality have been discussed. These concepts, such as "visibility", "familiarity", "safe spaces", "relief maps", "fear of violence", "dangerous men", "male gaze", "flaneur" and "flaneuse", and "bold walks", have been included in the analysis as key concepts when interpreting and analyzing the data collected in the field research. In the next aspect where gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic level are discussed, intersectionality approaches have been discussed. In the section discussing the public space, the concept of the public sphere is problematized and contested. We argue that the public space is not universal, objective, neutral, single, and homogeneous, but it is always specific, historical, and embedded in power relations. Therefore, access and use of the public spaces are not equal for everyone. For instance, marginalized groups such as women, LGBTI+ s, minorities, people with disabilities, and workers experience various barriers to accessing the public space due to discrimination, stigmatization, and violence. In addition, the public space is not only the domain of rational deliberation, but also a site of emotions, affectivities, and corporeality. Therefore, the

public space is not only about the exchange of opinions and ideas, but also about the embodied experience of being in public and *enjoying* the urban experience. This embodied experience is gendered, racialized, and classed, and affects how people perceive and experience the public space.

In the section discussing gendered public space, it has been argued that the public space is not gender-neutral, but gendered. It is shaped by the dominant norms and values of masculinity and femininity, and that these norms and values reproduce gender inequality and discrimination. It has also been argued that the public space is not a single *entity*, but composed of multiple publics, such as the experiences of “public women”, “dangerous” or “endangered” ones, each with its own norms, values, and practices. These multiple publics are often organized around gender, ethnicity, religion, and class, and they compete with each other for visibility and legitimacy. In the context of gendered spatiality, it has been discussed that the public space is not only a discursive and symbolic space, but also a physical and material space. Therefore, the physical and material characteristics of the public space, such as architecture, design, lighting, and signage, affect how people use and experience the spaces and places of the city. It has also been discussed that the public space is not a neutral and homogeneous space, but a space that is marked by power relations and social hierarchies. Therefore, access and use of the public space are not equal for everyone, but are shaped by social categories such as gender, class, and ethnicity.

In the context of intersectionality, it has been argued that gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic position intersect and interact with each other, producing multiple and overlapping forms of inequality and discrimination. The concept of intersectionality provides a more complex and nuanced understanding of social inequalities and discriminations, and that it helps to identify the specific experiences and struggles of marginalized groups, and the multiple and intersecting identities and subjectivities of individuals, and that it helps to avoid essentializing and homogenizing social categories. Next, the descriptions and meanings of being a minority in Turkey was explained, shedding light on the discussion of perceptions, emotions, and experiences, as later will be related to being a minority in the collected data. Under the subheading of this aspect, the historical context of the Armenian community in Turkey was examined, contributing to the framing of the social and

collective context of the sample of the research. Finally, discussions were carried out that focused on women belonging to minority communities. In this section, the experiences of women in marginalized groups and communities were discussed in general, followed by discussions specifically about the Armenian community in İstanbul. This section, which constitutes the final aspect of the literature review, revealed a significant lack of research on Armenian women, and that no research had been conducted on single and young Armenian women.

Before delving into the findings of the research, it is necessary to briefly discuss the assumptions made prior to the fieldwork and compare them to the collected data. These assumptions can be categorized into two categories such as (1) related to identities and (2) related to urban visibility, mobility, and spatiality. Firstly, based on literature, it was assumed that Armenian women clustered together in the city based on their socio-economic positions. The means of transportation they use to get to work is related to this position. In the field, I saw that this was partially valid. The places where my interviewees lived with their parents provided clues about their socio-economic level. On the other hand, the majority of parents, who migrated from Anatolia, were able to buy or build a house in areas like Yeşilköy, which were not yet urbanized or were in the process of being urbanized, due to the affordable prices. In addition to such examples, there were also parents who preferred to settle in areas like Bakırköy, even though their socio-economic level was high, simply because there were significant number of families from the Armenian community. It had not occurred to me to include such situations in my assumptions. It was assumed that Armenian women who did not attend mixed schools with the wider society before university, struggled more with discrimination at university compared to those who did. I assumed that I would encounter Turkish-origin names frequently in the field, thinking about the strategy parents used to protect their children from discrimination. However, none of the women I interviewed had Turkish-origin names. I had also assumed that they preferred to use pseudonyms when dealing with unfamiliar or “once-in-a-lifetime” encounters. However, I saw that most of my interviewees did not do that and instead, they revealed their Armenian identity by stating their names at the beginning. Consistent with my assumption, I saw that they were subject to various interrogations based on their names in their school and work lives.

My assumption that community networks would create safe spaces for job seekers in the business world was consistent with the experiences of some of my interviewees. On the other hand, I assumed that outside of these networks, they would be subjected to institutional discrimination due to being an Armenian woman in their workplace. While a few of my interviewees had experienced discrimination due to being Armenian, none of them had experienced discrimination due to being a woman. Ageism, a situation that a few of my interviewees experienced in their careers, was a circumstance that I had not seen beyond my assumptions. Additionally, I assumed that working women in the community would be problematic if it prioritized marriage, but I observed the opposite. The parents of my interviewees urged them to marry after achieving economic independence. My assumption regarding the “task-oriented” use of public spaces by single Armenian women was self-contradicted by field research. I found that the majority of my interviewees did not have a fixed routines such as home-work-market-home, but had a habit of spending time in public spaces. Similarly, my assumption that there were no flaneur experiences was self-contradicted by data. I assumed that Prince Islands were the only place where they could live their identities freely in public spaces. However, while this was true only for those who owned summer houses on islands, many of my interviewees felt a relative sense of belonging and safety in the areas where the community clustered. My assumption that these neighborhoods could be restrictive was also contradicted by field research.

My assumption that in contexts of visibility and mobility in the public space, the identity of being a woman is more prominent than being Armenian was based on my concern of fear, and anxiety. However, this assumption, which is partially valid, was proven incomplete by the narratives of my interviewees, who expressed that the extent of violence they would face would be limitless once their Armenian identity was recognized. My assumption that deserted, secluded and dark streets, underpasses, and corners pose a risk for women was valid, but incomplete. Many of my interviewees believed that their lives in the public space would be restricted by marriage, which validated my assumption in that direction. My assumption that gender creates more daunting and uneasy situations in the public space compared to ethno-religious identity was partially valid. Armenian identities had the potential to exacerbate violence in these situations and act as a catalyst for the emotions

experienced. The state's spaces and mechanisms are causing anxiety and reproducing the othering of Armenian women. This assumption was self-proven by the data in the field research. In addition, I assumed that the more Muslim and conservative connotations the neighborhoods had, the more my interviewees would feel strange, uneasy and nervous, which was in line with my findings.

8.2 Highly Educated Single Armenian Women's Relationality with the Public Space

Of the fifteen women I interviewed with, fourteen were born in İstanbul, while one was born in Diyarbakir. Six of the parents were born in Sason, Batman. The other six were born in Anatolian cities such as Kayseri, Malatya, Adıyaman, Erzurum, Diyarbakir, and Mardin, and moved to İstanbul after reaching a certain age. Three of the women had one parent who was an İstanbul Armenian who had been living in İstanbul for generations, while the others were born in Anatolian cities such as Sivas, Bursa, and Yozgat, and later moved to İstanbul. Therefore, although fourteen of the women were born in Istanbul, twelve of them had Anatolian Armenian parents, while only one of the parents of the other three was Anatolian Armenian. The parents mostly came to Istanbul with the dream of a better life, worked and accumulated capital, and, as the findings suggest, seized various opportunities, some of them buying homes around Kurtuluş, Ortaköy, Harbiye, and Yeşilköy with their extended families, while others bought homes after getting married. A few parents who had properties in Anatolia sold them before moving to Istanbul and settled in Bakırköy and Kurtuluş with their capital. When they first arrived in Istanbul, some had to stay at the church due to economic reasons, while others settled in charitable foundations with their families. They lived in places like Taksim, Tarlabaşı, Sarıyer, Bakırköy, Samatya, Kumkapı, and Çağlayan until they saved enough capital. Some started their own businesses with their families, some joined their family businesses, and some started working as laborers in other Armenian workshops. The mothers of the women I spoke with also mostly worked, some in factories and some in their family's shops. Although some of the fathers of the women I spoke with are retired, they are still working, and four of the women's mothers are still working. Regardless of their economic situation when they arrived in Istanbul, I saw that the parents invested all of their capital in their children's education, even if they themselves had

not been educated. Therefore, the women I spoke with were raised to study, work, and become economically independent from childhood.

Eleven of my interviewees have attended Armenian schools until university, but this has not been openly discussed within their families. As thoroughly discussed in the findings, since the regions they lived in were predominantly populated by the Armenian community, sending children to Armenian schools in the neighborhood became a tradition. Over time, my interviewees learned to move in groups with their neighbors who also attended the same school, as they walked to school. This internalized behavior became a practicality that eased their parents' minds, while also becoming a self-protection strategy for my interviewees. It was observed that the first bonds established with the areas where they lived, which would later become safe havens, began to develop from childhood. Two of my interviewees who did not attend Armenian schools until university were sent to foreign national high schools. Although this choice financially strained some parents, they did not want their children to grow up in a closed environment, and sent them to these schools. My interviewees felt safe in these schools because they saw that the environment was not exclusively made up of Muslims, but had a mixed structure. Additionally, these schools, which required a socio-economic status higher than that of my interviewees' parents, provided safe spaces for them. Therefore, the class-based nature of security is revealed here, which was adopted by both my interviewees and their parents.

Some of my interviewees who attended private universities have received scholarships. One of my interviewees who attended a public university had studied in a different city, dropped out, and came to İstanbul to work. After working for a while in an institution run by Armenian community, she won admission to a private university to study the profession he had dreamed of. Nine of my interviewees are university graduates, two have completed postgraduate studies, one is an undergraduate student, and three are postgraduate students. Seven of my university graduate interviewees started working without delay. Since working was encouraged by their parents from an early age, most of my interviewees enjoy working. Even those who claim they do not need to work still work. My interviewees who say they feel confident and strong have stopped receiving financial support from their families, and some even contribute to the household economy. Although my

interviewees who live with their families can meet their own needs with their salaries, the majority cannot afford to live alone in Istanbul. The minority of the interviewees who claims they could move out to their own place, but their parents do not approve of an unmarried woman living alone, have stayed with their families. The symbolic meaning of work was quite clear in the field. My interviewees emphasized that they gained their parents' respect by entering the workforce and that their parents no longer treated them like children. One of my interviewees, who took over the family business, even worked for a company in her field for several years after graduating. She stated that she gained her father's respect by doing so and later took over the family business.

Although not all of my interviewees are working in the profession they studied, most of them have gained certain qualifications along with their education and have entered the job market accordingly. My interviewees include teachers, psychologists, engineers, architects, and professionals from various fields, as well as those who have taken over their family business. Career is a top priority for all of them. While most parents tend to talk about marriage once their children have passed the age of twenty-five, my interviewees are not inclined to get married without finding *the right person*. In general, my interviewees are urban and educated, working either as self-employed or in full-time jobs, usually preferring to go to church on special occasions, spending their free time in different ways, such as going to the gym in their neighborhood or exploring the streets of the city. Although they have achieved financial independence, many of these women are not economically capable of living alone. Less than half of them have family summer homes on the islands, while the rest of the families rent houses together in different cities during the season, or rent a more refined holiday experience in a gated community if they can afford it. Most of my interviewees no longer go on vacations with their families as they did during adolescence and early adulthood, but they still take solo trips to their family's summer homes in İstanbul whenever they have time off from work.

The majority of my interviewees became aware of their minority identities through various public experiences at a young age. Most of them had limited public exposure and socialization until university, where they began to venture out and explore different areas using various forms of public transportation to attend schools in

different locations. They made friends outside of their community and developed new spatialities beyond the safe areas of their community. However, they had grown up with advices from their parents, particularly regarding their gender and ethno-religious identity, which started the process of internalizing fear in their everyday public lives. Therefore, they have learned to always be on guard and never lose control since childhood. In this regard, the concept of disguise for safety became prominent. The most common admonishment they received was to hide their religious symbols. They were also told to remain silent, not draw attention to themselves, and to “keep a low profile” in public. Furthermore, they were cautioned against engaging in political discussions and advised to maintain good relationships with the majority society. All of these formed part of their minority experience through knowledge of exclusion and discrimination (Morris, 2003). Most of my interviewees grew up with the knowledge of disguise and not opening up, but they have since challenged this by openly expressing their identities while regulating the way they disclose depending on the person they are interacting with due to safety concerns. On the other hand, I also observed that *home* held a special meaning for nearly every woman. Besides the answer of the minority who had summer homes on an island, the meaning of home as the only place where they could freely live their identities was significant (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016).

The overwhelming majority of my interviewees did not use public space in a “task-oriented” manner. Most of the women who had a habit of walking for stress relief, feeling good, clearing their minds, feeling confident and strong, enjoyed exploring the city streets and spending time with themselves with certain ritualized habits. On the other hand, I found that the most influential factor in the concepts of mobility and visibility in the use of public space was the fear of violence. The darkness of the city streets and places, was a significant factor that increased this fear. Similarly, the secluded nature of these spaces forced women to take action to protect themselves. Determining a safe route was important to avoid encountering such anxiety-inducing situations. Main streets and crowded spaces were usually decisive in this regard. The workplaces’ locations were important for women because not all of them had cars. They had to use public transportation to go to work and come back home. They often had to walk home from public transportation in the early hours of the morning and late at night. As these hours were relatively dark, women, who could not find crowds

on the streets, developed the habit of walking fast while constantly checking behind and/or zigzagging. Pretending to talk on the phone or calling a friend or their mother was another tactic used in these cases. In addition, lowering the volume of the music, turning it off altogether or taking off one earbud when listening to music was another commonly used tactic. Women who, consciously or unconsciously, applied the safe route determination strategy avoided underpasses, side streets, and secluded overpasses, especially during dark hours. When they used public transportation, if the stop was empty or if there were men around, they directed all their attention to their surroundings in order to protect themselves from any possible harm coming from outside. When using the metro, they tended to approach other women on the platform.

When femicides are visible in the media, it doubles the fear of violence that they say is always on their minds. They quickly move away from men who cause them unease in public spaces, especially those conceptualized as “dangerous men” by Valentine (1992), who focus their gaze on women and engage in verbal or physical harassment, as well as drunk and fighting men. The uncontrollable aggression observed in these situations is so distressing that women do their best to get away from the environment. These men who cause anxiety and fear for women in quiet and dark places, and who they are not familiar with, stand out. In addition to cultural differences, the anxiety and fear experienced in these situations are also due to class differences. It is noteworthy that the men women encounter may appear Muslim and conservative from an outsider’s perspective, and they may throw threatening glances at them. Here, their anxiety, fear, stress, and panic feelings are compounded both as women and Armenians.

Most of my interviewees who do not have cars frequently use public transportation. The anxiety-inducing situations mentioned above also apply when using public transportation. For example, for women who will use public transportation after work when it’s dark outside, whether the inside of the vehicle is empty, whether there are other women inside, and whether the driver has *hostile* and *threatening* gaze are decisive factors. In such situations, especially in the context of buses, some tactics that are resorted to include giving up getting on that vehicle and waiting for the next one, and if they have to get on, paying attention to their surroundings and

not listening to music or pretending to be talking on the phone. In addition to the anxiety of being subjected to violence as a woman, they try to prevent possible violence by hiding religious symbols such as the cross. This situation arises from the belief that the sexual violence they may encounter will become limitless with the revelation of their Armenian identity, taking the anxiety and fear to another dimension. Speed in transportation was a factor that reduced anxiety. In addition, ferries were a type of public transportation that made my interviewees feel safe as they emphasized the pleasure of travel. At this point, metros were considered the safest type of public transportation. Island ferries, on the other hand, had a special place for my interviewees who had island life. The idea that nothing would happen to them during the hours used by the island locals was widespread among these interviewees. On the other hand, I found that buses were the most anxiety-inducing type of public transportation. Buses were considered the most dangerous type of public transportation as they included people from every class and culture in every part of the city due to the city's heterogeneous, chaotic, and complex structure, causing fear and anxiety.

Similar feelings were also felt in unfamiliar and unknown spaces of the city. Interviewees who felt anxiety and fear while maintaining their female identity stated that they were more afraid because they were Armenian. Even during passport control, questioning looks and questions made women feel uneasy. This feeling was also experienced when encountering police officers waiting outside churches. Although threats to the community's institutions were now considered normal by women, they still triggered their anxiety. The urban areas where they could feel relatively safe were the first areas that came to mind. These areas were mainly where the community was clustered. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of interviewees who had difficulty experiencing a sense of belonging in the public spaces stated that they felt a sense of belonging to their homes, and some felt a sense of belonging to their rooms. Here again, symbolic meaning of the home, as a space where they could *live* freely their ethno-religious identity, stands out. However, most interviewees who openly displayed their identities without hiding their crosses or their names in the public spaces stated that they did not prefer to go to Muslim conservative places where they felt uneasy, unless they were forced to, even if they were visible there. They were not isolated there, but they did not visit these places

unless they had to, or knew someone to visit. Instead, I saw that many interviewees who were socio-economically more advantaged lived or were aware of the possibility of living in the city's more luxurious neighborhoods, while many disadvantaged interviewees ensured their security by staying close to the community. On the other hand, for almost all of them, feeling safe was possible in two ways; (1) being in familiar and known places or (2) being in areas they defined as enlightened and secular, where they could live and socialize. These places, which included both the community's public safe spaces and the groups they described, constituted the safe spaces of women.

If I were to summarize my findings and present my arguments, first of all, it has been observed after field research that regardless of parents' socio-economic positions or their relationships with capital, priority has been given to the education of their daughters. Therefore, when selecting the sample, determining the interviewees' education level as university and above has provided certain advantages throughout the research. It has been observed that higher education has a facilitating effect on the interviewees' access to areas outside their community's safe spaces. The primary factor that affects the interviewees' use of public spaces is the fear of violence. Fear of violence is the main obstacle to women's mobility and visibility. In the context of gender, this feeling specifically refers to the fear of sexual violence, which becomes limitless when ethno-religious identity is added. The complex nature of this fear is felt not only in İstanbul's Muslim conservative places and spaces but also when encountering men who are known to be Muslim conservatives from outside. Therefore, Armenian identities place women in a more disadvantaged position than unmarried women who have the same level of education but belong to the ethnic majority.

On the other hand, the Armenian women I interviewed continue to persist in public spaces in the city. The main issue here, is to focus on how these women exist in İstanbul's public places and spaces. Within the context of the fifteen interviewees, it was observed that education provided certain advantages in terms of access to public space. These women, who are positioned in employment with the skills that education has provided them, have the privilege of socializing in certain areas of the city. In other words, access to safe spaces is valid in the field and is ensured. With

their employment patterns, their privileges of socializing in the city's centers and relatively luxurious places are increasing. Speaking in the context of the women I interviewed, the observation I made was that education opens up the use of public spaces, allowing them to maintain their presence in safe spaces and thereby strengthening their protection shields.

The tactics and strategies, that women resort to in order to feel safe, encompass both their gender and Armenian identities and are decisive in their positioning within the city. Despite being in similar socio-economic positions, the women I interviewed exhibited some economic differences that played a role in their location within the city. For example, those with greater economic resources had the advantage of being able to live in the city's luxury areas while still maintaining their security by venturing outside of the safe spaces where the community was clustered. On the other hand, those with less economic resources were unable to leave the clustered areas and were forced to move between them for their safety, which was not an option for them.

Therefore, through field research, it was observed that highly educated, urban, single, and young Armenian women have two tendencies for ensuring their safety within the city; (1) to exist in secular areas where they can feel the sense of *prosperity* or (2) to be within or close to the community. The common thread in the way my fifteen interviewees relate to the city is their desire to live without fear and to feel safe and happy. For them, being able to walk at night without fear, both as a woman and as an Armenian, is the only way they can achieve this. These tendencies are shared among educated women, but their preferences differ. This situation requires a different class analysis. Here, in conclusion, it can be said that the positioning of Armenian women within the city is determined by their gender and ethno-religious identities, and their socio-economic position. Economic differences play a role in their ability to leave the clustered areas and places out into the more prosperous areas of the city. The common thread among the women interviewed was their desire to feel safe in the city, without fear of sexual violence or racist discriminations.

Another argument revealed through the field research is that the relationships established with the public spaces of the city are changing across generations. The interviewees, by comparing themselves with their parents and elders, growing up

with warnings and advices about hiding their identities, they shared that the ways of experiencing ethno-religious identities were no longer the same. they do not feel the need to hide their identities in the public spaces of İstanbul when they interact with the wider community. According to them, their ethno-religious identities are not meant to be hidden or concealed.

The relationship between gender, ethno-religious identity, space, and emotions such as fear and courage are highly variable and dependent on the time and place of everyday life. Through this research, the contradictory and conflicting nature of the relationships that single Armenian women have with the public places and spaces of İstanbul has been revealed. In other words, these women have a “contradictory city” experience, where they can feel happy, free, themselves, strong, secure, and comfortable in certain places and times in İstanbul, while feeling fear, anxiety, stress, helplessness, and unease in other places and times. These different emotions and experiences within a single city indicate the ethnic makeup of these spaces in addition to their gendered, and thus patriarchal structure. These intersectional experiences are actually vulnerable *choices* between being brave or acting wisely, and no doubt, are most strongly felt during “bold walks” (Koskela, 1997).

The cost of feeling safe is resorting to constant strategies and tactics (Kern, 2019). Valentine (1992) suggests that coping mechanisms used by women in spaces to make themselves feel in control are actually *illusions* because it is not possible to live in constant fear. However, because they always know that they are afraid deep down, fear persists in their lives. Through this research, it is clearly evident that what sets apart single Armenian women from *other* single women belonging to the ethnic majority is the way they experience fear in public spaces. Armenian women, who experience the fear of violence in a multi-layered manner, feel the disadvantages of their ethno-religious identity intensely, when this emotion is triggered. In situations where their ethno-religious identity is recognized, the dimension of violence increases, and women become concerned for their lives. The recognition of their Armenian identity in a situation where they may be subjected to verbal or physical harassment can lead to their murder. The women I interviewed are forced to consider these aspects differently from other women whenever they feel uneasy in public spaces. This thought, encountered in every interview, is not merely an imagination

but a dimension that directly affects the mobility and visibility of women in public spaces. On the other hand, Munt (1995) points out that it is only possible to transform a space by existing and being present in it. I believe in this as well. Women who persist in being visible and active in public spaces, even in areas they consider risky, go there for work, and do not isolate themselves from those areas, even if they feel uncomfortable and uneasy. They get on that bus; they exist and continue to exist. This way of existing in public spaces brings to mind Rose's (1993) transformative power of spaces. In this way, the focus is on the agency of women rather than their victimhood.

8.3 Contributions of the Research to the Literature

Although the number of studies on ethno-religious minorities in Turkey is increasing, it is still relatively small compared to the literature of social sciences in general. Moreover, feminist research focusing on women from non-Muslim minority communities is scarce. In this field, there has been no research specifically on young and single Armenian women. Therefore, this research makes a direct contribution to the literature on non-Muslim minorities in Turkey. Additionally, since this study is situated at the intersection of the literatures on non-Muslim minorities and feminist research, and specifically focuses on this sample adopting feminist methodology, it makes a direct contribution to feminist literature as well. This study is significant in positioning single Armenian women not as victims, but as active agents, by highlighting the tactics and strategies they use to avoid violence and discrimination based on their identities, which is a layered examination of their everyday lives in İstanbul. As such, this study not only strengthens feminist knowledge but also offers a new perspective on non-Muslim minority literature. Therefore, in addition to its direct contribution to non-Muslim studies in Turkey, it also contributes to the literature on gender and women's studies.

Focusing on women's struggles and their potential to transform spaces, this study reveals the gendered nature of public spaces. By examining the relationship between gender and space in İstanbul's spaces and places, it also contributes to the literature of feminist geography. Moreover, it is a study placing İstanbul at the focus that maps out women's relief and fear, making it a contribution to the literature of space, place and urban studies as well. In conclusion, this research makes significant

contributions to the aforementioned literature, as well as to the literature on urban and spatial studies.

8.4 Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Researches

It is acknowledged that the primary limitation of this research is the narrow population within the sample. This thesis aimed to reach a limited group of women within a certain age range from a limited community, and thus encountered some challenges in this regard. Additionally, diversity could not be sufficiently provided in terms of women who are in similar class positions because they were predominantly from the middle classes. If we imagine the class positioning as a scale, not being able to reach women from both ends creates another limitation for the research. Keeping the educational levels of the interviewed women high can also be considered another limitation. On the other hand, during the field research, it was observed that the importance given to the education of young women within the community was high, regardless of the relationships established by parents with capital. However, considering the limited number of unmarried women within the age range of the sample, the educational basis of class differences becomes increasingly difficult to establish. In this context, some conclusions were reached in this research. Although the educational level provided some advantages to the interviewees in terms of access, mobility, and visibility in the use of public spaces, they resorted to similar tactics and strategies, and even if they could access seemingly similar safe spaces, they showed some differences among themselves. These differences are most evident in their nightlife.

For example, let's consider two of my interviewees who have the same education level and live in locations that are quite close to each other's. One of them, university-educated women, has taken over the family business and is engaged in trade, which is not related to her field of study. This interviewee, who goes out a few times a week, prefers nightclubs in upscale areas such as Arnavutköy and Bebek and always takes a taxi by herself to get there, without feeling unsafe because she usually uses the app Uber. She has not developed any strategies to ensure her safety inside the clubs because she is confident that anyone she complains about will be thrown out of these luxurious and upscale places. On the other hand, the other interviewee, who has the same education level, goes out one or at most twice a month and has

close relationships with Alevi employees at a place in Taksim where she goes to dance with her aunts. She usually walks with them to that same place, due to economic reasons. She ensures her safety inside by having close relationships with employees. When returning home, they use a taxi together, because she has difficulty feeling safe when she is alone and also, she finds taxis quite expensive. Therefore, as can be seen in this example clearly, although the women in my sample seem to have similar social and cultural positions, there are differences in the ways their mobility and spatiality occur, that are independent of their high education. In other words, just being highly educated does not necessarily mean that they share the same social environment and network. To analyze these differences, there is a need for a social class analysis that is not defined solely based on education, or cultural similarities and/or differences. Consequently, future researches are recommended to focus on class differences, where the difference is clearly seen, and explore the relationship between gender, ethno-religious identity, and spatial use. This will result in a more comprehensive and holistic research.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GÖRÜŞME SORULARI

GÖRÜŞME SORULARI

1- Bireysel ve Aile Soruları

Anneniz babanız nerede doğdular? Ailede göç hikayesi var mı? Çalışırlar/çalıştırlar mı? Şu an ne yaparlar?

Siz nerede doğdunuz? Çocukluğunuz ve gençliğiniz nerede (hangi semt ve mahallede) geçti? Ailenizle hep aynı mahallede mi yaşadınız? (Taşınma hikayesi)

Diğerlerinin Ermeni olmadığını ne zaman fark ettiniz?

Eğitim hayatınızdan bahseder misiniz? (Eğitim hayatı/ilk ve ortaokul ve lise hayatı- Ermeni okulu mu karma okul mu ve buna kim karar vermiş? Buralarda arkadaş ortamları nasıl? Çevresini en çok kimler oluşturur?)

Lise yıllarınızda hobileriniz var mıydı? Neler yapmaktan hoşlanırdınız? Hangi aktivitelere katılırdınız? Kimlerle sosyalleşirdiniz? (Cemaat içi faaliyetlere katılım)

Tatillerinizi nasıl değerlendirdiniz? (Ada hayatı var mıydı?)

Üniversite ve bölüm tercihleriniz nasıl oldu?

Üniversite sonrası sosyal hayatınızda nasıl değişiklikler oldu? (Sosyal çevre ve faaliyetler – Çevresini oluşturanlar değişti mi? Sokakta geçirilen vakit arttı mı?)

[Çalışan kadınlara] İş hayatına ilk ne zaman atıldınız? Ailenizden bu konuda nasıl bir tepki aldınız? Eğer destek aldıysanız, evde en çok bunu kim destekledi?

[Çalışan kadınlara] Şu an çalıştığımız işi nasıl buldunuz? Güncel işinizle yolunuz nasıl kesişti? Bu işi tercih ederken kıstaslarınız nelerdi?

2- Gündelik Hayatta Kamusal Alanla İlişkilenme Soruları

Hafta arası işe/okula nasıl gidiyorsunuz? (Hangi rotayı neden kullanıyor? Toplu taşıma mı özel araç mı? Toplu taşımaya ait deneyim toplayabilirsin – taksiler de dahil, buralarda nelere dikkat ediyor, kendisini nasıl koruyor? Rotada yalnız mı yoksa tanıdıklarıyla beraber mi seyahat ediyor?)

[İşyeri ulaşımı sağlıyor/karşılıyorsa] Eğer işyeriniz ulaşımı sağlamasaydı/karşılmasaydı işi yine de kabul eder miydiniz?

Çeşitli toplu taşıma türlerini güvenlik derecesine göre sıralayabilir misiniz? Gerekçeleriniz neler?

Üniversitede ve iş yaşamında kadın ve/veya Ermeni olduğunuz size hatırlatılıyor mu? Nasıl? Hangi durumlarda? Böyle durumlarda ne yaparsınız?

[Çalışmayanlar için üniversite hayatında] Ermeni ve/veya kadın kimliğinden ötürü bireysel veya kurumsal ayrımcılığa maruz kaldın mı? Ne gibi? Böyle durumlarda ne yaparsınız?

Okul sonrası/ Mesai sonrası dışarıda vakit geçirir misiniz? Kimlerle nerelere gitmeyi tercih edersiniz? (Nasıl mekanlar? Buralara nasıl gidiyor?)

Hafta arası eve genellikle ne zaman/hangi saatlerde dönersiniz?

Hafta sonları dışarı çıkar mısınız?

Gece hayatınız nasıl? Nerelere kimlerle gidersiniz?

Dışarıdayken/sokaktayken geniş toplumla temasınız olduğu durumlarda isminizi gizlemek durumunda kaldınız mı hiç?

Yeni biriyle tanıştığınız zaman dikkat ettiğiniz/uyguladığınız belli başlı şeyler var mı? (İsmini Türkçe söylüyor mu mesela?)

Dışarıdayken çok korktuğunuz ya da tedirgin hissettiğiniz durumlar oluyor mu? Ne gibi?

Dışarda nerelerde kendinizi rahat hissedersiniz? Kendinizi ait hissettiğiniz bir yer var mı dışarıdayken? Buralar ne tür yerler?

Kiliseye giderken ulaşımı nasıl sağlıyorsunuz? Hangi rotayı neden tercih edersiniz? Yalnız mı gidersiniz?

Kilisenin civarında tedirgin hissettiğiniz durumlar oluyor mu?

Peki giderken ayaklarınızın geri gittiği yerler var mı?

Asla gitmem, oralarda yaşamam dediğiniz nereleri var?

Büyüklerden kulağınıza küpe olmuş tembihler var mı? Şuraya gidilmez, burada böyle davranılır gibi tembihler yapılırdı mıydı? Sizin çevrenizdeki kadınlara verdiğiniz bu tür tavsiyeler var mı?

Bugüne kadar hiçbir eyleme katıldınız mı? Sokak protestolarına, eylemlere katılır mıydınız?

Parklara gider misiniz? Orada nasıl hissedersiniz?

[Yukarıda bahsetmediyse] Alışveriş merkezlerine gider misiniz? Orada nasıl vakit geçirirsiniz?

Sokaklarda alıp başınızı kaptırıp yürüdüğünüz olur mu hiç? [Oluyorsa] Böyle anlarda kendinizi nasıl hissedersiniz? Nerelerde yürümeyi seversiniz, neden? [Olmuyorsa] Şu an yürüyecek olsanız nerede yürürdünüz? Nasıl bir rotanız olurdu? (Ara sokaklardan sakınır mıydı örneğin?)

Burası benim mekanım dediğiniz yerler var mı? Bu mekanların özellikleri nedir?

“Kentsel alanı sahiplenme” ifadesi size ne çağırıyor? Böyle hissettiğiniz anlar oluyor mu?

Sahip olduğunuz maddi olanaklara sahip olmasaydınız kentteki yaşamınız nasıl olurdu? (Mesela arabanız olmasa? Şu an yaşadığınız yer yerine yoksulların daha yoğun yaşadığı bir semtte yaşasaydınız?)

TRANSLATED VERSION

1- Individual and Family Questions

Where were your parents born? Does your family have a migration story? Do/did they work? What do they do now?

Where were you born? Where did you spend your childhood and youth (which neighborhood)? Did you always live in the same neighborhood with your family? (Moving stories)

When did you realize that others were not Armenian?

Can you tell us about your education? (Education/elementary and middle school and high school life – Armenian school or mixed school and who decided on this? What were your friend groups like in these schools? Who made up your social circle?)

Did you have any hobbies in high school? What did you enjoy doing? Which activities did you participate in? Who did you socialize with? (Participation in community activities)

How did you spend your vacations? (Was there island life?)

How did you make your university and department choices?

What changes have occurred in your social life after university? (Social environment and activities - Have the people who make up your circle changed? Has the time spent on the street increased?)

[For working women] When did you first enter the workforce? How did your family react to this? If you received support, who in your family supported you the most?

[For working women] How did you find your current job? How did you intersect with your current job? What were your criteria when choosing this job?

2- Questions About Interaction with Public Space in Daily Life

How do you commute to work/school on weekdays? (Which route do you use and why? Do you use public transportation or a private vehicle? If you use public transportation, you can collect experiences - including taxis - what do you pay attention to? How do you protect yourself? Do you travel alone or with acquaintances?)

[If workplace transportation is provided/catered for] Would you still accept the job if your workplace did not provide/cater for transportation?

Can you rank various types of public transportation by security level? What are your reasons?

Are you reminded that you are a woman and/or Armenian in university and/or work life? How? In which situations? What do you do in such situations?

[For non-working individuals during university life] Have you ever been subjected to individual or institutional discrimination due to your Armenian and/or female identity? What kind? What do you do in such situations?

Do you spend time outside after school/work? Who do you prefer to go out with and where do you prefer to go? (What kind of places? How do you get there?)

What time/hours do you usually return home on weekdays?

Do you go out on weekends?

How is your nightlife? Where do you go with whom?

Have you ever had to hide your name when interacting with the wider community while outside?

Are there any situations that make you very scared or uneasy while outside? What are they?

Where do you feel comfortable outside? Is there a place where you feel like you belong? What kind of places are these?

How do you get to the church? Which route do you prefer and why? Do you go alone? Are there situations around the church where you feel uneasy?

Are there any places you would never go to or live in?

Do you have any warnings or advice from older people about certain places or behaviors? Do you give this kind of advice to women in your environment?

Have you ever participated in any actions? Would you participate in street protests or demonstrations?

Do you go to parks? How do you feel there?

[If not mentioned above] Do you go to shopping malls? How do you spend your time there?

Do you ever get lost in your thoughts and walk around on the streets? [If so] How do you feel in those moments? Where do you like to walk, and why? [If not] If you were to walk now, where would you walk? What would your route be like? (For example, would you avoid side streets?)

Are there any places that you consider “your place”? What are the characteristics of these places?

What does the phrase “claiming urban space” mean to you? Do you ever feel this way?

If you did not have the financial means you currently possess, how would your life in the city be different? (For example, if you did not have a car? Or if you lived in a neighborhood with a higher concentration of low-income individuals instead of where you currently reside?)

B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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21 EKİM 2022

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu


Sayın Prof.Dr.F. Umut BEŞPINAR

Danışmanlığınızı yürüttüğünüz Tomris Derya Keresteci'nin "**Bekâr Ermeni kadınların kamusal alanla kurdukları ilişkilerde sınıfın etkisi**" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **0543-ODTÜİAEK-2022** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.


Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

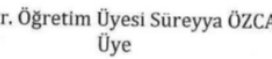
Prof. Dr. Sibel KAZAK BERUMENT
Başkan



Doç. Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye


Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye


Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye


Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye


Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye


Dr. Öğretim Üyesi A. Emre TURGUT
Üye

C. INFORMED CONSENT FORM/GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu çalışma ODTÜ Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları bölümü öğrencilerinden Tomris Derya Keresteci tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Bu çalışma, “Bekâr Ermeni kadınların kamusal alanla kurdukları ilişkilerde sınıfsal konumlarının etnik kimlik ve medeni durumları ile etkileşerek nasıl bir etkisi vardır?” sorusunu yanıtlamak için İstanbul’da yaşayan bekâr Ermeni kadınların gündelik yaşantılarında kamusal alanla kurdukları ilişkilerde etnik kimlik, toplumsal cinsiyet ve sınıfsal konumun etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden, araştırmacının size yönelttiği açık uçlu soruları cevaplandırmanız beklenmektedir. Yapılacak bire bir görüşme ortalama 2 saat sürmektedir.

Katılımla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Bu çalışmaya katılmak tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır. Herhangi bir yaptırıma veya cezaya maruz kalmadan çalışmaya katılmayı reddedebilir veya çalışmayı bırakabilirsiniz. Araştırma esnasında cevap vermek istemediğiniz sorular olursa boş bırakabilirsiniz.

Arařtırmaya katılanlardan toplanan veriler tamamen gizli tutulacak, veriler ve kimlik bilgileri herhangi bir řekilde eřleřtirilmeyecektir. Katılımcıların isimleri bağımsız bir listede toplanacaktır. Ayrıca toplanan verilere sadece arařtırmacılar ulaşabilecektir. Bu arařtırmanın sonuçları bilimsel ve profesyonel yayınlarda veya eđitim amaçlı kullanılabilir, fakat katılımcıların kimliđi gizli tutulacaktır.

Riskler:

Çalıřma fiziksel ve psikolojik herhangi bir teřkil etmemektedir.

Arařtırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Çalıřmayla ilgili soru ve yorumlarınızı arařtırmacıya deryakeresteci@gmail.com adresinden iletebilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalıřmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

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TRANSLATED VERSION

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM FOR RESEARCH

This study is conducted by Tomris Derya Keresteci, a student of the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at METU. This form is prepared to inform you about the research conditions.

What is the Purpose of the Study?

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of ethnic identity, gender, and class position on the relationships of single Armenian women with the public sphere in their daily lives in Istanbul, and how these factors interact.

How Can You Help Us?

If you agree to participate in the research, you will be asked to answer open-ended questions posed by the researcher. The one-on-one interview is expected to last approximately 2 hours.

What You Need to Know About Your Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the study or withdraw from it at any time without any penalty or punishment. If there are any questions you do not want to answer during the research, you may leave them blank.

The data collected from the participants will be kept completely confidential, and the data and identity information will not be matched in any way. The names of the participants will be collected in an independent list. In addition, only researchers will have access to the collected data. The results of this research can be used for

scientific and professional publications or for educational purposes, but the identity of the participants will be kept confidential.

Risks:

This study does not pose any physical or psychological risks.

If You Want More Information About the Study:

You can send your questions and comments about the study to the researcher at deryakeresteci@gmail.com.

I have read the above information and I am participating in this study entirely voluntarily.

(Please fill out and sign the form and return it to the researcher.)

Name Surname

Date

Signature

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D. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

ETNO-DİNİ KİMLİK VE MEDENİ DURUMUN KAMUSAL ALAN KULLANIMINDAKİ KESİŞİMİ: İSTANBUL'DAKİ YÜKSEK EĞİTİMLİ ERMENİ KADINLAR ÖRNEĞİ

GENEL BAKIŞ

Günlük kentsel deneyimler cinsiyetlendirilmiştir. Yaşayabileceğimiz ya da erişebileceğimiz yerler, işten çıkışı akşam geç saatlerde yürürken belirlediğimiz rotalar, arabamız olmadığı veya karanlıkta yalnız yürümekten korktuğumuz için katılmamayı *tercih ettiğimiz* etkinlikler; hepsi sadece sınıfsal değil, aynı zamanda cinsiyet temellidir. Sürekli şiddet, taciz veya cinayet tehdidi kentsel yaşamı etkiler. Sınıfsal konum birçok avantaj getirebilirken yine de kentsel günlük deneyimin cinsiyetlendirilmiş *doğası* kendini bir şekilde hatırlatır. Bu noktada, İstanbul'daki kentli kadınlar için yüksek eğitimin sağlayabileceği bazı avantajlar öne çıkmaktadır. Cinsiyetli kamusal alanla kurduğumuz orantısız ilişkiye etnik ve/veya dini kimlik eklendiğinde, konu çok daha karmaşık hale gelir. Bu tezde, yüksek eğitimin bekar Ermeni kadınların kamusal alanla ilişkilenmelerine etkisini anlamak ana hedef olmakla birlikte, bu özgül konuyla ilgili yapılan saha araştırmasıyla elde edilen veriler daha geniş bir bağlamı karşılamaktadır. Bu nedenle, belirlenen araştırma sorusuna cevap vermeye çalışırken, aynı zamanda İstanbul'daki kamusal alanların ve mekanların cinsiyetlendirilmiş doğası da ortaya çıkarılacaktır.

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, bekar Ermeni kadınların kamu alanıyla kurdukları ilişkileri anlamak ve bu ilişkilerde yüksek öğrenimin etkisini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Anlaşılması hedeflenen bir diğer husus, kamusal alanda kimin nerelere ulaşabildiği, buralarda nasıl güvende ve rahat hissedildiğiyle ilgilidir. İstanbul ile kaygı, korku, güvenlik ve aidiyet gibi duygular arasındaki ilişkiyi açığa çıkarmanın yanı sıra, şehir

içinde kullanılan ve kullanılmayan mekanlar da gün yüzüne çıkarılacaktır. Bu nedenle, cinsiyet, mekan ve duygular arasındaki ilişkinin anlaşılması, bu araştırmanın ana amaçlarından bir diğeridir. Dolayısıyla, kimliklerin kadınların mekansal duygularını nasıl etkilediği anlaşılmalı istenmektedir. Kamusal alanda, kullanımı zorunlu olan ve bireylerin tercih ettiği yerlerin yanı sıra, girilebilen ancak istenmeyen “riskli” bölgelerin anlaşılması da hedeflenmektedir. Bu nedenle, korku ve tehlikenin haritalanması, bu araştırmanın başka bir amacını oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca, yaşadıkları mahallelerle kurdukları ilişkiler, şehirdeki güvenli mekanlar ve kadınların “rahatlama haritaları” da ortaya çıkarılacaktır. Etno-dini kimlik başka bir analiz kategorisi olarak ele alındığından, cinsiyet ve kimlik arasındaki ilişkiler de incelenecektir. Aynı zamanda, araştırmanın kapsamına, Ermeni cemaati içinde evlenmemiş kadınların deneyimlerini anlamak dahildir.

Kamusal mekanlarla ilişkilerde güvenliği sağlamak için kullanılan taktikler ve stratejilerin anlaşılması, bu araştırma için büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu taktiklerin ve stratejilerin ortaya çıkarılması, kadınların faillliğini vurgulamak ve onları kurban olarak tasvir etme algısını yeniden üretmemek için önemlidir. Tüm bu özgül amaçların birleşimi, kamusal mekanın cinsiyetli yapısını ortaya çıkarma niteliği taşımaktadır. Bu araştırma, genç ve evlenmemiş Ermeni kadınların kamusal alandan vazgeçemediklerini, orada var olmaya ve gelişmeye devam ettiklerini göstermektedir. Burada önemli olan, nasıl var olduklarını anlamaktır. Korku kadınlar için, toplumsal cinsiyet ve Ermeni kimliği bağlamlarında çok katmanlı bir yapıdır. Sosyal sınıflarına bakılmaksızın, görüştüğüm tüm kadınlar şiddet korkusuyla karşı karşıyadır. Diğer yandan, güvenli hissetmek için geliştirilen filtreler, öncelikle sosyal sınıf ayrıcalığı tarafından belirlenir. Alan araştırması sırasında, gece hayatı bu toplumsal farklılığı en çok vurgulayan alandır. Ancak, eğlence için gece dışarı çıkma sıklığı ve biçimleri, görüşülen kişilere göre değişmektedir. Alan araştırmam aracılığıyla, hareketlilik ve görünürlüğü etkileyen en önemli faktörün şiddet korkusu olduğunu gördüm. Yüksek eğitim, kadınların istihdam pozisyonlarını etkilemekte ve hareketlilik, görünürlük ve şehirdeki kamusal alanlara erişim konusunda belirli araçlar sağlamaktadır. Kamusal alanlarda güvenli bir şekilde hareket etmek için kaynaklar sağlayarak onları yalıtılmış alanlarda görünür kılmakta ve şiddeti azaltıcı edici bir etkiye sahiptir. Bu nedenle, koruyucu kalkanları daha da güçlendiren faktörlerden biridir.

Kamusal alanın erişim, hareketlilik ve görünürlük açısından kullanımını incelediğimde, eğitimin kadınlar için bu bağlamda bazı ayrıcalıklar sağladığını gördüm. Yüksek eğitim, bu kadınlara iş hayatında nitelikli pozisyonlar sağlayarak kentsel kamusal alanların kullanımında çeşitli ayrıcalıklar elde etmelerini sağlamaktadır. Görüştüğüm kadınlardan on ikisinin hayatı iş hayatlarına göre düzenlenmiştir. Tatil yapabilecekleri günler işyerleri tarafından belirlenmektedir. Geri kalan üç kadın kendi işlerini kurmuşlar ve dolayısıyla günlük hayatlarını kendi tercihleri doğrultusunda düzenlemektedirler. Diğer yandan, kentsel hareketliliklerinde erişebildikleri mekanlar ve alanlar benzerdir. Ayrıca günlük yaşam pratikleri de farklı şekillerde tanımlanıp uygulansa da benzerdir. Örneğin, hepsinin bir şekilde gece hayatı vardır veya boş zamanlarını geçirmek için katılabilecekleri bir dizi kültürel etkinlikleri vardır. Günlük kamusal hayatlarında, bu durum ayrımcılıktan ve şiddetten kaçınmak için belli taktikler ve stratejilere başvurmalarını kolaylaştırmaktadır. Bulguları sunarken detaylı olarak açıklanacağı ve analiz edileceği gibi, bazı inşa edilmiş veya belirlenmiş güvenli alanların varlığı bu durumun bir örneği olarak verilebilir. Ancak, hareketlilik ve erişimleri benzer olsa da korunma taktikleri ve stratejileri, ayrımcılık ve şiddetle başa çıkma mekanizmaları açısından bazı farklılıklar saha araştırmasıyla ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bu farklılıkların öne çıkarılmasıyla, yüksek eğitimin bir etkisinin olmadığını gördüm. Bu farklılıklar en çok gece hayatında belirgindir.

BÖLÜM 1

GİRİŞ

Gündelik kentsel deneyimleri oluşturan ve onlar tarafından oluşan İstanbul, kuşkusuz yalnızca bir sahne olmanın ötesindedir. Bu bağlamda, kimlerin deneyimlerinin hangi mekanlarda nasıl tezahür ettiğinin ve bu mekanları nasıl dönüştürdüğünün anlaşılması, birçok yapısal olguyu açığa çıkarabilmektedir. Bu çalışma, yüksek eğitilmiş bekar Ermeni kadınların, İstanbul'un yer ve mekanlarındaki günlük deneyimlerini, mekansal duygulanımlarıyla ortaya konmayı hedeflemektedir. Kamusal alan hem kişisel hem de siyasi deneyimlerin ve gündelik pratiklerin temel

bir parçası olduğu için, evin dışında kalan herhangi bir yer olarak basitçe tanımlanamamaktadır. Ayrıca, bekar ve genç Ermeni kadınların günlük yaşamları dışındaki kamusal mekanlara odaklanıldığı için, kamusal alan katmanlı bir şekilde incelenmelidir. Gayrimüslim bir topluluğa ait kadınların gözünde özel mekanların anlamlarını anlamak adına, onların sosyalleşme süreçleri kapsamlı bir şekilde ortaya konmalıdır.

Bu araştırma, bekar Ermeni kadınların geniş toplumla kamusal alanın mekanlarındaki ilk temasları anlamakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda onlar için özel mekanların anlamlarını anlamayı amaçlamıştır. Yaşanılan mahalleler ve çevrede semtlerle kurulan ilişkiler, işe ve/veya okula giderken tercih edilen rotalar ve ulaşım araçları, cemaatin alanları, şehrin riskli bölgeleri, kamusal mekanların siyasi kullanımı ve kadınların boş vakitlerini değerlendirme biçimleri ve pratikleri, günlük yaşamın katmanlarına ayrılarak analiz edilmiştir. Amaç, yarı kamusal veya cemaatin alanları gibi çeşitli kamusal alanları ve cemaatin özel alanlarını kullanım biçimlerine göre inceleyerek anlamaktır. Bu nedenle, kamusal alanla kurulan ilişki bu yönde ele alındı.

Bekar Ermeni kadınların kamusal alanla kurdukları ilişkiler bağlamında ana belirleyenin şiddet korkusu olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Şiddet korkusu, kamusal alanın mekanlarında kişisel bir biçimde deneyimlenmektedir. İstanbul, Ermeni kadınlar için farklı duyguların etkileyeni konumdadır. Cinsel şiddet korkusu her daim mevcut olsa da, hava karardığında kadınlar dışarıda tek başlarıysa ve yeterince aydınlatılmamış tenha sokaklardalarsa bu korku son derece belirgindir. Ermeni kimlikleri deneyimlerinde kimi zaman ön planda kimi zaman geri plandadır. Kamusal alanlarda isimleri, kimi zaman (Ermenice) konuşmaları ya da konuşma biçimleri, haç gibi sembolleri taşımaları bu bağlamda belirleyicidir. Bekar Ermeni kadınları etnik çoğunluğa dahil diğer bekar kadınlardan ayıran, şiddet korkusunu hissetme ve deneyimleme biçimleridir. Dolayısıyla kamusal alanlarda hissedilen cinsel şiddet korkusu, Ermeni kimlikleri açığa çıkarsa limitsiz bir hale gelerek hayatları için korkmaya dönüşmektedir. Bu deneyim, İstanbul'un Müslüman muhafazakar mekanlarıyla ilişkilendirilen ve dışarıdan bakıldığında Müslüman muhafazakar olduğu belli olan erkeklerle olan karşılaşmalarda belirgindir. Yapılan saha araştırmasında görülmüştür ki kadınlar sokaklardan vazgeçmeyerek, girmek

istemeler bile Müslüman muhafazakar semtlerde görünür olmaya devam etmektedirler. Bu çalışma, bekar Ermeni kadınları birer kurban olarak değil, korku yaratan durumlara karşı geliştirilen taktik ve stratejileri, ayrımcılık ve şiddetle baş etme mekanizmaları ön plana çıkararak onları kamusal alanda mücadele eden aktif failer olarak ele alır.

BÖLÜM 2

LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

Yapılan literatür taraması, kamusal alan tartışmaları, kamusal alan ile toplumsal cinsiyet ve kamusal alan ile sınıf ilişkilerinin yanı sıra “azınlık” olmaya dair yaklaşımlar, Ermeni cemaati ve azınlık cemaatlere dahil kadınların deneyimleri olacak şekilde birbiriyle ilişkili ve ilişkilendirilen ancak kendi içlerinde özgül birçok düzlemde oluşmuştur. Bu çalışma genel olarak kamusal alanın kullanımı hakkında olduğu için önce “demokrasi”, “uzlaşma” (“*consensus*”), “çeşitlilik” ve “görünürlük” gibi politik tartışmalar ve kavramlar çerçevesinde kamusal alan tartışılmıştır. Bu kavramlara odaklanmanın nedeni, nesnellik, tarafsızlık ve evrenselliğin tüm vatandaşların kamusal alanda eşit erişim ve eşit söz hakkına sahip olmadıklarını sorgulamak, eleştirmek ve meydan okunmaktır. Fraser (Acar-Savran, 2019: 151) çağdaş kapitalist toplumlarda tek bir kamusal alandan değil, kamusal alanlardan bahseder. Fraser, Habermas’ın tek bir kamusal alana katılan herkesin eşit oldukları kamusal alandaki teorisine karşı çıkar. Fraser, burjuva kamusal alanındaki söylemsel etkileşimin, *pleb* gruplardaki kadınları ve erkekleri müzakerelere katılmaktan uzaklaştırdığını belirtir (Acar-Savran, 2019: 157). Eleştirilerine ek olarak, Fraser, birden fazla kamusal alanın demokrasiyi engellediği varsayımına karşı çıkar. Bu çalışma bağlamında, kamusal alanda süregelen günümüz çatışmaları göz önüne alındığında, Fraser’ın eleştirilerinin oldukça uygun olduğu söylenebilir. Kadınlar, işçiler ve LGBTİ+lar gibi “alt-sınıf karşı kamusal alanlarından” bahsedildiğinde, bu gruplar ve kitleler yüzyıllardır kamusal alanda görmezden gelinmiş olsalar da siyasi mücadeleleriyle, ya da sadece görünür olmakla, onu talep etmeye devam etmektedirler. Fraser’ın teorisine dayanarak, ezilen grubun üyeleri baskın kamusal

alanlara alternatif kamusal alanlar sunarak katılım ve demokrasi *idealini* tartışmaya açarak mümkün kılar.

Kamusal alan ile cinsiyet arasındaki ilişki, kamusal alanın örgütlenişi ile gündelik deneyiminin cinsiyete dayalı oluşu birbirleriyle ilintilidir. Kamusal alana katılımda “hareketlilik”, “görünürlük”, kimliğin “ortaya çıkması” gibi kavramlar kritiktir. Bu araştırma soruma cevap vermek için belirlediğim kavramlar, “güvenlik”, “güvenli alanlar”, “tanıdıklık”, “korku” ve “algılanan güvenlik” gibi kavramlarla yakından ilişkilidir. Kamusal alan herkese açık ve erişilebilir gibi görünse de örgütlenişi ve kullanımı ağırlıklı olarak cinsiyetlendirilmiştir. Mekan, toplumsal olarak inşa edilir (Massey, 1994:178) ve mekanı anlamak için ekonomik ve toplumsal analiz gereklidir. Bu nedenle, toplumsal ve mekansal değişim toplumsal bir bütünün parçalarıdır. Dolayısıyla yer hiçbir zaman statik değildir. Yer, toplumsal ilişkiler bağlamında ele alınacaksa, mekan da toplumsal etkileşimlerle kavramsallaştırılmalı ve böylece mekânın süreçlerden oluştuğu ortaya çıkmalıdır. Dinamik ve akışkan mekân zamanla donmuş değildir; aksine, zamanla akar. Massey’e (1994: 161) göre mekân, hükmetme ve boyun eğme, dayanışma ve işbirliği ilişkilerinin karmaşık bir örgüsüdür. Yerler, mekânlar ve yer temelli kimlikler, sınırlı değil açık, geçirgen, akıcı oluşumlardır ve sayısız diğer mekânlarla sürekli olarak ilişkilidirler. Mekânlar ve yerler cinsiyetin nasıl inşa edildiği ve anlaşıldığına yansır, etki eder ve etkilenir (Massey, 1994: 179). Onların taşıdığı, iletildiği ve etkilendiği sembolik anlamların, kendilerini *şiddetle* ifade ettiği, literatür taramasında öne çıkmıştır. (1) Teslimiyet ve hapsedme yoluyla hareketliliğin ve (2) kimliğin kısıtlanması, bu dışlama sürecinin iki yönünü oluşturur (Massey, 1994: 179). Modern dünyanın kamusal alanında ekonomik gelir elde eden kadınların evdeki görevlerini bırakarak görünür hale gelmesi, ataerkillik düzeni için bir tehdit oluşturur. İşte burada ataerkillik ve kapitalizmin çelişkisi ve çatışması ortaya çıkar. Modern dünyanın kamusal alanında görünür hale gelen kadınların karşı karşıya kaldığı mekansal kontrol, cinsiyeti yeniden üretmede temel bir rol oynar (Massey, 1994: 180). Bu nedenle, metropol yaşamı aslında ataerkillik kontrolüne karşı bir tehdittir.

Kamusal alanda bu bağlamda var olan kadınlar, şiddet korkusuyla karşı karşıya kaldıkları, literatürde görülmüştür. Bu noktada, kadınların erkeklerden korkusu mekansal ve coğrafi bir boyut kazanır. Kadınlar belirli erkekleri kaçınmak yerine,

hangi yerleri ve alanları kaçınmaları gerektiğini içselleştirirler (Valentine, 1989). Bu, şehir sokaklarında hissedilen korkunun sürekliliğini kesen bir başa çıkma stratejisidir. Valentine (1989: 386), kadınların her erkekten korkmadıklarını belirterek, “tehlikeli erkeklerle” nerede ve ne zaman karşılaşılabileceklerini belirleyerek güvenlikleri üzerinde kontrol *illüzyonunu* koruduklarını söyler. Cinsiyetle bağlantılı olan güvenlik kavramı, “algılanan güvenlik” kavramıyla kendini gösterir. Bunun bir örneği, şehrin bir bölgesinde şiddet ve suç oranlarının azalmasına rağmen, kadınların hissettiği korkunun değişmemesidir. Cinsiyete bağlı güvenliği algılama eşitsizliğini gösteren çalışmalar, kentsel tasarımın kadınlar ve diğer dezavantajlı grupların deneyimlerine görmediğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, bu deneyimlerin karanlık sokaklar, yüksek duvarlar, karanlık ve ıssız yerlerde duraklar ve istasyonlar, umumi tuvaletler, alt geçitler ve köprüler gibi yerlerde dikkate alınmaması, kadınların şehrin halka açık alanlarında özgür ve korkusuzca hareket edememelerine neden olmaktadır (Jiang, Mak, Larsen ve Zhong: 2017). Güvenlik, algılanan güvenlik ve korku kavramları bağlamında vurgulanan başka bir olgu da kadınların genellikle tanıdık bir yer ve ortamda kendilerini güvende hissetmeleridir. “Tanıdıklık” burada, kültürel, demografik ve sınıfsal ortam ve yerlere dair tanıdıklıktır (Roy ve Bailey, 2021: 7). Bireylerin kendileri için “güvenli alanlar” yaratmaları, literatürde “Rahatlama Haritaları” kavramıyla ilişkilendirilmiştir; bireylerin duyguları ve deneyimleri ile mekanlar ve yerler arasındaki ilişkileri belirleyerek, kimliklerin görünürlüğünü tarif edilmektedir (Rodo-de-Zarate, 2013: 17).

Azınlık kavramı üzerine yapılan literatür taramasında, benzer yönelimlere rağmen farklı yaklaşımlar ön plana çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca, “kültürel çeşitlilik”, “vatandaşlık”, “azınlık bilinci”, “toplumsal ayrımcılık”, “dışlanma”, “marjinalleştirilme”, “çeperde kalma”, “diaspora” ve “yerellik” gibi kavramlar, teori ve pratik açısından azınlık kavramıyla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Ek olarak, bu önemli kavramlarla ilişkili olarak, literatürde azınlık kavramına yönelik bir kavramsal eleştiri dikkat çekmektedir. Suciyan’a (2018) göre, terminolojik olarak, bu kavram çelişkili bir şekilde ideolojik olarak bazı önemli tarihsel ve dolayısıyla toplumsal gerçekleri görmezden gelecek şekilde oluşturulmuştur. “Azınlık” kavramı, temel olarak bir yasal kategoridir ve çeşitli *tehcir* ve *sürgünlerin* tarihini görünmez kılarak onları meşrulaştırır (Suciyan, 2018: 57). Ayrıca, çoğunluğun “ulus” ve azınlığın “öteki” olduğu ulus-devlet

yapısını referans alır ve yeniden üretir. Bu kavram, birleştirici ve homojen birliği ve dayanışmayı sağlayan ulus-devlete karşı tanımı gereği çelişirken, farklı politik tarihleri ve devletin ayrımcı politikalarını, farklı türdeki ırkçılıklarını örtbas ederek gayrimüslimleri genel bir kategori altında toplar (Suciyan, 2018: 57). Azınlık kavramı bağlamında sınırlı ve küçük bir oluşuma işaret ediliyor gibi görünse de aslında azınlığı ilgilendiren konular doğrudan çoğunluğu ilgilendirir. Bu sorunlu siyasi tanımıyla azınlık kavramı, gayrimüslim toplumların benzersiz sosyo-politik tarihlerini görünmez kılar.

Yüzyıllardır Türkiye topraklarında yaşayan Ermeniler, diğer üç gayrimüslim toplulukla karşılaştırıldığında nüfus olarak oldukça kalabalık ve heterojendir. Lozan Antlaşması ile azınlık statüsü yasal olarak elde edilen ve yeni kurulan Cumhuriyetin eşit vatandaşları olarak kabul edilen gayrimüslimlerin, ulus devletinin inşası sırasında azınlık haklarının kullanımı önemli ölçüde kesintiye uğratılmış veya önlerinde çeşitli engeller konulmuştur. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun aksine, *milli kimlik* tanımında etnisiteyi vurgulayan yeni Cumhuriyet, kağıt üzerinde herhangi bir etnik ve/veya dini kökene bakılmaksızın "Türk" olarak kendini tanımlayan bir bireyi kabul ederken, gayrimüslim azınlıklar "öteki" olarak kabul edilmiştir (Maksudyan, 2005). Türk milliyetçiliğinin ortaya çıkmasının tarihsel nedenlerinden birinin Osmanlı modernleşme politikaları olduğunu belirten Göl (2005: 136-137) ise, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun dini karakteri ve millet sisteminin "Türklük" tanımında *etnisiteye* engel olduğunu söylemektedir. Bunun yerine İslam, Türk ulusunun etnik farklılıkları yerine birleştirici bir sosyal güç olmuştur. Bu süreç, diğerine dair bir yapı kurulmasını gerektirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Ermeniler Türk devleti gözünde ulusal toprak birliği ve bütünlüğünü tehdit eden bir konuma oturtulmuşlardır (Göl, 2005: 137). Cumhuriyet tarihi boyunca ve günümüzde, devletin ayrımcı politika ve eylemlerinin travmatik etkileri halen bellek aracılığıyla günlük yaşamda devam ederken, gayrimüslim azınlıkların sayısının giderek azalmasına ve bu toplumların bu topraklarda "misafir" oldukları algısının sürekli yeniden oluşmasına neden olmuştur.

Ermeni cemaati, devlete ve egemen gruba karşı kendisini, kendisine yöneltilen müdahaleleri dikkate alarak konumlandırmıştır. Cemaatin iç kısmını Ermeni evleri, aileler ve akrabalık ilişkileri oluştururken, kiliseler, okullar, diğer kurumlar ve mezarlıklar oluştururken, orta kısımda yer almaktadır. Bu orta kısımdan itibaren

devlet gözetimi başlar. Dolayısıyla gayrimüslimlerin kamusal alanı ve *devletin toprağı*, cemaatin dış kısmını oluşturuyordu (Ekmekçiođlu, 2016: 38). Bu nedenle, aile ve akrabalık ilişkileriyle birlikte insanların özel hayatlarını işaret eden ev, etno-dini kimlikleri açısından Ermenilerin devlet baskısını hissetmediğı tek yerdi (Ekmekçiođlu, 2016: 39). Böylece farklılık, kamusal alanda görünmez hale gelerek evin içine çekildi ve kadınlarla ilişkilendirilen geleneksel bir yapı haline geldi. Kadınlar “geleneğın koruyucuları” olarak tanımlanırken erkekler, “ilerleme”, “modernizm” ve “dış tehditlere” uyum sağlama adına hareket etme izni verildi (Ekmekçiođlu, 2016: 34). Ermeni kültürünün kurtuluşunu sağlayacak olan ev, kadınların belirlenmiş alanı ve mekanı olarak kendini gösterdi. Bu “dünya ve ev” ekseninde yatay olarak konumlanan çift yönlü formülde, kadınlar evde geleneklerin devamlılığını sağlayarak ruhaniyeti ve “iç özü” *kurtararak* bunu çocuklarına aktarmalıydı. Dolayısıyla kadın, annelik görevini yerine getirdiğinde ancak bu iç özün kurtarılmış olduğı kabul edilmekteydi (Ekmekçiođlu, 2016: 35). Kuşaklara aktarılmadan kurtarılamayan gelenek, değışen zamanın ruhuyla çelişkili bir durum yaratıyordu; bu anneler eğitilmeliydi ancak köklerinden kopmamalıydılar. Bu nedenle, giderek modernleşen bir toplumda kadınlar da değışmek zorunda kaldılar. Literatürde görölmüştür ki, bir ulus yaratma sürecinde ataları korumak ve sürdürmek için tasarlanan iş bölümü büyük ölçüde cinsiyete dayalıdır ve Ermeni kadınların “azınlık içinde azınlık olma” statüsü kendini göstermiştir.

BÖLÜM 3

METODOLOJİ

Bu yüksek lisans tezi, kamusal alanın cinsiyetli yapısını ve kimliklerle olan ilişkisini anlamayı ve mekan ile cinsiyet arasındaki etkileşimi ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Eşitsizliklere ve güç ilişkilerine karşı üretilen taktikler ve stratejiler belirlenecek ve kamusal alanın mekanları ve yerleri ile karşılıklı ilişkileri ortaya çıkarılacaktır. Bu doğrultuda araştırma sorusu, “Yüksek eğitimli bir grubun toplumsal cinsiyet ve etno-dini kimlikleri kamusal alanla kurulan ilişkisellik ve mekansallık ile nasıl kesişmektedir?” şeklinde belirlenmiştir. Saha araştırması

sonucunda, başka bir sorunun daha yanıtlandığı görülmüş ve alt-soru, “Bekar Ermeni kadınlar geniş toplumla etkileşirken başvurdukları taktik ve stratejiler nasıldır?” şeklinde oluşmuştur.

Bu tezin metodolojik çerçevesi feminist metodolojiye dayanmakta ve feminist epistemolojiden yararlanmaktadır. Özellikle feminist bakış açısı teorisinden yararlanarak kadınların gündelik deneyimleri yoluyla üretilen bilgiye odaklanmaktadır. Kamusal bekar Ermeni kadınların günlük deneyimlerine ve duygularına odaklanarak, bu araştırma onların hikayelerini ön plana çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bireylerin deneyimleri ve/veya duyguları toplumsal bağlamdan bağımsız olamayacağından, bu hikayeler hem bireysel tarihleri hem de topluluklarına ait tarihsel bağlam içinde incelenmiştir. Bireyleri sosyal bağlamda eritmeden ve failliklerini göz ardı etmeden ürettikleri bilgiler, kendi başına anlamlı kabul edilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, Ermeni cemaatinin tarihsel ve toplumsal bağlamı içinde bekar Ermeni kadınların hikayelerini vurgulayarak bu çerçevedeki failliklerini vurgulayacaktır. Bu araştırma, feminist coğrafyacı Massey (1994) ve Rose (1993) etkilenmiş ve feminist bakış açısı teorisine katkı sağlamak için güçlendirilmiştir. Mekanların özgürleştirici potansiyelini vurgulayarak, araştırma kadınların mekansal faillliğini ve kullandıkları taktik ve stratejileri ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Görüldüğü gibi, araştırma sorusunu yanıtlamak için, kadınların gündelik yaşamlarını katman katman incelemek gerekmektedir. Bu doğrultuda bu çalışmaya en uygun yöntem olarak niteliksel araştırma yöntemi seçilmiştir. Gündelik yaşam deneyimlerini ortaya çıkarmak için yarı-yapılandırılmış açık uçlu soruların içerildiği derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Mülakat yapılan katılımcıların yaş aralığını yirmi beş ile otuz beş arasında belirlenmiş, ancak katılımcı bulma zorluğu düşünülerek iki üç yıllık bir esneme payı bırakılmıştır. Kadınların kamusal alandaki hareketliliği ve görünürlüğünü ele alırken, çeşitliliği artırmak için sadece çalışan kadınlar değil, aynı zamanda kendi işini kuran veya aile işini devralan, ya da üst düzey yöneticiler olan kadınlar örnekleme dahil edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, görüşülen kadınlar, üretim araçlarıyla olan ilişkileri bağlamında belirlenerek ve kendi üretim araçlarının sahibi veya yüksek düzey yöneticisi olan beş kadına ek olarak on maaşlı kadınla mülakat yapılmıştır. Bu şekilde, kadınlar arasındaki sosyo-ekonomik benzerlikler ve farklılıklar temelinde, İstanbul'un mekanlarına ve yerlerine erişimleri

ile avantajları ve dezavantajlarının anlaşılması çabalanmıştır. Kürtçe, İngilizce ve Fransızca dillerinden birini veya ikisini konuşabilen, yüksek eğitimli on beş kadınla görüştim. Üçü kendi işini kurmuş, ikisi aile işini devralmış ve biri özel bir şirkette üst düzey yöneticiydi. Bir tanesi yarı zamanlı çalışan üniversite öğrencisiydi ve geriye kalan katılımcılar özel sektörde çeşitli tam zamanlı işlerde çalışmaktaydı. Üniversite öğrencisi de dahil olmak üzere hepsi çalışıyordu ve ailelerinden maddi destek almıyor olsalar bile hala aileleriyle yaşıyorlardı. Görüşülenler arasında öğretmenler, psikologlar, sosyologlar, mimarlar ve mühendisler gibi farklı alanlarda uzmanlar da vardı.

BÖLÜM 4

BU ERMENİ KADINLAR KİMDİR?

Görüştüğüm kadınlardan on dördü İstanbul'da, biri başka bir şehirde doğmuştur. Ezici bir çoğunluğun ebeveyni Anadolu Ermeni'sidir. Aileleriyle ilgili olarak, dışarıya açılmamak ve içeride kalmak temaları, benim görüşmelerimdeki çoğu katılımcının eğitimleriyle ilgili belirgin bir eğilim olarak ortaya çıktı. On beş görüşmecinin on birinin liseye kadar Ermeni okullarına gitmiştir. İlkokul ve ortaokul için farklı seçenekler evde tartışılmamış, doğrudan Ermeni okullarına gönderilmişlerdi. Görüşmeler sırasında bazı ebeveynlerin bu okullarla kişisel bağları olduğunu fark ettim. Bazıları mezun olmuştu ve nesiller boyu devam eden bir gelenek haline gelmişti, diğerleri ise kardeşleri ve kuzenleri de dahil olmak üzere hepsi orada mezun olmuştu. Bu nedenle, bu ebeveynler bu aile geleneğini devam ettirmek istiyorlardı.

Katılımcılar, ergenlik çağına geldiklerinde lise seçiminin evde tartışıldığını ve birçok ailenin kızlarını geniş toplumla birlikte okuyacakları karma okullara göndermek yerine Ermeni liselerine kaydettirdiklerini paylaştılar. Tüm katılımcılar, mahallelerindeki Ermeni okullarında liseye kadar okumuştular, çoğu yürüme mesafesindeydi. İlk ve ikinci sınıfta anne veya babaları tarafından bırakılan katılımcılar, arkadaş edindikten sonra arkadaşlarıyla birlikte okula gitmeye başlamışlardır. Evleri yakın olduğu için, sabah kapıdan birbirlerini alıp birlikte okula

gider, okul çıkışında da birlikte eve dönmektedirler. Kamusal alanla kurulan ilk ilişkilerin bu şekilde başladığını gördüm. Gruplar halinde hareket ettikleri için, güvenlik bağlamında ebeveynleri de daha rahattı. Sokakta kalabalık bir grup halinde oldukları sürece, haçları görünür olsa bile fazla rahatsız edilmemişlerdir. Liseye geçişte karma okula geçen iki görüşmeli, “yabancı uyruklu” kolejleri tercih etmiştir. Ailelerinin cemaate yakın ancak çok içinde olmadıklarını gördüm. Bu okullara gidebilecek durumda olanlar, daha çeşitli etnik-dini bir ortama ve üst gelir gruplarının çocuklarının da kayıtlı olduğu bir yere gidecekleri için kızlarının bu okullarda güvende olacaklarını düşünmüşlerdir.

Üniversitede katılımcıların en çok karşılaştıkları söylem, “nerelisin?” sorusuydu. Özellikle hazırlık sınıflarında, başka birçok bölümden gelen karma bir ortam olmasından ötürü, benimle paylaşılanlar ışığında, katılımcıların Batman, Diyarbakır veya Şırnaklı birer Anadolu Ermeni’si olduklarına inanmayanlar çoktu. Sık sık “Nasıl doğulu olabilirsin?” gibi sorularla karşılaşmaktaydılar. Dershanedeki gibi aşağılayıcı ve ayrımcı bir tavırla olmasa, sırf meraktan sorular soruluyor olsa dahi, çoğu katılımcı kendilerini sürekli açıklamak zorunda hissetmekten yorulmaktaydı. 1915 ya da Ermenistan-Azerbaycan ilişkilerine dair sorulan sorular da onları yoran bir diğer meseleydi. Bazıları, “soykırım hakkındaki düşüncen nedir?” gibi sorularla karşılaştıklarında sessiz kalmadıklarını ve onları köşeye sıkıştırmaya çalışanlara güçlü cevaplar verdiklerini paylaşmıştır. Bu deneyimlerini aileleriyle paylaştıklarında, genellikle “iyi yapmışsın ama yine de dikkatli ol” gibi yorumlar almışlardır. Ek olarak, kimi katılımcının vurguladığı gibi, eğitim hayatı boyunca sınıfta öğretmenlerin ırkçı ve ayrıştırıcı söylemleri dikkat çekmektedir. Öğretmenlere karşı kimi kadın sesini çıkarabiliyorken kimilerinin sessizleşip içine kapanması, sınıftaki güç dinamikleriyle ilgilidir (Morris, 2003).

Görüştiğim kadınların çoğunluğu yaz tatilini geçirmek için yazlıklara gidiyorlardı. İstanbul dışında büyüyen tek katılımcı, İstanbul Bakırköy’de akrabalarını ziyaret ettiğini ve köye büyükannesini görmeye gittiğini belirtti. Diğer on dördü ise yazlık evlerinden bahsettiler. Bunların üçü Kınalıada’da, dördü Büyükkada’da yazlıkları vardı. Geri kalan yedi kişinin, Marmara Ereğlisi, Çınarcık, Silivri, Tekirdağ ve Altınoluk gibi bölgelerde yazlık evleri vardı. Bazıları yazlık evlerini sezon boyunca kiriliyor ve geniş ailelerini orada topluyordu. Benzer şekilde, beş ya da altı evin

bulunduğu bir sitede geniş ailesiyle ayrı ayrı yaşıyorlardı. Bazıları da satın aldıkları evlere çekirdek aileleriyle gidiyor, çevrede kimse olmadan tatillerini geçiriyorlardı. Ancak bu durumlarda genellikle evler güvenli bir sitenin içindeydi ve belirli bir gelir düzeyine sahip insanlara ait olduğu için kendilerini güvende hissediyorlardı. Komplekslerde yazlık evi olmayan bazı katılımcılar, geniş toplumla etkileşime girmeye başlarken öte yandan, etkileşim olsun ya da olmasın, bu ortamlarda Ermenice konuşmak *yasaktı*. Yazlık evlerin konumları bağlamında ebeveynlerde iki eğilim gözlemlendim. İlki, adada ev satın alamamaları veya kiralayamamalarıydı. Bunun sebebi çoğunlukla ekonomikti. İkincisi, cemaatten ve/veya turist kalabalıklarından uzaklaşmak, daha rafine bir tatil yapmak istenmesiydi.

Hemen hepsi bugün çalışıyor olan görüştüğüm kadınların iş hayatına atılmakla birlikte, günlük hayatları da daha yapılandırılmış hale geldi ve önceki hayatlarında yapabildikleri aktivitelerde kısıtlamalar getirildi. Artık ailelerinden iş hayatlarında destek almayan kadınlar, gidebilecekleri yerler ve yapabilecekleri aktivitelerin seçenekleri daha da kısıtlandı. Ayrıca, işleri nedeniyle dışarı çıkabilecekleri gün ve gecelerin sayısında ve süresinde yeni kısıtlamalar getirildi. Hobilerinin devamında ve gece hayatlarında azalma görüldü. Kadınların erken yaşta çalışmaya başladıklarını gözlemlendim. İstanbul'da büyüyenler arasında, okul yıllarında babalarının iş yerlerine veya dükkanlarına dokuz ila on üç yaşları arasında götürülenler, kasada durarak babalarına yardım etmişlerdir.

Ek olarak, birçok kadın, cemaat ağları sayesinde yazları yarı zamanlı olarak çalışmışlardır. Kadınların yarısından fazlası, ergenlik dönemlerinde bu şekilde çalıştıklarını belirtti. Diğer yarısı ise üniversitedeki stajları aracılığıyla çalışmaya başlamıştır. Dört kadın kendi hesaplarına çalışırken, biri üst düzey yönetici olarak çalışıyor, biri yarı zamanlı çalışarak üniversite öğrenimi görürken diğer sekizi öğretmen, mühendis gibi alanlarda beyaz yakalı işçiler olarak çalışıyor. Sosyal sınıfları ne olursa olsun, çalışmanın, görüştüğüm tüm kadınlar için bir sembolik anlamı olduğunu gözlemlendim. Ortak deneyimlere ve anlatılarına dayanarak, kariyerlerine başladıktan sonra finansal olarak bağımsız hale gelmenin ve ailelerinden bu anlamda destek almamanın, onların ailelerinin gözünde saygın hissetmelerini sağladığını gördüm. Çoğu katılımcı, evliliğe ılımlı bakmaktaydı. Ancak kamusal alandaki hareketliliklerinin ve özgürlüklerinin kısıtlanma ihtimaline

karşı evlenmeyip bekar kalmayı tercih ediyorlardı. Ebeveynleri eğitimlerini ve ekonomik bağımsızlıklarını öncelese de, cemaatin genelinde evliliğin kadınların hayatında olmazsa olmaz olarak kabul edildiğini gördüm. Evlenmeden ayrı eve çıkılması ebeveynler tarafından sıcak karşılanmıyordu. Katılımcıların hemen hepsi bu sebepten ötürü ayrı eve çıkmadıklarını söyleseler de asıl sebebin aslında ekonomik olduğunu, gelirlerinin bugün *düzgünce* yaşayabilecekleri bir evin kirasını karşılayamayacağını söylüyorlardı.

Söyleştığım kadınların hangi sınıfa ait olduklarına bakılmaksızın, yaşadıkları mekansal deneyimler hem oldukça eşsiz hem de benzerdi. Hayatın her düzeyinde farklı ayrımcılıklara maruz kalsalar da sessiz kalmadıklarını gördüm. Kendilerini savunduklarını, okulda öğretmenlerinden arkadaşlarına, işyerlerinde patronlarından iş arkadaşlarına ve flört ettikleri insanlara kadar herkesle cesurca mücadele ettiklerini gördüm. Halka açık alanların farklı mekanlarında verdikleri mücadelelerle, çevreye kendilerini “alıştırmış” olarak ifade eden kimi katılımcılar, buralarda insanlarla daha iyi anlaşmaya başladıklarını paylaştılar. Diğer yandan, her zaman tedirgin oldukları devlet kurumları, kendilerini “öteki” ve “marjinal” hissettikleri mekanlardı. Kadınlar, bu mekanlara atfedilen Sünni Müslüman Türk algısının farkında olduklarından, genellikle oralara girdiklerinde rahatsız, savunmacı ve çaresiz hissettiler. Kendilerini orada ait olmayan biri gibi hissetmelerine neden oldu. Bu, "yerinde olma" ve "aidiyet" duygularının belirsizliğini ortaya çıkardı. Dışlanma deneyimleri, bu ihtiyacın anlamını belirsizleştirmiştir. Katılımcıların anlatı ve deneyimleri ışığında gördüm ki, diğer mekanların aksine devlet kurumlarının sınırları sabit ve değişmezdi.

BÖLÜM 5

İSTANBUL'DA GÜVENLİĞE DAİR DUYGULAR

Güven hissi, genellikle halka açık alanda güvenli olarak algılanan mekanlarda, yerlerde ve konumlarda rahat hissetmekle ilişkilendirilir. Görüşmelerimde, kendilerini rahat hissettikleri yerlerde güvenli hissettiklerini tutarlı bir şekilde açıkladılar. Burada, yerel esnafları tanımak ve iyi ilişkiler içinde olmak ve bunu sürdürmek, görüşmelerde kişilerin kendilerini güvende hissetmelerini sağlayan

anahtar kavramdı. Kurtuluş'ta yaşayanlar, Ermeni veya değil, mahallenin esnafının çocukluklarından beri değişmediği gerçeğinin onları rahat ve güvende hissettirdiği için tereddütsüz bir şekilde orada güvende olduklarını belirttiler. Belirgin bir eğilim de evlere yapılan vurguydu. Nesiller boyunca, ayrımcılıktan ve şiddetten sakınmak için farklılıklarını kamusal alanlarda gizleyen gayrimüslimler için ev, kimliklerin özgürce yaşanabileceği bir yer haline gelir (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 39). Görüştüğüm çoğu kadın, kendilerini koşulsuzca güvende hissettikleri evlerine ve odalarına öncelik verdiklerini belirtti. Cevapları, özel alanlarını belirtmekle başladı ve sonra evlerinde rahat hissettikleri halka açık alanlara doğru kaydı. Ait olma ve rahat hissetme duyguları, kimliklerinden ötürü kötü hissettirilmedikleri insanlar ve yerlerle çevriliydi. Neredeyse her şeyi açıkça konuşabildikleri, rahatça oturup kalkabildikleri ve ayrımcılıktan kaçınmak için kendilerini *sansürleme* stratejilerine başvurmak zorunda kalmayacakları insanlar ve yerler her zaman öncelikliydi. Bu noktada, yaş grupları ve düşünce biçimleriyle uyumlu olan insanlar ve onları içeren yerler vurgulandı. Ermenilerin genellikle kendi mahallelerinde toplandıkları yerler örnek olarak sıklıkla verildi. Bu yerlerin bazı sahipleri de Ermeni'ydi.

İstanbul'un bilmedikleri yer ve bölgelerinde kadınlar, yoğun toplu taşıma ağının, bolca dükkan ve kafenin olmasının onlara kendilerini güvende hissettirdiğini paylaştılar. Burada belirleyici olan, o bölgenin merkezine ek olarak görece kolayca ulaşabilecekleri mekanların bulunmasıydı. Ayrıca, tanımadıkları bir yerde olsalar bile, ailelerin yaşadığı bir mahalle olduğunu bildikleri yerlerde bulunmanın da kendilerini güvende hissettiklerini belirttiler. Güvenlik açısından dikkat çekici bir başka nokta, Midpoint veya Cookshop gibi markalaşmış ve/veya "kurumsal" ve bilindik yerleri tercih etme eğilimiydi. Bazı kadınlar, örneğin bir Starbucks'a girdiklerinde bile kendilerini güvende hissettiklerini vurguladılar. Yüksek sosyo-ekonomik seviyeye sahip bir katılımcım, "alt segmentten insanların üst segment yerlere gelmediği" için kendisini güvende hissettiğini belirtti. Dolayısıyla, güvende hissetmek için ekonomik olarak avantajlı olan kimi katılımcılar, "üst segment" veya "lüks" yer ve mekanlara gitmeyi tercih etmektedirler. Kern'in (2019: 122) bahsettiği "üçüncü mekan" kavramı bu deneyimi açıklamak için kullanılabilir. Tasarım ve inşaa biçimleriyle dikkat çeken bu mekanlar, kadınların güvende ve rahat hissettikleri yerler olarak günlük yaşamlarının bir parçası haline gelirler. Ayrıca, Bookman

(2013) tarafından “evden uzakta bir ev” olarak tanımlanan bu mekanlar, yarı-kamusal mekanlar olarak kabul edilir.

Bir yere sıkça gitmek, oranın düzenli müşterisi olmak ve oraya gitmeyi bir alışkanlık haline getirmek, görüştüğüm kadınlar arasında “benim mekanım” diyebilecekleri bir nitelik oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca, mekanın çalışanlarını, yöneticilerini ve/veya sahiplerini tanımak da güvende hissettirmekteydi. Onları rahatsız eden birini şikayet ettikleri takdirde o kişinin mekandan atılacağına dair hissedilen inanç ve güven çok etkiliydi. Görüştüğüm kişilerin çoğu için bir yere bağlanmak, orada bulunan insanlar aracılığıyla gerçekleşmekteydi. Aidiyet meselesi, çocukluklarını geçirdikleri, büyüdükleri ve anıları olan yerlerle ilintiliydi. Kadınlar genellikle doğdukları ve büyüdükleri yerlere aidiyet hissettiklerini ve burayı, onların ifadesiyle, “avucunun içi gibi” bildiklerini eklediler. “Bilmek”, “tanınmak” ve “bilinmek” kavramları burada öne çıktı. Aynı zamanda, Rodo-de-Zarate'nin (2013: 17) “güvenli alan” kavramı ödünç alınabilir. Şehirdeki şiddet korkusunu ortadan kaldırmak için başvurdukları kendi güvenli alanlarını yaratma stratejisi, şiddetle başa çıkma yolu olarak kendini gösterdi. Görüştüğüm kişilerden bazıları, bir kiliseye girdiklerinde aidiyet hissettiklerini de eklediler. Diğer yandan, çoğu röportaj yaptığım kişi hiçbir yere ait hissetmediğini paylaştı. Türkiye’de yabancı olarak görülmenin ve Ermenistan’da yeterince Ermeni olarak görülmemenin onları üzdüğünü ve öfkeliendirdiğini belirtirken, diğerleri gibi aidiyet hissetmeyen bazıları, aidiyet hissine olanak tanıyan Büyükada’yı bir seçenek olarak gösterdiler. Büyükada ve Kınalıada, bu kadınlar için evlerindeymişçesine kimliklerini özgürce yaşayabilecekleri bir yer olarak tanımlandı. Aitlikle ilişkilendirilen bir yanıt olan Büyükada, orada yazlık evi olan yedi kadından sadece üçü tarafından verildi ve açıkçası bu beni oldukça şaşırttı.

Kentin kamusal alanlarında hareketlilik ve görünürlük bağlamında mekansal duygular, kadınların karşılaşmak istemediği, kendilerini “öteki” hissettikleri mahallelerde, bölgelerde ve mekanlarda net ve açıktır. Mahalleler ve bölgeler hakkında konuştuğumuzda, her görüşmeden çıkan ortak cevap Müslüman muhafazakar bölgelerdi. Gündelik yaşamlarında buralara giren kadınlar, toplumsal cinsiyetlerine ek olarak etno-dini kimlikleri bakımından da rahatsız ve tedirgin hissettirildikleri için çoğunlukla haçlarını saklama ihtiyacı duymuşlardır. Yolların kesişmesi istenmeyen yer ve mekanlar konuşulurken, patlamaların meydana geldiği

bölgeler de akıllarına geldi. Bu bölgeler arasında Taksim ön plandaydı. Patlamaların yanı sıra, demografik ve mekansal dönüşümden de şikayet eden kadınlar için, Ermeni kimliklerinden öte birer kadın olarak günün herhangi bir saatinde rahatça yürüyemedikleri hale gelen Taksim, bazılarının lisede okuduğu ve birçok kişinin lise ve üniversite hayatını sokaklarında geçirdiği bir yer olmasına rağmen, artık tanıyamadıkları ve gitmek istemedikleri bir yer haline gelmişti. Dolaştıkları sokaklar değişmiş, sıklıkla uğradıkları kafeler ve barlar kapanarak yerini mağazalara bırakmıştı. Taksim, hiçbir kadının gece yalnız kalabileceği bir yer değildi artık. Kimi katılımcı oradaki deneyimlerinden bahsederken akıllarına erkek turistlerin bakışlarından duydukları rahatsızlığı anımsayarak bu kişilerin kasıtlı olarak onların üzerine yürüdüklerinden bahsettiler. Kimi katılımcım Taksim'i Müslüman muhafazakar bir yer olarak tanımlarken, diğerleri karışık, garip, yabancı ve kaotik olarak tanımladı. Taksim, Eyüp ve Fatih gibi yukarıda bahsedilen bölgeler, turistler, göçmenler ve/veya mültecilerle karşılaşma olasılığı yüksek yerler olduğundan karmaşık kültürel ve sınıfsal bir yapıya sahiptir. Burada Simmel'in (2013: 26) metropolü tanımlarken karmaşık sosyal ağlar ve kalabalıklara vurgusu akla gelirken, Massey'in (1994: 179) belirttiği gibi, artan nüfus yoğunluğu, değişen demografik yapı ve tanıdık yüzlerin azalması, kadınların bu bölgelerle ilişkilerini olumsuz etkiler ve dolaylı olarak erişim ve hareketliliklerini etkiler.

Arzu ettikleri yerde cemaatin olmasını isteyen kimi katılımcım, istedikleri yaşam alanlarını paylaşan daha seküler insanların varlığının önemini vurguladılar ve en azından birkaç cemaat üyesine, bir kiliseye, bir okula sahip olmanın kendilerini daha huzurlu hissettireceğini belirttiler. Onlara göre, bir bölgede bir kilise, bir okul ve dolayısıyla bir topluluğun olması, yerel Müslümanların onları *kabul etme* olasılığının artacağı anlamına gelebilir. Ayrıca aile üyelerine yakın olmak veya güvendikleri insanların mahallede yaşadığını bilmek, kendilerini daha güvende hissettirmekteydi. Ailelerine yakın olmak isteyen kadınlar, mevcut mahallelerinde kuzenlerine, teyzelere, amcalara ve yayalara yakın yaşayan kadınlardı. Dışarı çıktıklarında aile üyelerinin evlerine uğrama alışkanlıklarını sürdürmek istediklerini paylaştılar. Bazıları, anneleri ve babalarından çok uzak olmak istemediklerini vurguladılar. Tüm bu ifadeler ve anlatılar aslında güvenli bir alan yaratma ihtiyacına dayanıyordu. Hayallerini kurdukları yerlere güvenli alanlarını getirmek/oluşturmak için bir çaba

harcıyorlardı. Sınıflarına bakılmaksızın, kadınlar korku içinde değil, keyifle yaşamak istiyorlardı.

BÖLÜM 6

KENTSEL ALANI SAHIPLENMEYE DAİR ÇAĞRIŞIMLAR

Kentsel alanların sahiplenilmesi duygusu, çoğunlukla görüştüğüm kadınların yaşadıkları bölgeyle ilişkilendirilen bir aidiyet duygusuyla bağlantılıdır. Güvende ve rahat hissettikleri mekanlara dayalı olarak yapılan paylaşımlar, gündelik hayatın ve hafızanın parçası olan İstanbul’la ilişki kurma çabası olarak görülebilir. Birçok kişi, ötekileştirmeye maruz kalmaları nedeniyle İstanbul’un bütünüyle bir ilişki kuramadıklarını belirtmişlerdir ve bu, marjinalleştirilmeyecekleri bir kent yaşamına özlem duyduklarını göstermektedir. Doğdukları ve büyüdükları toplumun güvenli alanları, doğrudan kentsel aidiyetle ilişkilidir (Örs ve Komşuoğlu, 2009: 331). Ancak, Akatlar, Ortaköy ve Nişantaşı gibi yerler sosyo-ekonomik refah açısından daha yaşanabilir bulunduğundan, bu alanlarda yaşayan kadınların kentsel deneyimleri, Carmona’nın (2014) “iyi kamusal alanlar” kavramını hatırlatmaktadır. Bu ayrıcalığı olan kadınların, bu alanlardan ayrılmak istemediklerini gördüm. Diğer yandan, orta ve alt gruplar, kentsel dokudan, değişen demografik yapıdan ve kalabalıklaşmaktan şikayet etseler de cemaatlerine yakın bölgelerde yaşamaktan vazgeçmiyorlardı. Bu bölgeler, onlar için rahatça soluklanabildikleri güvenli alanları oluşturuyordu; buralar çoğu durumda onların, dışlanma deneyiminin mümkün olduğunca az olduğu üçüncü mekanlarıdır (Kern, 2019: 122). Bu kadınlar, aslında kentle ilişkilendirirken cemaatle olan ilişkiler aracı oluyor ve buradan doğru kentle bağlar kuruyorlardı.

Ek olarak, sınıf ayrımı gözetmeksizin daha politik eğilimli olan katılımcıların, şehirdeki dönüşümün politik yönlerinin farkında olduklarını ve dolayısıyla sahiplenme veya aidiyet hissi edinemeyeceklerini gözlemledim. Ancak kendilerini apolitik olarak tanımlayan daha yüksek sosyo-ekonomik düzeydeki katılımcılar, İstanbul’u sadece kendi semtleri olarak değil, şehir olarak benimsediklerini vurguladılar. Kendi işletmelerine sahip olan iki katılımcı, onların ifadesiyle İstanbul,

“maliyeti düşünmeden her istediklerinde Boğaz manzaralı bir restoranda yemek yiyebilmenin keyfini çıkarabildiklerini” bir yerd. Yine içlerinden bir tanesinin ifadesiyle, “İstanbul’un kaymağını yiyebiliyorlardı”. Fakat benzer sosyo-ekonomik düzeyde ancak politik kimliği ön planda olan bir başka katılımcı ise politik duruşu nedeniyle İstanbul’a aidiyet ve sahiplenme hissedemeyeceğini söyledi. Hopkins ve Dixon (2006), bireylerin bir yerde siyasi görünürlük ile aidiyet, bağlılık ile evde hissetme duygularını ilişkilendirirken, ulus, devlet ve toplum gibi siyasi tahayyüllerin bir yer ve mekanda oluşturulan siyasi bilinç sayesinde inşa edildiğini belirtmektedirler. Ancak, politik eğilimli katılımcılarımın İstanbul’a aidiyet hissedememe ve sahiplenememe deneyimlerine dayanarak, bu durum farklıydı diyebilirim. Bu duyguların ve deneyimlerin kendi içinde güç ilişkileri içerdiği açıkça görülmektedir. Katılımcılarımdaki travmatik kolektif belleğin gündelik hayata olan politik izdüşümü, onları daha eleştirel bir yaklaşım sergilemeye sevk etmekte ve her karşılaştıklarında onlara Türklük ideolojisi hatırlatılarak aidiyet hissini zayıflatmaktadır.

Görüşülen kişilerin ailelerinin politik aktivizme bakış açılarının farklı olduğunu gözlemledim. Politik konuları evde tartışan aileler, politik eylemliliği onaylayan ailelerdi. Bu aileler, katılımcılarıma çocukluklarından beri politikanın evlerinin bir parçası olduğunu göstermişlerdir. Eylemliliği onaylayan kimi aileler, kızlarıyla protestolara veya anma katılırken öte yandan, politik aktivizmi onaylamayan aileler; evde politika tartışmalar bile kızlarının katılımını başlarına bir şey gelecek korkusuyla istemeyenler ile evde hiç politika tartışmayıp çocuklarını apolitik yetiştirenler olmak üzere ikiye ayrılmaktaydı. Bu “apolitik” tanımı, bu ailelerdeki üç görüşülen tarafından kendi politik durumlarını tanımlamak için kullanıldı. Ayrıca bu katılımcıları, hayatlarında politik aktivizmin eksikliğini hissettiklerini belirttiler. Neredeyse tüm katılımcıları ölüm korkusu ve/veya tutuklandıkları takdirde Ermeni kimlikleri dolayısıyla başlarına gelebileceklerin belirsizliğinden ötürü endişeleri olduğunu ifade ettiler. Bu noktada, görüşmeler sırasında Ermeni bir kadın olmanın, kimliklerin kesişimselliğinin yarattığı stres, rahatsızlık, endişe ve kaygıyı net bir şekilde görebiliyordum.

Güvenlik hissi, görüştüğüm kadınların şehirle olan ilişkilerinde belirleyici bir rol oynamaktadır. Bilinçli veya bilinçsiz bir şekilde, cinsiyet veya etno-dini kimlikleri

nedeniyle şiddet ve/veya ayrımcılığa maruz kalmayacakları, tehlikeli erkeklerden uzak kalabildikleri güvenli alanlardan oluşan rahatlama haritaları inşa etmektedirler. Bu alanlar, yaşadıkları mahallelerden veya sosyo-ekonomik bağlamda lüks kabul edilebilecek bölgelerden oluşabilir. Genellikle, aidiyet duygusu, doğdukları ve büyüdükleri mahallelerle kurulurken, çoğu durumda şehre genel anlamda aidiyet hissetmediklerini gördüm. Bu his, görüştüğüm kadınların politik eğilimlerine bağlı olarak değişmekteydi; kendilerini politik olarak tanımlayan ve kamusal alanı politik amaçlar için kullanan bazı kadınlar, şehrin dokusuna daha eleştirel bakarken, apolitik olduklarını ve yüksek bir sosyo-ekonomik pozisyona sahip olduklarını belirten bazı kişiler ise İstanbul'a hissettikleri bağlılığı lüks ve dolayısıyla güvenli alanlar aracılığıyla kurmaktadır. İş ve okul hayatları dışında kentin kamusal alanlarında keyifli bir deneyim yaşamak isteyen görüştüğüm tüm kadınlar, bu deneyimi hissedebilecekleri alanları arıyorlardı. Arabası olan bazı kadınlar doğaya yakın ormanlık alanlara giderken, bu ayrıcalığa sahip olmayanlar parklara ve deniz kenarına giderek keyifli bir deneyim yaşamaya çalışıyorlardı. Dikkatimi çeken bir başka veri ise, neredeyse tüm kadınların yalnız vakit geçirmekten hoşlanıyor ve ritüelleştirilmiş alışkanlıklara sahip olmasıydı. Dolayısıyla, görüştüğüm bekar Ermeni kadınların “görev odaklı” bir kamusal alan kullanımına sahip olmadıklarını açıkça gördüm.

BÖLÜM 7

KAMUSAL ALANDA STRATEJİLER

Valentine (1992: 23-24) makalesinde, ev içi şiddetin oranının kamusal alandakinden daha yüksek olsa bile ebeveynlerin kızlarını kamusal alandaki şiddete karşı uyardıklarını vurgular. Dolayısıyla ebeveyn uyarılarının ve diğer gündelik tartışmaların, kadınların kamusal hayatında korkunun yerini sosyal ve ideolojik olarak şekillendirdiğini ortaya koyar. Hemen hemen tüm görüşmelerde kendini gösteren kamusal alanlarda gizlenme stratejisi, ebeveynler ve aile büyüklerinin kızlarına ve/veya torunlarına aktardığı bir bilgiydi. Özellikle şehrin daha muhafazakar bölgelerinde dini sembolü gizlemek için haç takmamak veya “arkaya

atmak” oldukça yaygın bir stratejiydi. Farklılık çağrıştıran dini sembollerin görünürlüğü, bireylerin kamusal alan kullanımını etkileyebilir ve ötekiliği yeniden üretmektedir. Bu yöndeki uyarılar, daha muhafazakar yerlerde, özellikle Fatih’te, bir önceki kuşağın Müslüman topluma karşı güvensizlik, huzursuzluk ve korku hisleri aktarmaktadır.

Ermeni kadınların kamusal alanda *konuşma eylemleri* ve geniş toplumla diyaloga girerek “siyaset yapmaları”, dikkat çekerek onları hedef haline getirme olasılığını tetikleyerek büyükler tarafından endişe verici bir durum olarak görülmüştür. Aktarılan başka bir tavsiye ise, ana dili gizlemektir. Çoğu kadına, çocukluklarından beri annelerine “mama” diye hitap etmemeleri sıkı bir şekilde öğretilmiştir. Sokakta yürürken, alışveriş yaparken veya tatillerde plajda, kısaca geniş toplumla etkileşim halinde olunan yerlerde, kimliklerinin ana dili aracılığıyla ortaya çıkarmanın tehlikeli olduğu aktarılmıştır. Evde Ermenice öğrenen kadınların ezici çoğunluğu, çocukluğundan beri ana dillerini saklamayı öğrenmiştir. Buna göre, özellikle taksi gibi tek başına *başkalarıyla* etkileşimde oldukları yerlerde Ermenice konuşulmamalıdır. Bu açıdan taksi gibi yerler güvenli alanlar değildir. Geniş toplum tarafından anlaşılamayacak olma düşüncesi de güvenlik ve korunma bağlamında kaygı unsuru olarak yer almaktadır. Mümkün olduğunca Müslümanlarla etkileşimi sınırlamak, üst kuşaklar tarafından teşvik edilmiştir. Bu deneyimler, ayrımcılıktan ve dışlanmaktan kaçınmak için kendi toplumlarının içinde kalmak ve dışarı çıkmamak için kendini koruma stratejileridir. Aynı zamanda azınlık olma deneyiminin bir parçasıdır (Morris, 2003: 5).

Çoğu katılımcım için, ebeveynlerinin giyimlerine müdahale edişi ve onları sınırlaması, şiddetten kaçınmak için benimsenen bir strateji haline gelmiştir. İstanbul’da, kadınlar şehrin yer ve mekanlarında vücutlarını açıkta bırakacak giysilerle, özellikle gece, rahat ve güvende hissetmediklerinden örtünmeye başlamışlardır. Bu giysileri giyerken çekindiklerini ifade eden az sayıdaki katılımcıya karşın, çoğu katılımcı vücutlarını açıkta bırakacak şekilde istediklerini giymekte, ancak kendilerini korumak için kat kat giyinmektedirler. Kentin yer ve mekanlarında saklı olan sembolik anlamlar, şiddet korkusu gibi duygular aracılığıyla kamusal alanların cinsiyetli yapısını yeniden üretir. Yukarıda listelenen deneyimler, Massey (1994: 179) tarafından işaret edildiği gibi, kamusal alanlarda hareketliliği ve

kimliklerin sınırlamakta ve kısıtlamaktadır. Cemaatin mekansal olarak kümелendiđi alanlara yakın olmak, kolektif hareket etmek ve çeşitli giyim taktik ve stratejilerine başvurmak, bunu açıkça göstermektedir. Saha görüşmelerinde beni sarsan bir diđer bulgu, kadınların dinleri nedeniyle sözlü tacize, yani cinsel şiddete maruz kalmalarıydı. Müslüman erkeklerden gelen bu söylemler, Hıristiyan oldukları için onlarla *rahatça* cinsel ilişkiye girebilecekleri imalarını içermekteydi.

Geniş toplumla karşılaşma alanları olarak kentin kamusal mekanları, görüştüđüm Ermeni kadınlar üzerinde birçok etki yaratmaktadır. Bazıları kadın olmalarından dolayı yaşadıkları kaygıları, korkuları ve çaresizliđi paylaşıırken, diđerleri, maruz kaldıkları veya kalabilecekleri şiddetin derecesinin Ermeni olmalarından dolayı artacağını paylaştılar. Anlatılarına kadın olarak rahatsızlık duydukları deneyimlerle başlayan bazı kadınlar, Ermeni oldukları taktirde başlarına ne gelebileceđine dair senaryolarla bitirdiler. Bu deneyimler, Karakaşlı ve arkadaşlarının (2009: 379) “azınlık içinde azınlık” olarak tanımladıkları kamusal mekanlardaki katmanlı ve kesişimsel deneyimlerdir. Görüşmelerde kentteki kamusal mekanlarda hissedilen rahatsızlıđın oldukça karmaşık, çok boyutlu, benzersiz ama aynı zamanda tanıdık olduđu görülmüştür. Ek olarak, kadın cinayetlerinin ve görünürlüđünün arması ile kamusal alanda hissedilen rahatsızlık ve korkunun ilişkili olduđu görülmüştür. Kamusal alanda bir kadın olarak hissedilen tedirginliđe Ermeni olmanın eklenmesiyle, kendilerini nerede ve nasıl hissetmeleri gerektiđi konusunda sıklıkla kararsız olduklarını paylaşan kimi katılımcılar, diđer kişinin niyeti konusunda sık sık belirsiz olduklarını belirttiler. Belki de rahatsızlık ve endişeye dair en açık cevap, kamusal alanlarda yalnız kalmaktı. Yalnız yürürken veya otobüs durağında beklerken, mümkün olan en kısa sürede kalabalıđa atılmaya çalıştıklarını paylaştılar. Bu doğrultuda, Kern’in (2019: 38) şehrin kalabalıklarının kadınlara görünmezlik sağladığı ve böylece özgürlük hissettirdiđi vurgusu referans alınabilir. Bu vurguyu genişleterek, bu görünmezliđin, şiddeti önlemede kadınlara avantaj sağladığını söylemek mümkündür. Benzer şekilde, şehir kalabalıđının kadınlara “anonimlik” sağlayarak, onlara *özgürce* dolaşma fırsatı sunduđu eklenebilir.

Görüştüđüm bekar Ermeni kadınları tedirgin eden bir diđer unsur, İstanbul’un kamusal alanlarının تنها, ıssız ve karanlık olmasıydı. Kadınlar, ıssız ve sessiz bir sokakta yürürken sıklıkla arkalarına bakmaktaydı. Bazıları bu sokađı gördüklerinde,

yollarını uzatma pahasına yolunu deęiřtirmeye karar verdiklerini belirtti. Bu genellikle yanlarında kimse olmadığında meydana gelmekteydi. Bařka bir boyut olan karanlık, her gürüşmede tereddütsüz bir şekilde kendini gösterdi. Gece yalnız yürümek ve özellikle gece sokakta yalnız olmak, çok yoğun duyguları tetikledi ve kadınların bu rahatsızlık verici duygudan kaçınmak adına tüm planlarını buna göre şekillendirdiđi açıkça görüldü. Karanlık köşelerden aniden bir erkeđin fırlayıp canına zarar vereceđi korkusu, sahada oldukça belirgindi. Bu korkunun bazı kadınların asla unutamayacađı bir şey olduğunu görmek benim için oldukça yoğun ve etkileyiciydi.

Kent hareketliliđinin vazgeçilmez bir parçası olan ve günlük hayatta sık kullanılan toplu taşıma, kadınlar için farklı duygular ve deneyimler tetiklemektedir. Çođu katılımcım için gündelik yařantının ayrılmaz bir parçası olan toplu taşıma, arabaları olmadığı için daha fazla çeřit içermekteydi. Çok küçük bir azınlığın ise kendi arabaları vardı ve bunun dışında nadiren taksiye biniyorlardı. Görüřtüđüm kadınların büyük çođunluđu, toplu taşımayı aktif olarak kullandıklarından, bilmedikleri yerlere gitseler bile endiře duyduklarını paylařtılar. Duraklarını kaçırmamaya dikkat ederken, aynı zamanda bir şey olursa sığınacak yerlerini bilmedikleri ve bölgede yařayan insanları tanımadıkları için gergin ve stresli hissettiklerini ifade ettiler. Ek olarak, araçların içinin boş olması, endiře ve rahatsızlık uyandıran önemli bir faktördü. Kimi görüşmelerde, tanıdık bir bölgede yolculuk eden aracın korkutmaması görülrken, bilinmeyen yer ve bölgelerde katılımcıları tetikte olmalarına sebep olan bir etken olduğu görülmüřtür. Bu gibi durumlarda, aracın köprü altından veya alt geçitten geçerken araç içinin karanlığa bürünmesi katılımcıları tetikleyen ve tedirgin eden durumlar yaratmaktaydı.

Bazı görüşmelerde, metronun kapılarının sadece bir sonraki durakta açılıyor oluşunun metroyu otobüse göre daha az çekici bir seçenek haline getirdiđi görülse de öte yandan, çođu görüşmelerde, otobüsün metroya kıyasla daha az tercih edildiđi görülmüřtür. Toplumsal olarak çeřitli ve genellikle şehir merkeziyle kalmayıp çevre bölgelere de girdiđi için kadınları oldukça tedirgin eden otobüs, çođu katılımcıyı tedirgin etmekteydi. Kaos tarafından yaratılan bilinmezlik faktörü, burada öne çıkmaktadır. Bu ortamlar, sınıf farklılıklarının belirgin olduğu alanlardır. Yapılan görüşmelerde, taksiye binmenin farklı veçheleri açıkça ortaya çıkmaktadır. Gece sokaklarda kalmamak için hızlı bir seçenek olmasına rağmen, taciz, tecavüz,

kaçırılma ve cinayet gibi tehlikeler, beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu nedenle kadınlar, yukarıda bahsedilen taktiklere ve stratejilere başvursalar bile, taksiye binmemeyi her zaman öncelikli bir seçenek olarak değerlendirirler. Ancak kendini koruma bağlamında geceleri toplu taşıma kullanımında, taksi bir seçenek haline gelmekteydi. “Korkunun ekonomik bedeli”, taksi kullanımı bağlamında açıkça ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yüksek sosyo-ekonomik konumdaki kadınlar, gece dışarı çıktıklarında evlerinden uzaklaşma ayrıcalığına sahipken, diğerleri evlerine daha yakın seçenekler arasından kalmak durumundaydı.

BÖLÜM 8

SONUÇ

Bu çalışmayla birlikte, yüksek eğitiminin, cemaatin güvenli alanlarının dışında kalan alanlara erişimlerini kolaylaştırıcı bir etkisi olduğu gözlemlendi. Eğitimin sağladığı becerilerle istihdamda konumlanan bu kadınlar, belirli şehir merkezlerinde sosyalleşme ayrıcalığına sahiptirler. Başka bir deyişle, güvenli alanlara erişim sahada geçerlidir ve sağlanmıştır. İstihdam kalıplarıyla, şehir merkezlerinde ve nispeten lüks yerlerde sosyalleşme ayrıcalıkları artmaktadır. Araştırmamın bağlamında konuşursak, gözlemediğim şey eğitimin kamusal alanların kullanımını açması ve böylece güvenli alanlarda varlıklarını sürdürmelerine olanak sağlaması ve böylece koruma kalkanlarını güçlendirmesi oldu. Diğer yandan, Ermeni kadınların kamusal alanları kullanmalarını etkileyen temel faktör olarak karşımıza çıkan şiddet korkusu, kadınların hareketliliği ve görünürlüğü için ana engeldir. Bu şiddet, Ermeni kadınlar için çok katmanlıdır. Toplumsal cinsiyet bağlamında deneyimlenen cinsel şiddet korkusuna etno-dini kimlikleri eklenince korku sınırsız bir hale gelmektedir. Bu korkunun karmaşık doğası, yalnızca İstanbul’un Müslüman muhafazakar yerlerinde ve alanlarında değil, aynı zamanda dışarıdan Müslüman muhafazakar oldukları belli olan erkeklerle karşılaşılınca da hissedilir. Bu nedenle, etno-dini kimlikleri Ermeni kadınları, aynı eğitim seviyesine sahip ancak etnik çoğunluğa ait bekar diğer kadınlardan daha dezavantajlı bir konuma yerleştirir.

Öte yandan, gördüğüm Ermeni kadınlar İstanbul'un kamusal alanlarında varlıklarını sürdürmeye devam etmektedir. Burada ana mesele, bu kadınların İstanbul'daki kamusal yerlerde ve alanlarda nasıl var olduklarına odaklanmaktır. Kadınların güvende hissetmek için başvurdukları taktik ve stratejiler, hem cinsiyet hem de Ermeni kimlikleriyle ilişkilidir ve kent içerisindeki konumlanışlarında belirleyicidir. Benzer sosyo-ekonomik pozisyonlarda olmalarına rağmen, gördüğüm kadınlar arasında ekonomik farklılıkların da şehirdeki konumlarına etki ettiği gözlemlenmiştir. Örneğin, daha fazla ekonomik kaynağa sahip olanlar, cemaatin güvenlik çemberinin dışına çıkarak şehrin lüks bölgelerinde yaşama avantajına sahiptiler. Buna karşılık, daha az ekonomik kaynağa sahip olanlar cemaatin güvenlik çemberi içerisinde kalarak güvenliklerini sağlamaktaydı. Buradan hareketle, yüksek eğitilmiş, kentli, bekar ve genç Ermeni kadınların kentsel güvenliklerini sağlamak için iki eğilime sahip olduğu gözlemlendi; (1) refahı hissedebilecekleri, seküler olarak tanımladıkları alanlarda var olmak ve (2) topluluk içinde veya yakınında bulunmak. Sonuç olarak, Ermeni kadınların kentsel konumları, cinsiyet ve etno-dini kimlikleri ile sosyo-ekonomik konumsallıkları tarafından belirlenmektedir.

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