

GENDERED VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND RESISTANCE:
EXPERIENCES OF IRANIAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN YALOVA

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ABSTRACT

GENDERED VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND RESISTANCE: EXPERIENCES OF IRANIAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN YALOVA

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My dissertation focuses on the experiences of Iranian refugee women in Turkey who await resettlement in Canada, the USA, and various European Countries. Asylum seekers from countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq are assigned to satellite cities in Turkey until their resettlement. The lives of refugees waiting without any social or financial support are deeply shaped by satellite city regulation, and the satellite city emerges as an important category of analysis to understand the multifaceted experiences of refugees in Turkey.

Based on ten months of ethnographic research with a feminist methodology in one of those satellite cities — namely Yalova — I ask, how do refugee women experience satellite city restrictions, labor exploitation, and gendered violence during their period of waiting in Turkey and, what kind of strategies do they use to resist these oppressive conditions? With a focus on Iranian women, my research demonstrates that their experience in Yalova entails multiple and multi-layered forms of gendered violence, ranging from encounters with legal system down to their everyday practices, all while being exposed to fierce exploitation in the

informal labor market, compounded by the constant looming threat of deportation. However, by cultivating solidarity, they also create ways to navigate and negotiate the restrictions of the asylum regime and never give up claiming their lives. By locating women's experiences at the center of the research, I aim to make refugee women's experiences and the structures that reshape them visible and to map the relationship between heteropatriarchy, racism, and capitalism.

Keywords: Iranian, refugee women, gendered violence, labor exploitation, resistance

ÖZ

TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYETLENDİRİLMİŞ ŞİDDET, SÖMÜRÜ VE DİRENİŞ: İRANLI MÜLTECİ KADINLARIN YALOVADAKİ DENEYİMLERİ

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Bu çalışma, Yalova’da yaşayan ve Kanada, ABD ve çeşitli Avrupa ülkelerine yerleştirilmeyi bekleyen İranlı mülteci kadınların deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Türkiye, Cenevre Sözleşmesi’ne koyduğu coğrafi çekince sebebiyle, Avrupa Konseyi dışındaki ülkelere sığınma başvurusunda bulunanlara mülteci statüsü vermemekte, Afganistan, İran, Irak ve Somali gibi ülkelere gelen sığınmacıları, üçüncü ülke yerleştirilmeleri gerçekleşene kadar, devlet tarafından belirlenen uydu kentlere yerleştirmektedir. Herhangi bir sosyal, finansal destek almadan bu kentlerde yerleştirilmeyi bekleyen mültecilerin Türkiye’deki bekleme deneyimleri bu uydu kent uygulaması etrafında şekillenmekte, uydu kent uygulaması mültecilerin deneyimlerini anlamak için önemli bir analiz kategorisi olarak belirmektedir.

Bu uydu kentlerden biri olan Yalova’da feminist bir metodolojiyle on ay süren etnografik bir araştırmaya dayanarak gerçekleştirilen bu tez, mülteci kadınların Türkiye’deki bekleme süreleri boyunca uydu kent kısıtlamalarını, emek

sömürüsünü ve toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddeti nasıl deneyimlediklerini ve bu baskıcı koşullara direnmek için ne tür direniş pratikleri geliştirdiklerini incelemektedir. Araştırma, Yalova'daki İranlı mülteci kadınların Türkiye'deki bekleyişleri sırasında toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddetin farklı ve çok katmanlı biçimleriyle karşılaştıklarını ve kayıt dışı istihdam koşullarında sınır dışı tehdidiyle emek sömürüsüne maruz kaldıklarını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Öte yandan, araştırma, tüm bu kısıtlamalara ve şiddete rağmen, kadınların aralarında gerçekleştirdikleri dayanışma pratikleriyle, sığınma rejiminin yarattığı kısıtlamalara karşı direnmenin ve hayatlarına sahip çıkmanın farklı yollarını bulduklarını da göstermektedir. Kadınların deneyimlerini araştırmanın merkezine yerleştiren bu tez, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini ve deneyimlerini yeniden şekillendiren yapıları görünür kılmayı ve heteropatriyarka, ırkçılık ve kapitalizm arasındaki ilişkiyi haritalandırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İranlılar, mülteci kadınlar, toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddet, emek sömürüsü, direniş

To all women who stand up for their lives, never giving up claiming their lives

And

*To my dear aunt Hatice Osmanelebiođlu Karatepe, who never stopped fighting
until the last moment of her life*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PDMM: Provincial Directorate of Migration Management

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

DGMM: General Directorate of Migration Management

LFIP: Law on Foreigners and International Protection

ASAM: Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants

RSD: Refugee Status Determination

MUDEM: Refugee Support Association

IFK: Istanbul Feminist Collective

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Back in 2017, a number of activists, including myself, from the Migrant Solidarity Network/Ankara¹, were preparing for an event. The event aimed to gather refugees, activists, and scholars to discuss increasing racism toward refugees in Turkey. After checking the list of attendees, Deniz,² a fellow activist and co-organizer of the event, asked: “Who can write the official invitation letter for Maryam?” This was a jarring question, which I could not immediately process. I did not understand why Maryam, a woman refugee based in Denizli, needed an official invitation to come to another part of the same country – as if she was looking to travel abroad.³ “Well, the Migration Administration doesn’t allow her to leave Denizli without an invitation,” Deniz replied. This was the moment when I first began to grasp the carceral nature of satellite city regulation in Turkey.

I first met Maryam in Denizli in 2016, at a forum titled “Under the Rainbow: Without Borders Without Exiles,” which was co-organized by Pembe Hayat QueerFest⁴ and Migrant Solidarity Network/Ankara. Now, a year later, she was

¹ Migrant Solidarity Network/Ankara is a political organization established in Ankara in 2014. The organization aims to make migrants' problems visible, organize events, and political campaigns against racism, and create solidarity with migrants. For more detail, please check the organization's blog: <https://gocmendayanisma.com/gda-ankara/>

² All the names I use throughout the thesis are pseudonyms to keep my interlocutors'/friends' identities anonymous.

³ I myself have repeatedly requested invitation letters from the organizers of the events and conferences in various European countries. Such invitation letters are highly functional to facilitate the grueling ways of entering the Schengen zone for the “non-Europeans” like myself. However, I never thought that the same might be necessary for someone traveling between the cities of Turkey.

⁴ Pembe Hayat QueerFest is the first queer festival in Turkey that started in Ankara in 2011. Since then, it has continued to organize screenings and events in many different cities in Turkey.

going to join us in Ankara for another event. However, as Deniz harshly reminded me and the others, Maryam could not just take a bus and come to Ankara— as we the activists did from Ankara to Denizli for the previous one. Maryam — like any other refugee assigned to a satellite city in Turkey — was required to obtain permission from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) to travel outside of the city she had been assigned to, in this case Denizli. Denizli PDMM expected Maryam to show an official invitation sent by an institution. The only other means to legally travel would be to provide proof of a serious health-related issue or an appointment with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The invitation would by no means guarantee the travel permit would be granted; any travel request can be accepted or denied according to the asylum authorities’ discretionary evaluation process. This time we were lucky. Maryam got her travel permit with the official letter we sent and was able to attend the event. However, this was only the beginning of my introduction to satellite city regulations and its effects on refugees’ lives.

Due to its particular geographical limitation to the Geneva Convention, Turkey grants refugee status only to asylum seekers from member countries of the Council of Europe. Those who apply for international protection from non-European countries are only granted conditional refugee status. The conditional refugee status provides a temporary stay to non-European asylum seekers in Turkey until their resettlement in third countries can be arranged. In other words, asylum seekers from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan wait to be resettled in a third country with the “conditional refugee”⁵ status they have obtained from Turkey. During their waiting period, they must reside in one of the

⁵ Therefore, people who are referred to as refugees in Turkey have neither the refugee status nor the rights that this status brings. At this point, instead of the legal statuses determined by nation states and the definitions attached to these statuses, I will use the concept of “refugee” throughout the thesis to emphasize the right of every person to live wherever they want and the right to seek asylum.

satellite cities,⁶ assigned by the Turkish state. Like Maryam, refugees are not allowed to leave these cities without permission. They also are forced to regularly sign-in with the asylum authorities to confirm their presence in the city. With its oppressive administrative practices, the satellite city regulation shapes refugees' experiences in Turkey and occupies a crucial place in Turkey's asylum regime.

To have a better understanding on the effects of satellite city regulations in refugee women's lives and experiences, I decided to conduct my research in one of those satellite cities. For a number of reasons, I decided that Yalova, in the west of Turkey, would be a good entry point to understand satellite city regulation and its effects. First of all, it has been a satellite city since 2011 and is very close to Istanbul, a center of attraction for refugees with its social life and informal job opportunities. Through my previous field experiences in various research projects, I had come to learn that, although it is a small city, Yalova is a place with relatively large Iranian refugee women and LGBTI+ populations. Furthermore, Yalova is not only a satellite city but also a city where many foreigners with different legal statuses live. Therefore, the city, with its dwellers from a variety of countries of origin and with varying legal statuses, provides a very specific case through which to understand the current migration/asylum regime in Turkey. Lastly, through my previous fieldwork experience, I had built up deep connections and relationships with several refugee women living in Yalova. This motivated me to deepen my ties there and focus on Yalova as the main fieldwork location for my dissertation.

I started my fieldwork in Yalova in April 2019 and conducted 10 months of ethnographic research. Even though I met with Iraqi, Iranian, and Pakistani refugee women during the fieldwork in Yalova, most of those I met were Iranian. Statistically, since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has had one of the highest rates of emigration in the world. Also, the prolonged Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988

⁶ Contrary to what many think, Syrian refugees neither receive refugee status nor do conditional refugees. Syrians are under temporary protection status during their stay in Turkey. However, satellite city regulation does not apply to them.

further contributed to migration flows from Iran. Turkey has rarely been the target destination for Iranian refugees, but rather a transit country for them to reach the West. In 2008, when the United Nations declared to grant refugee status to LGBTI+, together with the departure of opponents of the Iranian regime following the presidential elections held in 2009 (Kalfa-Topateş et al., 2018), new migration waves increased the number of Iranians, including refugees, in Turkey. According to 2020 UNHCR statistics, the number of Iranians applying for international protection (asylum seekers and refugees) in Turkey was 27,000 (UNHCR, 2020). Besides those seeking international protection, the number of Iranians applying for a residence permit in Turkey also increased in recent years, with the figure for those staying in Turkey with a residence permit reaching 101, 204⁷ in 2022 (DGMM, 2022).

Although thousands of people have migrated from Iran over the past decades, there are not many studies focusing on Iranian refugees in Turkey⁸, especially with a particular focus on refugee women and their daily practices. In light of this, I decided to concentrate on group in my dissertation, to try to better understand their experiences⁹. Therefore, the interlocutors of my dissertation are refugee women from Iran who applied for asylum in Turkey and are waiting for their resettlement to another country. The women with whom I conducted my research have different

⁷ Iranians are ranked 5th among the people with residence permits in Turkey.

⁸ For studies focusing on Iranian groups in Turkey, please check: Koser Akcapar, S. (2010). Re- thinking migrants' networks and social capital: A case study of Iranians in Turkey. *International migration*, 48(2), 161-196; Shakhshari, S. (2014). The queer time of death: Temporality, geopolitics, and refugee rights. *Sexualities*, 17(8), 998-1015; Vaghefi, S. (2014). Devlet ve diaspora çıkmazında feminizm: Türkiye'deki İranlı sığınmacı kadınların toplumsal dışlanma ve gündelik direniş deneyimleri. *Fe Dergi*, 6(2), 50-61; Akis Kalaylıoğlu, Y. (2016). Transforming constraints into strategies: the role of different forms of capital in the status passage of documented Iranian migrants in Ankara, Turkey; Biner, Ö. (2016). *Türkiye'de mültecilik iltica, geçicilik ve yasallık: 'Van uydu şehir örneği'*. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları; TOPATEŞ, A. K. (2021). Akışkan Kırılğanlıklar Ekseninde İranlı Mülteciler: Emek ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet. *Fe Dergi*, 13(2), 87-101.

⁹ Rather than including other refugee groups in the research, I choose to focus only on Iranians since focusing on a single group would also be very helpful in grasping the specificities of the experiences.

demographic features that readers will encounter throughout the thesis. Most of the interlocutors were single mothers, single straight women, and lesbian women, whose ages vary between 18 and 41 (For more details, see appendix 1). Contrary to traditional migration theories, most of the interlocutors did not migrate as dependent on male members of their families but rather migrated to claim their lives on their own, with their children, or together with other women.

In the beginning of my research, my preliminary focus was on the production of space, including the confinement mechanisms of satellite cities and their effects on refugee women's lives and subjectivities. However, the fieldwork and conversations with women also highlighted the constitutive role of gendered violence both in refugee women's experiences and the workings of the asylum regime. Although the women I met during my fieldwork had applied for asylum for different reasons, they all left their loved ones behind and sought asylum in Turkey because of the violence and persecution they had experienced in Iran. However, my preliminary fieldwork revealed that the kinds of violence these women experienced in Iran has continued in Turkey, too. I have noticed that refugee women experience multiple and multi-level forms of gendered violence. Furthermore, almost all women have been subjected to labor exploitation and are negatively affected by Turkey's satellite city regulation. However, even in the harsh conditions of labor exploitation and gendered violence, refugee women also cultivate solidarity practices, mutual care, and resistance strategies. Their journey to claim their lives continues in Turkey.

My research questions to understand the women's experiences of waiting in Turkey are shaped by these preliminary findings. Accordingly, I have organized my fieldwork — and this dissertation — around two central questions: How do refugee women experience satellite city restrictions, labor exploitation, and gendered violence during their period of waiting in Turkey and what kind of strategies do they use to resist these oppressive conditions? However, I think that any scholarly and activist effort to understand refugee women's experiences without including

related historical processes, social relations, and material conditions in our analysis will have no effect other than rendering these experiences — and the people whom we write about — rootless, ahistorical, and apolitical (Malkki, 1996). Furthermore, as intersectionality reminds us, I also argue that to understand refugee women's experiences, we need to examine gendered violence, labor exploitation, solidarity and resistance practices together with the contemporary asylum regime, and with other systems of oppression.

This intersectional focus will highlight how experiences of refugee women (re)shape by the existing asylum regime, and structural mechanisms. Thus, my research questions extended and included questioning the asylum regime itself, and I continued to ask the following questions: How does the asylum regime constitutes refugee women as subjects who become open to labor exploitation and gendered violence? Is there a unique role of satellite cities in the production of gendered violence and labor exploitation? Does the asylum regime create obstacles to women's access to work permits and push them into informality? What is the role of deportability in shaping refugee women's labor practices? What role do mutual care, shared experiences, and knowledge(s) play in women's resistance practices? What is the role of social networks in solidarity and resistance practices? These questions arose focusing on the everyday experiences of those who included themselves in the women category with all their multiplicity and differences. As a feminist researcher, I deployed an intersectional feminist approach to capture these multiplicities and their experiences' specificities.

Moreover, focusing on the structural conditions and linking them with experiences of refugee women from an intersectional perspective has another aim: to create change in understanding refugee experiences as 'exceptional'. By doing this, I argue that exploitation, gendered violence, and racism do not only affect certain social groups. Intersecting experiences with systems of power such as heteropatriarchy, racism, and capitalism illustrate whether different social groups have different experiences — 'the enemy is common'. Therefore, different subjects can create a coalition for social change not to save someone else, but to free

themselves from oppression. I hope this thesis will also provide insights to capture commonalities between different groups of women —whether they are cisgender or trans, straight or queer, refugees or citizens.

Since refugee women's experiences are highly (re)shaped by asylum regimes, in the rest of this introduction, I will offer an overview of the asylum regime in Turkey. This overview aims to familiarize readers with the necessary structural background of what refugee women navigate during their period of waiting in Turkey. Hopefully, learning about these asylum processes and procedures will make the stories I will tell in the other parts of the thesis more intelligible and illustrate how the asylum regimes have an important place in shaping women's lives. While reading this overview, I also aim to exhibit how becoming a refugee requires and is contingent on following these challenging and complicated processes, completing arduous procedures, and fulfilling numerous administrative duties. As a researcher and activist working in the field of migration for almost a decade, and as a citizen of Turkey who is familiar with legal and bureaucratic worlds, I have to admit that it took a lot of time for me to understand these asylum procedures. By saying this, I would like to emphasize how this ever-changing complex structure is a very challenging process for refugee women who are in a country where they are not fluent in the culture, language, and context. Despite this, I think that the ability of women to continue their asylum processes is one of the strongest manifestations of their agency and perseverance.

After discussing the asylum processes and procedures, I will introduce the conceptual framework that is considered as important and is used in the thesis. I hope the conceptual framework provides a foundation to better understand women's experiences and can make the thesis more intelligible for audiences from different backgrounds. Finally, I will conclude by outlining the thesis chapters.

1.1 Governing Through Exclusion: Uncertainty, Ambiguity and Discretion

Turkey is a party to the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees. Yet it retains a “geographical limitation” (Kirisci, 1991) in relation to the Convention. Turkey applies restrictions on non-European asylum applicants’ right to seek protection and grants only “temporary asylum” to non-European refugees, which prevents their possibility to benefit from refugee status rights and their right to citizenship. Tens of thousands of refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia wait in Turkey for asylum authorities to resettle them in a third country in Europe or North America. Detailed statistics on those who have applied for international protection in Turkey are not shared by the General Directorate of Migration Management (DGMM)¹⁰. But general statistics on the refugee population are available. 29,256 people applied for international protection in Turkey in 2021 (DGMM, 2022). Furthermore, according to data from UNHCR, more than 330,000 asylum seekers and refugees are in Turkey (UNHCR, 2020). Iranian refugees constitute the third largest group of international applications in Turkey.

Until the asylum law in Turkey was put into effect in 1994, the UNHCR was the only institution responsible for evaluating asylum applications and resettling refugees in a third country. In that year of intense migrations from Northern Iraq, “asylum seeker” status was given to those who came to the country until their resettlement into a third country was determined by the Turkish state. This “parallel track” (Zieck, 2010) or “dual” (Biehl, 2009) asylum regime created by the Asylum Regulation of 1994 doubled not only the asylum procedures but also the asylum terminology (Biner, 2014:88). Asylum applicants had two separate cases that were examined by both Turkey and the UNHCR. At the end of the examination,

¹⁰ On 29.10.2021, the name of the “T.R. Directorate General of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior” was changed to “T.R. Presidency of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior.”

UNHCR granted them “refugee” status, and Turkey granted them “conditional refugee” status.

With the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) enforced in 2014, along with the establishment of the DGMM, significant changes were made to make migration management standardized, systematized, and civilianized¹¹. One of the significant attempts at the latter was the withdrawal of police from the asylum processes. With the LFIP, some of the asylum procedures that were previously carried out by the police were transferred to the civilian agency, DGMM. In addition to its civilianization attempts, this new law also attempted to standardize and systematize the legal and administrative asylum procedures. However, it did not fully eliminate the dual asylum procedures until 10 September 2018, when the UNHCR announced its withdrawal from migration management in Turkey. Until 2018, refugees still had to follow two asylum application processes—one with the UNHCR and one with Turkey’s DGMM. In the wake of the UNHCR’s abrupt termination of its activities in Turkey in 2018, the DGMM has become the foremost authority in registering refugees and assessing the ‘credibility’ of their asylum cases.

I conducted my fieldwork in 2019 after the withdrawal of UNHCR. However, all of my interlocutors started their asylum processes before 2018 both with the UNHCR and Turkish DGMM. With the change in the asylum process, refugee women were confused about what would happen to their cases and what exactly were the responsibilities of UNHCR and DGMM. Most of the interlocutors did not receive enough explanation or guidelines from UNHCR and DGMM. These interlocutors learned about UNHCR's withdrawal from Telegram groups that had been established by refugees. The complexity of the transition process and the asylum regime’s overall “make it up as you go” approach (Sarı & Dinçer, 2017) made it difficult for refugees to follow their cases.

¹¹ For more details, see: Sarı, E., & Dinçer, C. G. (2017). Toward a New Asylum Regime in Turkey?. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, 3(2).

This is to say that my fieldwork witnessed the transition in Turkey's asylum administration process from a dual-actor system to a single-actor one. The fieldwork provided insights into how the new single-actor regime works. The experiences of refugee women illustrate that the promises of standardized and civilianized asylum management are still questionable. In the next section, I will examine the procedures followed by those who have applied for asylum in Turkey to clarify what is questionable in the new regime and how refugee women are once again stuck in uncertainty, law violations, and unsystematized asylum procedures.

1.1.1 Registration

To be recognized as a refugee, one must follow complex and challenging registration processes, refugee status determination (RSD), and resettlement. The first step is registration. Prior to 2018, refugees had to simultaneously register with the Turkish authorities, UNHCR, and between 2013 to 2018 with UNHCR's implementation partner, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM). After a short interview with ASAM in Ankara, refugees were assigned to the satellite cities determined by governorates and expected to stay there until their resettlement to third countries.

After being assigned to satellite cities, refugees had to register with the local state authorities within fifteen days. Not registering with the state authorities or ASAM would risk asylum claims being denied and deportation. While most of the interlocutors knew what they needed to do after arriving in Turkey, everyone I interviewed talked about their difficulties with ASAM and the registration process. They had to wait long hours at ASAM since there was no appointment system.

The interlocutors frequently mentioned the humiliating attitudes of the security guards and ASAM's workers as a problem. Refugees were mostly not listened to and were misinformed about the asylum processes. The high-security measures and the barbed wire at the entrance of ASAM made them feel uncomfortable. "When

we go to Ankara, you go straight into a cage; they are looking for your whole body. As if we were criminals, as if we were taken to the police station”.

This short quotation from an interlocutor illustrates how refugees feel they are criminals the moment they first encounter asylum authorities. In the ASAM building, interviews are conducted in isolated and secured rooms. Refugees are made to feel that they are a danger to the communities and institutions they seek to enter and receive protection from.

Once they register with ASAM, refugees need go to their assigned cities and register with the PDMM in their cities. Although they talked about the humiliating attitudes and violent approaches of the PDMM officials at various stages of the asylum process, they did not describe this stage of the process as a registration step. When I asked questions about this process, they generally mentioned ASAM and the challenges they faced there. But what is interesting here is that refugees still refer to the DGMM/PDMM as “police” even though the DGMM/PDMM has been a civilian institution since 2014.

All the refugee women I interviewed registered with ASAM and PDMM since all of them had arrived in Turkey before 2018. However, my interviews with migration expert at PDMM in Yalova and the conversations with newly arrived refugees in Yalova give new insights into the current refugee situation.

In 2018, UNHCR, and ASAM withdrew from the process, and since then, refugees coming to Turkey have started registering directly with the PDMMs at satellite cities where they want to register. Although this can mean that refugees have more scope to choose the cities they can live in, certain cities are effectively off-limits when their refugee ‘quotas’ are full. Refugees tend not to know which cities are open for registration or not as they receive little to no guidance about this. Refugees stated that PDMM officers use discretionary power and do not register refugees intentionally. One interlocutor said that a new friend had visited ten cities in the space of a month by the time they found one where they could register.

The occupancy rate in the cities refugees apply to also plays a vital role in determining the registration dates. Sometimes refugees can only register months after they arrive in Turkey which sometimes expand to a year. The PDMM migration expert in Yalova said that they take refugees for a preliminary assessment before registering them and that those who fail to pass the pre-interview are not accepted by the PDMM. The migration expert explained this situation: “Now why should I include him/her/them in the system, then reject? That makes the process longer and creates a burden for us”.

On the other hand, he also stated that PDMM aimed to shorten the long registration periods with these preliminary interviews. He added that they could shorten the time for the first registration, which normally takes more than a year, to several months. Even though these preliminary interviews shorten the waiting time for the registration of refugees, which is still quite long, as the migration expert said, the primary purpose here is to reduce the number of applicants and make the system workable. While it is questionable whether a short interview will be enough to understand whether people deserve to be refugees or not, the interview process also gives us a clue that the asylum regime does not prioritize people's rights but instead gives precedence to the functioning of the regime itself. The interview searches for ways to reduce the number of refugees. On the other hand, the ones who passed the preliminary interview do not automatically receive registration. While, PDMM continue to accept asylum applications, the appointment for registration given to refugees takes several months, as the migration expert underlines. Therefore, refugees stayed for many months without registering so they could not benefit from any rights. This illustrates another reason for not registering refugees is to delimit the access to benefits of the health services system. As I explain in detail in Chapter 3, refugees can benefit from free health services for one year after registration. The Yalova PDMM migration expert clearly says in the interview that this creates a burden for the state:

Now he comes, for instance, an Afghan man, applies for asylum, at that time he benefits from your health system for free, increases unemployment.

It already takes two years until he gets an interview, this creates another burden on us (PDMM, 2019).

These responses illustrate how the state deploys techniques of excluding refugees and depriving them of fundamental rights. This is a way of strategically ‘coping’ and ‘managing’ the increasing number of refugees in Turkey. His words show that the second part of the asylum process — the status determination process — takes at least two years.

1.1.2 Status Determination Process and Resettlement

What awaits the refugees once they manage to register and settle in the satellite cities is the RSD. UNHCR defines the RSD as the “legal or administrative process by which governments or UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, regional or national law” (UNHCR, 2022). These RSD interviews were conducted to determine if the refugees were ‘bogus’. As a result of these RSD interviews, applicants were granted “refugee” status by UNHCR and “conditional refugee” status by the Turkish state. However, this does not mean that both authorities will always reach the same decision about asylum cases. The resettlement processes of refugees who are recognized as refugees by UNHCR can be rejected by the DGMM, which also interrupts the asylum process. They must be recognized as conditional refugees by DGMM to acquire the “exit permit” from the Turkish authorities, which allows them to leave Turkey for resettlement in third countries. This is explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Following the 2018 UNHCR announcement that it had withdrawn from the refugee status determination process, DGMM became the sole authority to conduct RSD interviews. My own fieldwork began in 2019, several months after UNHCR’s

withdrawal¹², and most of the refugees I met were highly confused and anxious about the changes within the process at the time. Those who had previously been recognized as refugees by UNHCR wondered whether their status would remain unchanged. In a short time, anxiety and uncertainty gave way to fear. DGMM started to interview again with the applicants who had gained refugee status from UNHCR. A new interview meant a new start for another asylum case, which caused overly prolonged waiting periods in Turkey. For some refugees who were previously granted their status and got their cases started, new DGMM interviews resulted in the cancellation of their asylum status given by UNHCR - a rejection of their asylum application. Many cases were dismissed by DGMM with the reasoning that “they do not meet the criteria for international protection”, which I will focus on in greater detail while discussing Mona’s story in Chapter 3. Interviews that I conducted with asylum lawyers revealed a striking fact about these rejections. Asylum lawyers whom I spoke to stated that most cases rejected by DGMM were gender-related persecutions involving gender violence and sexual orientation. This strongly indicates that DGMM does not consider non-state actors’ violence to be sufficient to warrant asylum and that DGMM defines persecution as state-centered. This has jeopardized the cases of many women who have sought asylum due to gender violence and sexual orientation.

Becoming the ultimate authority to decide on the recognition or the rejection of refugees’ asylum claims, DGMM, like many other nation-state authorities, does not necessarily follow UNHCR guidelines – this will be explained in detail in Chapter 3. I will describe that rather than implementing the UNHCR guidelines, DGMM creates its own criteria for accepting refugees. My interview with the migration expert in Yalova PDMM clearly illustrates this: “We don't have to give the status to the ones who obtained refugee status from UN”.

¹² I use the term “migration/asylum management,” however, I do not define migration as something that needs to be managed; rather, I refer it as a form of structural violence - a set of policies deployed by states to prevent and regulate human mobility.

After this shift in the decision-making, the number of cases rejected by DGMM has significantly increased. For DGMM, some ‘reasons’ are less valid than others. This also reveals that the Turkish state pushes people out of the system from the very beginning as a new coping strategy with the increasing number of refugees and migrants. Like this, asylum authorities get the power to easily deport people since their application is rejected even before they have received refugee status. Therefore, there is no conflict with the principle of non-refoulement, which is also part of LFIP, a point I further discuss in Chapter 4.

In addition to the uncertainty of the criteria, the insufficiency of the migration administration personnel, both in terms of knowledge and numbers is a situation that affects the experiences of refugees in this new process. In the interview I held in Yalova PDMM, the migration specialist stated that they had to ‘deal’ with too many migrants and refugees with only a few employees. He also said that many institution's employees left the DGMM when they found a job in another state institution. Even if UNHCR provides training to DGMM employees, the frequent turnover in staff largely prevents the full development of expertise among the workforce. Refugees suffer from a lack of specialization in RSDs and registration processes. For example, one of the interlocutors, whose asylum claim is based on her Christianity, said that the DGMM employee even asked her about Christianity so as to confirm another refugee’s case.

According to LFIP, DGMM should do an RSD interview within six months of registration, but in practice this can take years to happen. Among the women I interviewed, some refugees had not yet been called to the RSD interview, even after 2-3 years of their registration. The Yalova PDMM official also confirmed the severity of the situation, explaining it on the basis of their lack of staff.

The waiting time for refugees also varies according to the categorization of refugees’ vulnerability. The timeline for RSD interviews generally accelerates according to vulnerability. While these vulnerabilities are expected to be determined by considering the UNHCR guidelines, another regulation to determine

the vulnerability is the LFIP. As I explain in Chapter 3, according to LFIP (Article 3), unaccompanied minors, disabled people, the elderly, pregnant women or single mothers or fathers with children, and persons subjected to torture, sexual assault, or other serious psychological, physical or sexual violence are counted as persons with special needs. Refugees within this definition generally receive status in the first phase of the RSD, while the waiting period for refugees not included in this group is longer. On the other hand, in recent years, as my fieldwork shows, even the waiting period for RSD interviews of refugees whose cases fall under these vulnerability criteria has been getting longer.

The issue of self-expression is another crucial aspect to consider in the RSD interviews. The RSD results are closely related to how well refugees are seen to express themselves, their cases, and their experiences. RSD processes tend to produce a result faster for applicants who can clearly and assertively articulate their situation. My own previous experiences as an activist and the fieldwork in Yalova have strongly suggested that most refugees who come from an activist background and/or had close ties to NGOs or grassroots organizations are familiar with the asylum and/or human rights terminology, which can be a helpful factor in securing their RSD status, and in a shorter time period.

What follows RSD is the resettlement process. Like the RSD process, resettlement is determined according to the vulnerability of refugees and their social grouping. For instance, the groups with the fastest resettlements were generally LGBTI+, disabled people, and single women. However, this situation has changed considerably in recent years, and the resettlement times have started to reach up to ten years. It could be claimed that a single vulnerability category is generally no longer sufficient in the current asylum regime. It is not an exaggeration to argue that “the more you are pained, the more your chance for resettlement increases” became the current feature of resettlement. The numbers also illustrate how few refugees became eligible for resettlement. For instance, only 17.552 refugees were resettled in 2019 in third countries, 67 percent of them were Syrian (UNHCR,

2019), and the number refugees who submitted to resettlement under 12,270 in 2021 (UNHCR, 2021).

Refugees also have to follow an ambiguous and unstandardized procedure for their resettlement. For example, although registration and RSD interviews are now carried out only by DGMM, the resettlement process itself is conducted by both UNHCR and DGMM. However, interviews with refugees reveal that some refugees believe that resettlement is the solely the responsibility of DGMM, while others state that resettlement is part of DGMM's mandate, but that UNHCR provides consultancy. Accordingly, there is uncertainty among refugees; they are not sure who deals with their cases. In addition, due to the transnational feature of asylum regime in Turkey, third countries' border and asylum policies closely affect the refugees' resettlement. The uncertainty in this process is because third countries set their own criteria and accept as many refugees as they want, according to their conditions and political will. Refugees who come to the resettlement stage undergo additional interviews requested by third countries and a medical check. This medical check also prompts some refugees to refuse to go to a psychiatrist even though they face many psychological problems while waiting in Turkey. Many refugees fear that mental health issues in medical checks may cause them to be rejected by third countries.

However, the only transnational barrier is not the additional interviews requested by third countries. Refugees experience ambiguity due to the third countries' border and asylum policies since their resettlement is highly related to third countries' refugee quotas. For instance, EU Member States' desire to externalize migration to neighboring countries while securitizing their borders has deterred refugee women from seeking asylum in Europe. Especially since the EU-Turkey deal in 2016 (Heck & Hess, 2017), securitization of the borders of Europe has become the main priority in the transnational asylum regime, as the EU countries cut their refugee resettlement quotas. As a result, thousands of refugees, especially non-Syrians, such as Iranian refugee women, have been stranded in Turkey for

undetermined periods. Donald Trump's 2017 "Muslim travel ban"¹³ left Iranian refugees stuck in Turkey and postponed their resettlement processes for at least the four years of his presidency. During my fieldwork, I met refugees in precisely this position, even though they had completed each resettlement step. Again, advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing border closures, which started after I completed my fieldwork, sharply affected refugees' resettlement. The resettlement of two refugees that I met in Denizli was halted due to the border closure of Australia until admission procedures started again. They could only leave Turkey in the winter of 2022, even though their resettlement date had been set for 2020.

Therefore, changes in the border and asylum regime of the Global North prevented refugee women's resettlement and stuck them in satellite cities where they had to wait for an undetermined time. And waiting in Turkey is becoming more and more complex, especially in recent years. On the one hand, refugees have to deal with these complex, ambiguous, and discretionary asylum processes; on the other, they also navigate through Turkey's socio-economic and political conditions, namely, the coup attempt in 2016, which was followed by an intensified authoritarianism, increasing censorship and oppression (Yegensu, 2016). In particular, the emergency decree laws enacted after the coup attempt distinctly affected the situation for refugees, with deportation becoming more widespread, even though the Turkish state recognized the non-refoulement principle in LFIP, a development I examine in detail in Chapter 4. Furthermore, Turkey's severely deepening economic crisis closely affects refugee women and their living conditions both in terms of what they are paid for their work and for the general cost of living, but also because they are scapegoated as having partly caused the crisis in the first place - and with the further dehumanization and violence that has come with this.

¹³ Trump issued an executive order titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry," in 2017 which prevents Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen citizens from traveling to the USA.

Since refugee women must establish some kind of life in the satellite cities during this open-ended waiting period, these spaces become essential sites to try to better understand the contemporary refugee experience in Turkey.

1.2 Satellite Cities



Figure 1. Map of satellite cities in Turkey, Source: Leghtas & Sullivan, 2017:6

When people apply for asylum, the Turkish state assigns them to selected cities in the country. Although the term “satellite city” evokes the constructed sites for refugees in the city’s peripheries, the terminology in fact refers to the provincial borders, which means that refugees can settle in any part of the city as long as they reside within the provincial borders. The state does not resettle refugees in closed settlements, where their movement is restricted by walls, barbed wire, and barriers. They can settle and use any part of the city, provided they do not leave its provincial borders. However, once relocated, refugees must “sign-in” regularly at the PDMM offices (the time periods change according to the assigned cities’ asylum authorities and can vary from daily registration to once every two weeks). They cannot leave their assigned city without travel permits issued by PDMM as mentioned in the story of Maryam. These administrative practices limit refugees’ freedom of movement and blur the boundary between ‘the camp’ and the city.

More importantly, this disrupts the basic tasks of everyday life, as the unique refugee settlement and satellite city regulation constantly reminds them that they are refugees. Their lives are under surveillance and the threat of deportation is ever-present. If a refugee does not sign three times or is caught by police outside the assigned city, their asylum cases can be closed, and they face the risk of deportation. Satellite city regulation reveals that the Turkish authorities see refugees as an object of security (Sert & Yıldız, 2013).

Although it is not known exactly when the satellite city regulation was first put into effect in Turkey, most scholars argue that it is rooted back in the 1950s (Nizam & Songül, 2017:1390). Article 17 of Law on Residence and Travel of Foreigners indicated that “foreigners who seek asylum for political reasons shall reside at places assigned by the Ministry of Interior” (Law no 5683). Until 1994, regulation of 5683 was singularly responsible for evaluating refugees’ accommodation in Turkey. In 1994, following the arrival of a considerable number of refugees fleeing Iraq, the Ministry of Interior passed Turkey’s first national legislation on the treatment of asylum seekers. Accordingly, the law stated, the foreigners who moved to Turkey “... shall be accommodated in a center or a guesthouse deemed suitable by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) or shall freely reside in a place which shall be determined by MOI” (Article 6). The same regulation appears under the 2006 Legislation and the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which define “forced” accommodation areas for refugees. Satellite city regulation kept its place in the LFIP, which entered into force in 2014.

While up until 2010 the number of satellite cities in Turkey was 30, this increased to 51 in 2011, and since 2015 this number has reached 62 (Nizam & Songül, 2017:1392-1393). Nevertheless, there remains no ‘official’ definition of satellite cities today, and it is still a difficult task to understand the criteria for defining and determining these cities. However, upon examining the satellite cities, we see that the country of origin, sexual orientation, and other social grouping factors can tend to determine which specific satellite cities people are assigned to. For instance,

LGBTI+ refugees tend mostly to be located to Eskişehir, Yalova, and Denizli, Christian Iranian refugees to Kayseri and Nevşehir, and Somalian refugees mostly to Isparta¹⁴.

On the other hand, both in the regulations before and after 2018, bigger cities such as Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and Antalya are exempted from the satellite city regulation. Refugees are often settled in smaller cities, thus also enabling their surveillance. Usually, in these small-sized cities, they are immediately noticed by the locals due to their linguistic and cultural differences and this is a barrier to refugees maintaining some level of anonymity, as I explore further in Chapter 3.

However, although the state determines the cities, refugees are on their own to find support mechanism or job opportunities. Refugees are expected to sustain themselves while they also lack accommodation, financial support, and a work permit. As I explain in Chapter 4, this completely exposes refugees to severe exploitation through mechanisms of deportability.

Consistent with the general character of Turkey's asylum regime as one of uncertainty and ambiguity, there is also no standardized regulation regarding the satellite city. The regulation of administrative routines of each city is left to the initiative of DGMM/PDMM and in fact, quite often, to the individual initiative of the officials working there. While refugees in some cities sign once a week, this interval is once every two weeks in other cities. Or, while signatures are in the form of retina scans in some cities, fingerprints or signatures are taken in some cities. Again, while getting permission to leave some cities is almost impossible, refugees can obtain permits easily in some other cities. Also, refugees' travel permits are

¹⁴ However, this situation is starting to change with the new implementation of assigning satellite cities after 2018 because refugees are now trying to register by going to cities. On the other hand, the quota of foreigners arriving in the neighborhoods can affect the solidarity opportunities created by refugees being together. It seems that the deconcentration of migrants became the official policy of the Turkish state since, in May 2021, it released a regulation that limits the number of foreign citizens accommodated in particular parts of cities (maximum %25 compared to the total city population).

often arbitrarily postponed or denied, and refugees face the risk of deportation if they leave satellite cities without permission. In the next section, I will focus specifically on the satellite city regulations of Yalova to illustrate how this discretionary and ambiguous regime works there and (re)shapes women's experiences.

1.2.1 Yalova as a Satellite City



Photograph 1. View from Yalova, the place on the horizon is Istanbul (Yalova, 2019)

Yalova is a city on the coast of the Marmara Sea with a population of 276,050. The coast stretches along the length of the center. This coast, which is on the west and north side of the city, is right across the sea from Istanbul. One evening, I was sitting on the beach with Marjan. What we saw opposite us in the distance was Istanbul. "It's funny," she said, "It's just there, but I need to get permission to go

there”. I realized when Marjan said this, that Istanbul is in fact only 45 minutes away from us that many refugees in Yalova want to go due to its social life and work opportunities. I don’t know exactly how it feels to be so close to a ‘dreamland’ and unable to reach it. But after my ten months in Yalova, I could somewhat better imagine the feeling of being stuck that it creates.

Yalova illustrates the meaning of satellite city in the most vulgar way since it also prompts us to see another provincial border so close by. It tells the story of enclosure within the borders of nation-states, showing us that the borders are no longer strictly limited to the cartographic borders of nation-states¹⁵. The city constantly reminds refugees of their refugeehood and that they should constantly overcome certain borders.

Yalova is by now a city where refugees have lived for a long time as it has been a satellite city since 2011. Very little data is shared on refugees under international protection in Turkey, and the shared data does not include satellite city information or the refugee population living in these cities. At this point, according to the data I obtained during the interviews with the Yalova PDMM, 30,000 registered foreigners live in the city, which had a total population of 276,050 in 2020 (TÜİK, 2020). About 16,000 of this population consists of Iraqis living in the city with a residence permit. There are also 4,000 registered Syrians under temporary protection in the city. The number of refugees under international protection is around 7,000, of which 2,000 are Afghans, 2,000 are Iranians, and the remaining 3,000 are Iraqis.

Although we do not have any information from the DGMM regarding the criteria for the placement of refugees in satellite cities, cities such as Yalova, Eskişehir, and Denizli are known as cities where LGBTI+ refugees, Christian Iranian and women who migrate without the company of a male partner are settled. This

¹⁵ On the other hand, Yalova became Turkey’s 77th administrative province in 1995, before it was part of Istanbul, making it, once again, an interesting case to consider the city borders and the mobility of refugees.

settlement policy causes a significant proportion of LGBTI+, Christian and single woman/mother population in the city and the concentration of these refugee groups in Yalova. This situation has also brought about the creation of many refugee connections in the city, and many newly arrived refugees tend to prefer the city since they are somewhat familiar with the conditions and have personal networks there. The shared knowledge(s) from other refugees who previously lived or still live in Yalova helps new arrivals obtain information about the city and Turkey. It enables them to find houses, furniture, and job opportunities (see Chapter 3-5 for further detail on this).

In addition, Yalova is one of the cities mostly preferred by refugees because it is close to big cities like Istanbul and Bursa, where social networks and informal job opportunities are high. It only takes 75 minutes by ferry to reach Yenikapı (on Istanbul's European side), 45 minutes to Pendik (on Istanbul's Asian side), and it is 60 minutes by bus to Bursa. One of the women I spoke to said that the Turkish authorities offered her 4-5 different city options and that she had no idea about Yalova, but that she chose it because it was the only city close to Istanbul from what was on offer.

Refugees in Yalova have compulsory sign-ins every two weeks. There is a distinct separate section for signatures by the entrance of the Yalova PDMM, and refugees sign in there without actually entering the building. Therefore, there tend to be long queues in front of the building, and someone who does not know the sign-in day can easily recognize them from the crowd. Unlike Denizli and Eskişehir, refugees in Yalova only sign the paper rather than retina scans or fingerprints.

The sign-ins are every two weeks, and many refugees come to Yalova only on the signing days while living in Istanbul. In addition to the people crowding in front of the PDMM, the taxi density also indicates the sign-in days. These taxis pick up the refugees getting off the Istanbul ferry hourly, wait in front of the PDMM until the signature procedures are completed, and pick the refugees up to the next ferry. Also, one of the interlocutors, a dancer, regularly goes to Istanbul to work, and the

rest of the time stays in Yalova. Although it is known to the authorities that some of the refugees live in Istanbul, they do not interfere, but officially this is prohibited. For those who are registered in Yalova but live in Istanbul, they must try not to undergo identity checks when coming for their signature or during their stay in Istanbul and constantly fear being caught and deported. As is the case in other cities, failure to sign three times or being caught outside the assigned city can result in the closing of their cases and deportation.

At the same time, refugees have to get permission to leave the city. It is widely accepted that they can generally get permission more easily in Yalova than in other cities. As a small seaside city, Yalova is not a highly securitized satellite city. Nevertheless, random identity checks at various intervals, especially at the ferry pier, are a source of stress for refugees. Although the identity check at the ferry port on some days poses a risk, especially for those who come to Yalova only on the signing days, most refugees prefer to get permission not to be stressed and risk their asylum cases. It depends on who can take how much risk and how much they can deal with the emotional burden of it. Some manage to live like this for years without being caught, while others might be caught by the police when they first leave the city without permission. When caught by the police, the police may say nothing or send the refugees to the detention centers. The absence of a standardized regime and regulations mean that what can happen to refugees is largely unpredictable.

Its preliminary interviews, rejections of previously recognized asylum cases, and increasing deportations illustrate that the new asylum regime aims to exclude refugees and deprive them of their fundamental rights. It also condemns them to ambiguity, – as in the case of interlocutors of the thesis- discretion, and uncertainty. On the one hand, complex, uncertain, and ambiguous asylum processes; on the other hand, travel permission requests, compulsory sign-ins, and deportability. For the refugee women residing there, Yalova becomes a space where they experience both the legal procedures and establish their daily lives,

dream and wait for their resettlement in the nexus of uncertainty, ambiguity and discretion.

1.3 Conceptual Frame of the Thesis

1.3.1 Space and the Satellite City

Space is one of the important concepts of this dissertation as I deploy the concept of “satellite city” not simply as a field site. The interdisciplinary literature on asylum, borders, and refugees categorizes refugee settlement under three main forms: camp settlement (Agier, 2002; Malkki, 1995; Peteet, 2005) urban settlement (Chatelard & Morris, 2011; Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Jacobsen, 2006), and local settlement (Crisp, 2004). The satellite city regulation in Turkey, however, does not entirely fit neatly within any of these classifications. Turkey does not confine refugees to a walled settlement, such as camp and detention, as in the camp settlement. On the other hand, it does not assign freedom of movement within the borders of the nation-state, as in the literature on urban refugees. It tries to keep refugees’ movements under control and surveillance with administrative applications such as compulsory sign-ins and travel permits. Therefore, the notion of a satellite city in the context of refugee resettlement appears as a new analysis category to understand the experiences of refugees.

Drawing on the Lefebvrian conceptualization of the production of space, I do not consider a satellite city as a geographical landscape but as its lived practices (Lefebvre, 1991), where the production of space is the very production of social relations. Focusing on the production of space as a satellite city and understanding its spatiality enable us to capture its manifestation in everyday lives and the material practices of refugee women. In this vein, I discuss satellite cities in relation to space in three ways: as spaces of control, confinement, and surveillance; as spaces of gendered violence and labor exploitation; as spaces of solidarity and resistance. Corresponding to Lefebvre’s framework, the first and second spatial

aspects of a satellite city dialectically constitute “perceived” and “conceived” spaces that simultaneously refer to “collective production of urban reality” and discourses “supporting and legitimating the modes of operation of state and capital” (Ronneberger 2008:137). The third aspect stands, in Lefebvre’s terms, as a “lived space and endured space,” wherein resistance becomes possible, representing “sites of resistance and of counter-discourses which have not been grasped by apparatuses of power, or which ‘refuse to acknowledge power’” (Lefebvre 1991:42).

First, satellite cities appear to be spaces of control, confinement, and surveillance, because by producing this space — confining refugees to a certain location, and limiting their freedom of movement by travel permits and compulsory sign-ins — the Turkish state aims to control and surveil their mobilities and everyday lives during their waiting period. Second, during refugees’ waiting in Turkey, the satellite city also works as a space of gendered violence and labor exploitation because this spatial confinement, combined with other asylum regime practices — including the difficulty of obtaining a work permit and the constant risk of deportability — leaves refugee women exposed to gendered violence and labor exploitation. In other words, the application of this framework helps demonstrate how legal practices of the asylum regime intersect with racism, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism and how, in turn, the satellite city space is one of gendered violence and exploitation. Third and finally, the satellite city also becomes a space of solidarity and resistance because refugee women cultivate collective practices against this surveillance and control while continuing to claim their lives. Thus, during the waiting period in Turkey, refugee women produce their own meanings, practices, and knowledge(s), which enable them to claim their lives and cultivate solidarities amidst gendered violence, exploitation, and oppression. Therefore, spaces of control and surveillance, gendered violence, and exploitation simultaneously exist as spaces of solidarity and resistance.

It is also important to emphasize that the discussion of space in my dissertation is not limited to the satellite city. Since the satellite city is a space of waiting where

refugees spend many years until their resettlement in a third country, it shapes and affects every aspect of refugee women's lives. Therefore, I also focus on its reflection on the different spatial practices of women. Feminist geographers, since the 1990s, have focused on space as an analytical concept and its relation to gender through power relations and how spaces are gendered and re/constitute gender roles and identities (Massey, 2013; McDowell, 1983; Rose, 1993; Valentine, 1993). Therefore, throughout the dissertation, I demonstrate how women experience, navigate, and negotiate numerous spaces in their daily lives, such as homes, workplaces, hospitals, NGO offices, gyms, parks, streets, and other urban spaces in the city. By doing so, I show how space is gendered and how it affects the construction and perception of gender itself (Massey, 2005:179). Of course, women's experiences are differentiated; therefore, I discuss differentiation in spatial experiences of various women and illustrate how some feminized bodies are considered deviant within this heterosexual space (Valentine, 1993), where women's bodies constitute spaces of both resistance and oppression.

By focusing on the satellite city regulation and deploying it as a new analytical framework, this dissertation contributes to refugee, gender and feminist studies with an empirical study. I argue that such an analysis of satellite cities as a distinct resettlement model can contribute to our broader understanding of refugee resettlement. Therefore, by emphasizing its uniqueness, I aim to reconsider the concept of camps, the urban, detention, and confinement, rather than underlining its exceptional nature.

Moreover, Turkey's unique satellite city regulation enables us to merge different settlement practices and to see how confinement spaces disperse through the urban itself. The satellite city highlights how legal mechanisms operate in the everyday and how legal mechanisms and everyday practices undergird violence, exploitation, confinement, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and racism.

1.3.2 Gendered Violence

Another important concept of this research is gendered violence since refugee women face different forms of violence during their migration and while waiting in Turkey. Since the 1970s, feminists have argued that violence is a central tool to the continuation of male dominance. In these years, feminists argued that violence perpetuates patriarchy and thus the oppression of women. Although the subordinate position of women and the role of violence in women's oppression are accepted by the different waves of feminisms, the conceptual explanation of violence differs among feminists. For instance, while the second-wave feminists see patriarchy as the root cause (Brownmiller, 2005; Dworkin, 1993, 1997; Millett, 2016), black feminists relate it to different forms of domination, such as racism and capitalism, and focus on the intersecting structures of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; Hooks, 1981; Lorde, 2012). At this point, feminists also use different terms to describe the varying forms of violence women face. Male violence, domestic violence, violence against women, and gender-based violence are just some of them.

Nourishing my approach through these previous discussions, especially with black feminist thought, I deploy the concept of gendered violence throughout the thesis. First, I argue that any form of violence that is experienced by women in different spheres of their lives is gendered; for instance, the violence they experience in their workplace and their encounters with Turkish citizens, including DGMM officials, mostly as sexual harassment, rape, or abuse.

Second, I use the concept of gendered violence to illustrate how different levels and forms of violence intersect in reshaping women's lives. This intersectionality also underlines the role of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism in producing the gendered violence that refugee women experience. Refugee women are exposed to violence in many spaces and places of their waiting in Turkey, from finding a house, finding a job, or accessing healthcare to their actual asylum application. Using this concept, I argue how the violence they experience in different spaces

and from different actors intersect with each other and make women vulnerable to gendered violence during their waiting period in the satellite city. For instance, all of the interlocutors expressed that they experienced gendered violence in their workplaces regarding their legal status. The violence they experienced in their workplaces also plays an important role in transforming women into exploitable and docile subjects. The forms of gendered violence experienced in these different fields intersect with each other and shape the refugee experience of women.

Third, gendered violence underlines the personal and the non-personal aspects of violence. Therefore, gendered violence also enables us to underline the legal violence or abuse of legal power of DGMM officials — this violence mostly derives from gender-blindness and sexism. This form of legal violence — which began with the Geneva Convention and dispersed to refugees' encounter with DGMM officials — points to similarities and an intersectionality between the violence of men and the heteropatriarchal institutional structures which aim to maintain control, oppression, and exploitation over women. Whether by male perpetrators or legal mechanisms, the concept of gendered violence enables us to make visible the relationship and similarity of violence perpetrated by these two seemingly separate fields and actors. The forms of violence applied by different actors at different scales constitute the gendered violence in women's refugee experience. The lens of gendered violence enables us to discuss these around a single concept.

Thus, by focusing on different spaces of refugee women in Yalova and using the concept of gendered violence, I aim to illustrate how legal mechanisms, semi-formal encounters with authorities, and everyday life are inextricably related to each other and how, taken together, they constitute the gendered violence that refugee women face. I aim to contribute to feminist and refugee studies by deploying a holistic and intersectional understanding of violence and making visible the role of gendered violence in the continuity of different power systems.

1.3.3 Womanhood and Refugeeness

I use concepts of womanhood and refugeeness in ways that continuously overlap throughout the thesis. While I delve into the concept of intersectionality in the Methodology Chapter, I will refer to it again to illustrate the interrelation between refugeeness and womanhood. Refugeeness and womanhood are key concepts to the thesis, which seeks to represent refugee women's experiences in different spaces, encounters, and scales during their waiting period in Turkey. Refugee women's practices show us how these two categories (refugeeness and womanhood) intersect and become crucial to understanding their experiences.

Many critical scholars argue that refugees have long been considered as an aggregate of people or as a universal subject position. In place of this approach, they draw our attention to the divergent processes and relations that deeply affect the experience of refugeeness (Lacroix, 2004; Lee & Brotman, 2011; Malkki, 1996). In this dissertation, I take the same approach as critical migration scholars and define refugeeness "as a matter of becoming" (Malkki, 1996:381) that is constituted through relations and processes and emerges "as a way of understanding the particular subjective experience in relation to existing refugee policies" (Lacroix, 2004:163). In this vein, throughout the dissertation I demonstrate how my interlocutors' experiences and everyday practices are highly shaped by their legal categorization as refugees and asylum seekers. Women experience refugeeness through their encounters with different actors, on different scales, and in a variety of contexts and spaces. First, as expected, their legal encounters with asylum authorities are based primarily on their refugeeness. However, this encounter is not limited to following their asylum cases or asylum interview processes. Their restricted mobility, limited access to health services, and the (im)possibility of obtaining work permits are also directly affected by the asylum regime and its policies. Furthermore, the satellite city regulation also affects every aspect of refugee women's lives, as it constantly reminds them of their refugeeness through its mandatory sign-ins and confinement mechanisms. In

other words, their refugeeness is highly related to this satellite city regulation and its manifestation in their everyday lives. Finally, throughout the dissertation I also highlight how refugeeness is not just something that is produced (and iterated) by the asylum regime and its restrictions. By sharing knowledge(s) and experiences with each other, by forming friendships and solidarity networks, and by struggling to claim their lives, women also show us a different definition of refugeeness. As I will further explain in the next section, refugeeness does not only refer to victimhood but also to agency — not only to violence and oppression but also to solidarity and resistance.

Of course, we cannot consider refugeeness away from their gender. Refugeeness is a multi-layered experience and cannot be understood as an isolated category. It intersects with women's gender and as with many other aspects of their subjectivities. Therefore, their experiences in Turkey constitute an inseparable relation between their refugeeness and their womanhood. At this point, the category of the woman in my thesis transgresses the dominant understanding of woman as one of the two gender identities. I deploy the woman as a self-claimed category that bonds everyone through the oppression they experience and that is rooted in sharing the same material conditions and positionalities (Collins, 1997). Thus, rather than defining it through biological differences, I use women as a category to include everyone who defines themselves as a woman. Therefore, the readers will encounter many women throughout the thesis, both trans women and cis women, young and old, married, single, with and without kids, straight and lesbian, from different socio-economic backgrounds, and with different migration stories. Their experiences became common in some contexts and situations but also vary in others according to their different positionalities in the matrix of domination. Therefore, I emphasize a lot throughout this thesis that the categories I use, such as “women” and “refugee women”, do not indicate that there is monolithic and fixed womanhood. Only in some cases, when I need to highlight the differentiation of experiences between different interlocutors, I use trans-woman, cis-woman, and lesbian to define my interlocutors since gender and sexuality

assigned to certain bodies deeply affect the experiences, especially in public encounters.

1.3.4 Victimhood, Agency, Resistance

Mainstream migration literature, which often treats migration as gender-blind, assumes the migrant/refugee subject as male and universalizes the migration experience of men as the migrant experience. These approaches, which ignore the agency of women, cause women to be defined as passive subjects who depend on the male members of the family during the migration processes (Simon and Bretell, 1986 as cited in Kofman et al., 2005:3). Although over the years these migration theories have been criticized and the ‘gender issue’ began to be discussed in migration studies in the 1970s and ‘80s, gender still remained a marginalized aspect of the field for a long time. For example, when Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2014) analyzed the 2007-2009 issues of the *International Migration Review*, one of the leading journals in the field of migration, she found that there were only 7 articles with women and/or gender in the title among the publications made during this period (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2014 as cited in Carastathis et al., 2018:6). Thanks to feminist scholars, it has been made possible to conduct research that recognizes the subject position of women, and furthermore does not consider women migrants as a homogeneous category, but on the contrary, emphasizes women’s differing migration experiences. The common feature of these studies is to deploy gender as an analytical category (Scott, 2007), rather than to include gender as a ‘difference’ in the existing migration literature (Mora et al., 2010:1). Still, when the leading journals of the field were examined in 2018 (Carastathis et al., 2018), it was revealed that only 20 percent of the articles published between 2016 and 2017 focused on the issue of gender. And the appearance rate of an intersectional feminist approach was even more scarce among these articles.

By focusing on the Iranian refugee women’s experiences through the analytical lens of gender and with the help of feminist methodological approaches, this

dissertation contributes to the feminist interventions in male-dominated international migration studies. Indeed, the interlocutors of this research — women themselves — challenge the very figure of the ‘dependent’ refugee woman that has long dominated migration studies. As their stories illustrate, most of my interlocutors did not migrate as dependents of male family members but migrated on their own or with their female partners or children. However, the contribution of this dissertation to existing scholarship on migration and asylum is not limited to showing women’s agency. I also use an intersectional feminist approach to illustrate the intertwined relationship of different forms of power and oppression (Collins, 2004) and to understand women’s experiences shaped around these different structures without being centered on a single form of oppression. By doing so, I aim to bring a much-needed intersectional analysis to both migration and feminist studies. At this point, I need to say that choosing intersectionality wasn’t just a political or theoretical choice that I made myself, but my interlocutors’ experiences forced it. Their experiences are intersectional!

Refugee women may be forced to migrate due to violence and the threat of persecution, but they are not passive victims of this violence. They make choices, decisions, and plans for their lives starting from their decision to migrate. The same is also true for their experiences of waiting in Turkey. Even though refugee women are exposed to exploitation and gendered violence, their lives include an active struggle where they create various forms of solidarity and resistance practices. Drawing on feminist standpoint theories, I argue that their oppressed and marginalized positions provide the women a unique ground to see the cracks of the existing systems and enable them to create tools of resistance to navigate, negotiate, and survive those systems (most of which are systems of oppression). Through this argument, this dissertation conceptualizes the category of resistance as a collective act where women make the resistance possible by sharing their experiences and knowledge(s) and creating mutual care practices.

To understand women's resistance practices, I have borrowed the political concept of "women claiming their lives" from the feminist movement in Turkey. Approaching this political concept through feminist standpoint theory, linking it with autonomy of migration literature, I focus on the women's experiences as a ground to understand their resistance practices. This approach allows us to better grasp that the resistance practices of refugee women are contingent and situational; therefore, they change according to actors, places, and situations. Second, such a conceptualization of resistance also enables us to recognize women's agency and how their everyday practices dismantle the narrative of refugee women as victims. Indeed, their experiences not only deconstruct the victim narrative but also destabilize the victim/agency dichotomy. Women's experiences offer us a rich repertoire of action and practices where they use victim narratives according to their encounters with different subjects (landlords, NGO workers, DGMM officials, etc.). By finding spaces to maneuver against different systems of power, these women destabilize the narratives of victim refugee women. Following this line of interpretation, my dissertation aims to expand our understanding of agency and victimhood by sharing women's everyday actions and practices and destabilizing the dichotomy of victims and agents.

1.3.5 Labor Exploitation, (Il)legality, and Deportability

One central characteristic of refugee/migrant labor in different sectors in Turkey is its informality (Kalaycıoğlu et al., 2016; Daniş, 2016; Dedeoğlu, 2011; Akalın, 2012). Of course, some degree of informality, insecurity, and exploitation are common features of today — and not only for refugees but for almost everyone. In Turkey, since the 1990s, informal work has been quite common among the general citizenry, but especially among women¹⁶. There are many studies focused on women's labor practices in the informal sector in different fields, which illustrate

¹⁶ According to the DİSK/General-İş Research Department "Women's Labor in Turkey" report, more than 1.2 million women are employed both part-time and informally (DİSK, 2020).

that working conditions in the informal sector are based on exploitation, harsh working conditions, insecurity, and being underpaid or not being paid at all (Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2000; Ozyegin, 2005; Toksöz, 2007; Topçuoğlu, 2012).

Although the work experiences of citizen and refugee women in the informal sector are quite similar, what distinguishes refugee women's experiences from citizens is their deportability. Therefore, to understand the labor practices of refugee women, I use "deportability" (De Genova, 2002) as one of the main concepts of the thesis. Many scholars have argued that states and migration regimes produce distinctions such as legal, illegal, documented, undocumented, irregular, and regular (De Genova, 2002; Squire, 2010; Tsianos & Karakayali, 2010; Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2015). As Nicholas De Genova and other critical scholars underline, illegality is a category produced by states first and foremost to integrate refugees into the labor market as part of an irregular labor force (De Genova, 2002) and constitute them as exploitable subjects (Gambino, 2017). As I discuss in Chapter 4, refugee women's work experiences in the informal sector are shaped by exploitation, insecurity, and informality. Indeed, employers mostly prefer to employ refugee women due to their exploitability. And the condition of this labor exploitation relies on their deportability. Consequently, discussing the labor practices of refugee women with concepts such as deportability and illegality also makes it possible for us to understand how the exploitation and insecurity refugee women experience in the workplace are fundamentally tied to their legal status.

Furthermore, as I emphasize throughout the dissertation, the notions of informality, illegality, and deportability that refugee women experience are also tied to the satellite city regulation. By bringing these legal and spatial specifics to my analysis, my research contributes to existing works on refugee labor in two main ways: the first of these is by showing how legality, illegality, informality, or other central categories used by scholars and policy makers are not constant or permanent categories. Rather, I demonstrate how they become categories that

refugee women constantly navigate and move between during the day, and how their meanings and the divisions between them constantly change according to time, space, and context. More specifically, I examine how the practical impossibility of obtaining a work permit and the restrictions of satellite cities push women to work in the informal sector. However, when they work in informal jobs, refugee women also become (potential) illegal subjects even though they have legal status as refugees. However, this “illegality” is not a permanent status; it evaporates when they leave their jobs at the end of the work shift. In other words, refugee women in the satellite cities start their days as ‘legal subjects’ who are registered and/or recognized refugees. However, when they go to the workplace and begin to work, they fall into informality and illegality. Since the production of space is a temporal-spatial process, I underline the temporality and spatiality of these legal statutes and show how women’s statuses change between the different spaces they occupy. By illustrating that the line between these distinctions blurs in refugee women’s daily lives, I hope to encourage readers to reconsider the division between different legal statuses and ‘produced’ “legal illegalities.”

Aside from this contribution, I also focus in particular on the gendered aspect of the concept of deportability. Deportability makes migrant/refugee labor exploitable and makes refugee women vulnerable to gendered violence. Women experience different gendered forms of violence such as rape, sexual abuse, and harassment at their workplaces and in other spheres of their lives. At this point, deportability makes them vulnerable to gendered violence and exploitation and prevents women from speaking out against the gendered violence and from the benefit of legal mechanisms. Thus, deportability also works as a silencing mechanism for women. And by producing such “legal illegalities,” states and intersecting systems of oppression ensure the continuity of the exploitation and gendered violence.

1.4 Chapters Overview

This thesis consists of six chapters. Although I have discussed gendered violence, labor exploitation, solidarity, and resistance in separate chapters, they intersect with each other, and it is impossible to separate them and give priority to one. Resistance is embedded in gendered violence and exploitation, while labor exploitation is full of gendered violence, and gendered violence itself does not operate apart from racism and heteropatriarchy and capitalism or vice versa. However, I have chosen to write them as distinct chapters so as to make the specificity of experiences visible and to make the experiences more understandable to the reader.

In the second chapter, titled “Methodology of the Research”, I outline why I follow feminist methodology in this research. Following feminist methodology’s critical positioning, I also reflect on my positionality during and after the fieldwork, and try to acknowledge the limitations and dilemmas of this thesis.

In the third chapter, titled “Mapping Gendered Violence in Refugee Women’s Lives”, I focus on Iranian refugee women’s narratives to illustrate the multi-layered gendered violence they experience in Turkey. I first focus on formal and semi-formal spaces of violence, exploring how asylum institutions and legal arrangements are constructed as gender-blind and how existing legal mechanisms of asylum regime in Turkey lack any gender-sensitive protection. Then, by mapping gendered violence in refugee women’s everyday lives, I strive to show how legal status and the existing legal frameworks are embedded in women’s everyday practices.

In the fourth chapter, titled “Between (In)formality, (Il)legality, and Deportability: Labor Practices of Refugee Women”, I examine the structural and personal conditions that push refugee women to work in the informal sectors. I give a detailed account from women’s experiences in the informal work sectors and the incessant gendered violence on top of their exploitation. Lastly, I discuss the

deportation regime and introduce the concept of deportability. I illustrate how deportability creates conditions of heightened exploitation and gendered violence, positioning refugee women as disposable and exploitable subjects. Their deportability, furthermore, is a major cause for them to remain silent regarding the injustices they have been subjected to.

In the fifth chapter, titled “Women Claiming Their Lives: Solidarity Practices Among Refugee Women”, I demonstrate refugee women’s shared experiences, knowledge(s), and mutual care practices. These forms of solidarity practices create a common ground to navigate, negotiate and resist different forms of gendered violence and exploitation. In this chapter I argue that by claiming their lives, refugee women create novel forms of resistance. This also challenges the victim/agency dichotomy by putting the emphasis back on refugee women’s agency.

Lastly, I conclude the thesis with a focus on what has happened in the field of asylum between the years I began and finalized my fieldwork and writing. I then demonstrate what I believe my findings and contributions are to the fields of refugee studies, gender studies and feminist studies. The thesis concludes with suggestions for further inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Razık was 20 years old and was working with us as an interpreter in one of the cities where we were conducting our fieldwork in research focusing on unaccompanied refugee minors in 2013. He was also a refugee who arrived in Turkey when he was 16 as an unaccompanied minor. And the research we met was my first research experience that I worked as a research assistant. After completing the interviews, we finally had a break. That was when Razık and I started talking. He told his own story of migration from Iran to Turkey. He told me his not-so-good memories of the dormitory¹⁷ where we have conducted the interviews. As I was listening to Razık, I was also thinking about what I could do in the field of migration beyond research. I was questioning whether it would be ethical to give him my number and stay in touch with him. I did not know how to position myself as the assistant researcher and a feminist activist who believes in the power of everyday solidarity practices. I felt uncomfortable to obtain the needed data and continue to my life as I had never heard these stories. Razık and I exchanged our contact information at the end of the break. This was the first encounter with him and the first step of 9 years of friendship we still have, and my entrée to the field of migration.

In the same period that I met with Razık, I also started my master's thesis on migrant domestic workers from Georgia to Turkey. My project as well as friendship with Razık drove me to research migration in my master's thesis and

¹⁷ An unaccompanied minor means a child under the age of 18 who is not accompanied by his/her/their parents and/or a relative responsible for taking care of him/her/them. After applying for asylum, unaccompanied migrant minors are placed in institutions belonging to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies or in reception and shelter centers affiliated with the Ministry of Interior.

being a feminist directed me to do it from a feminist perspective. In my research, I focused on the relationship between the global economy and migrant women's working and living experiences from a feminist perspective, where I conducted interviews with migrant women from Georgia and their women employers in Turkey. I was incredibly impressed by every experience – resistance and solidarity practices, the harsh working conditions of domestic workers - I encountered. Although both groups I interviewed were women, each time I meet with interlocutors, I was (re)discovering how the distinctions between being a citizen and undocumented and/or being ‘local’ and being ‘migrant’ differentiated our subjective experiences. This impression made me continue researching refugee studies in my Ph.D.. And desire to moving it beyond the ‘theoretical’ discussion and making it embodied to politics led me to participate in the migrant solidarity movement. Over the years, I actively participated in migration politics, spent many times in migrant neighborhoods, made many migrant friends, and even became a comrade/sista with some of them in the dream of a “free world without borders, exiles, and sexism”. When I started to conduct research for my Ph.D., I was looking for a way not to instrumentalize the old relationships that I established as an activist and not to objectify people for my research. And I started to think about the possibility of activist research with feminist methodology.

As a feminist and researcher who obtained her master's degree in Gender and Women Studies, I was familiar with the feminist methodology. However, feminist methodology was not a mere methodological discussion for me but an embodied one- from my everyday actions to my political motivations. My master thesis made it clearer that feminist methodology provides a fertile ground to open a place for the voices of marginalized groups -especially for women- utilizes powerful conceptual tools to capture subjectivities and has sensitive methods to explore and change power relations. Moreover, its emphasis on the politicalness of the research process and critiques of the hierarchy between researcher and interlocutors made it a perfect methodology for me to conduct my research in the field of migration. It

was almost a ‘dream methodology’ to engage politics and scientific knowledge production and to show how they can be mutually constitutive.

While the feminist methodology, which engages in discussions to understand and change power relations, highlights the advantages of conducting research “woman to woman,” it does not require us to study only women. What makes research feminist is not the chosen topic but the method and approach (Birkalan-Gedik & Berkday, 2009). At this point, during my research, I use gender as an analytical tool and approach the issue of migration with feminist lenses, which means that I (re)evaluated all the categories and concepts I use and (re)configure all the steps of research from a feminist perspective. By doing this, I seek to dismantle heteropatriarchy, racism and capitalism and their different practices embedded in the asylum regime and everyday practices of refugee women. Thus, what I mean by feminist research is not only including women's stories into analyses as a new demographic ‘dimension’, which is a common attitude in migration studies. Instead, I tackle migration with a feminist methodology which indicates the importance of gender to capture the social reality.

At this point, it is crucial to emphasize that there is no unique and singular feminist methodology; instead, it varies and includes different schools. Although the emphasis on the politics of the research process, the desire to change the social reality beyond understanding, and the importance of gender in understanding phenomena create a common ground, how we will conceptualize all these categories and construct our epistemology and methods causes debates/differentiations in the feminist methodology. In my thesis, the approach that I utilize is feminist standpoint theory with a particular focus on intersectionality.

Feminist standpoint theory is an essential pillar of critical theory comes into existence around 1970s among Marxist feminists. It takes daily life experience as its basis, and tries to provide an epistemological, scientific, and political advantage to the knowledge of the oppressed. The claim that the position of the oppressed in

social relations gives them an epistemological advantage has an important place in feminist standpoint theory. According to this approach, the oppressed or marginalized groups have epistemological and political advantage to reach the knowledge of society precisely because of their disadvantaged position in social relations. Their disadvantaged position provides oppressed groups “particular way of seeing a reality” (hooks, 1990: 341), which is “unknown to the oppressor”. In this vein, knowledge production based on the experiences of oppressed groups - women- permits comprehending complex social reality (Harding, 2004:7) and also enable scholars to knowledge production both understanding the social reality and changing it. Thus, producing the knowledge of the society from the standpoint of the women creates a possibility for social equality, justice, emancipation, and freedom.

At this point, feminist standpoint theorists argue that our social positions shape the experiences and knowledge we produce. Thus, knowledge production can only be possible from a particular standpoint. Emphasizing that knowledge is positional, situational, and contextual, feminist scholars criticize the assumptions of universality and rationality advocated by the traditional understanding of science. Feminist standpoint theory claims that knowledge production cannot be independent of the positionality of the researcher. Thus, “achieving a *feminist* standpoint requires a commitment to particular social and political aims of inquiry—namely, a commitment to understand and challenge systems of oppression” (Wylie 2003; Harding 2004; Intemann 2010b; Crasnow 2014 Intemann and de Melo Martín 2014a as cited in Intemann, 2016:268). Therefore, the feminist standpoint scholars, who emphasize that knowledge production and politics cannot be independent of each other, argue that social struggle is inevitably for knowledge production and that the research process itself is political.

It is also important to underline that the feminist standpoint is also a varied project based on political, theoretical, and ethical dimensions. Still, the point of commonality assumes that knowledge production can be done from a particular

standpoint. At this point, the standpoint theory that I will use in my research is the one in which positionality and contingency are multiple, including the specificity and agency of the subject, and aims to establish a non-essentialist feminist subjectivity. Thus, the core points that I utilize during my research are: a) emphasizing the inseparability of politics and scientific knowledge production; b) giving epistemological superiority to the knowledge of marginalized groups; c) taking experience as a ground of theory; and d) the concept of intersectionality.

First, as a feminist and activist in migration, I must say that after involving the field of migration both as a researcher and activist, I was very confused between the artificial academia-activism dichotomy. The questions that arose on the first day I met Razık continued, albeit differently, during the time I was actively involved in migration politics. Just as it was insistently emphasized in the mainstream methodological approaches, I felt compelled not to ‘mix’ my political imagination and thoughts into the production of knowledge, or conversely, I thought that being involved in a field politically was only possible with being ‘there’ as an activist. It was as if activism and scientific knowledge production were separated fields operating through duality. And if I merge them, in the best scenario, I will be considered ‘emotional,’ ‘militant’ and not a qualified researcher. In the worst case, I would betray the relationships I had built as an activist, ‘instrumentalizing’ them for my thesis.

It took me a long time to realize that my thoughts and concerns were rooted in the distinction between scientific knowledge production and activist practice emphasized in mainstream literature which rooted to Enlightenment thought. At that point, feminist methodology provided me ground with its critics to this duality to realize that knowledge production is embedded with politics, and they mutually work. Knowledge is inseparable from praxis, and the possible effect of politics can only enrich and guide knowledge production (Harding, 2004:2). In other words, the feminist methodology has two claims: a) the theoretical claim to understand the relationships between social structures and subjectivities and b) the political claim

to social change (Weeks, 1998:15). Thus, feminist methodology not only destabilizes the dichotomy between activism and scientific knowledge production but also questions my relationship with interlocutors during the research. I approach the research interlocutors not as ‘objects’ of the research but as a subject of research with whom we prefigure another world. This made it possible to recognize the political agency of interlocutors and deconstruct the consideration of refugees as ‘victims’ and/or the group that needs to be ‘managed’ or ‘controlled’, which is a prevalent approach both in migration studies and policy making.

Second, I took women's experiences as the main ground for knowledge production and gave an epistemological superiority (Smith, 2004). As feminist standpoint theorists argue, knowledge of marginalized groups helps us understand not only the experiences of a specific group and also provides a ground to understand and change social relations in general. Understanding how experiences are socially constructed also enables us to analyze capitalist heteropatriarchal society in general (Hartsock, 1983; Rose, 1983). Thus, experiences of refugee women -or marginalized groups in general- “can be turned into an epistemological, scientific and political advantage” (Harding, 2004:8) that provides us a particular standpoint that we can produce scientific knowledge. It is important to note that the subject does not acquire this advantaged position automatically. Instead, “it is an ongoing achievement rather than spontaneous attribute or consciousness of all women” (Week, 2004:188). Thus, standpoint is “neither self-evident” (Hartsock, 1983:3003 cited by Weeks, 2004:188) nor fixed position; it is acquired by a struggle with a group of people who also require love, care, and labor.

By conducting ethnographic research, I had the chance to observe and understand women's everyday life experiences and experience these daily practices with them. Locating women's experiences at the center of the research and giving epistemological privilege to these experiences allowed me to make women's experiences visible and understand systems of power such as asylum regime, racism, heteropatriarchy, capitalism from women’s perspective. So, this approach

makes it possible to understand experiences beyond the dominant male gaze in the knowledge production. As Harding emphasizes, research conducted from a feminist perspective “aims to map how power practices, dominant institutions, and conceptual frameworks create and maintain oppressive social relations” (Harding, 2004:31). She argues that we have a chance to make power relations and hegemonic narratives visible through research conducted with feminist methodology. Thus, we have a chance to “deal with the injustices caused by oppression” (Kourany, 2010) and intervene in power relations with the stories of the interlocutors. As Davis put it clearly (2013:27):

As drawing on methodological strategies that embrace the everyday experiences of people—especially those forced to live on the margins—as epistemologically valid. Feminist knowledge production, when linked to methodological strategies, should unravel issues of power and include interventions that help move toward social justice.

Third, while focusing on experiences, I kept in mind that not all women's experiences are the same, and women are not a united and homogeneous category. I kept in mind the assumption that the knowledge production by centering the experiences will always be positional, situational, conditional, contingent, and contextual. What we know, how we perceive the world is contextual and socially situated (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 2004), and different social positions (re)shape our experiences differently. At this point, considering that different social positions shape refugee women's experiences, intersectionality becomes an essential concept to analyze these categories without creating a hierarchy among them. Thus, I use intersectionality as one of the main concepts of this dissertation.

The concept of intersectionality was first used by the US legal and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in her 1989 article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*. She argues (Crenshaw, 1989) that the perspective in which race and gender are handled separately from each other, and that domination is understood in a single framework obscures the specific discrimination black women face by the intersection of two different forms of domination by making their experiences

invisible. While Crenshaw first uses the concept, the intersectional feminist perspective has roots in the works of black feminists since the 1970s. Black feminists illustrate how different systems of domination intersect (Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981; Combahee River Collective, 1982) and emphasize specificities of oppression faced by black women as well as Chicana feminists' lesbian and trans activists' interventions (Lorde, 1984) that mainstream feminist framework excludes their own experiences. As Combahee River Collective puts it clearly in their statement in 1977 (1983:16):

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking.

Intersectionality identifies those complex social inequalities are formed by different interlocking lines of domination and analyzes them within a single theoretical and methodological framework. In other words, intersectionality provides an analytical, methodological and political tool to reveal the specific forms of oppression created by the interweaving of different power relations and understand the complexity of the subjectivities that occur in this way¹⁸. Collins (2000) references Crenshaw, using the concept “matrix of domination,” and defines it in relations to intersectionality. As she puts it:

Matrix of domination refers to how (these) intersecting oppressions are organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression (Collins, 2009:21).

She emphasizes that race, gender, class, sexual orientation is interconnected, and many more different identities can be included. However, she highlights that in this system, where many different identities are intertwined, individuals acquire different experiences at different intersections. No one is entirely in disadvantaged

¹⁸ Therefore, throughout the dissertation, I employed intersectionality in three senses: a. as a methodological approach, b. As a theoretical framework, c. As a political tool.

or has completely privileged categories (Collins, 2000). This contribution of Collins underlines that there are no fixed positions and positionalities are important. Her approach also saves me from evaluating the essentialist categorization of women and preventing to take oppression as a fixed and unchangeable category.

In recent years, the concept of intersectionality has ‘popularized’ both in the mainstream and critical approaches, feminist scholars emphasize how the word itself became a “buzzword” (Carastathis et al., 2018:9), and it depoliticized during the years (Bilge, 2013). Especially in the US academy, the concept is used as a synonym for diversity. While intersectionality aims to dismantle the power structures, diversity, quite the contrary, “is not meant to transform social institutions but to insert bodies into existing structures and even engage in rebranding an organization” (Nash, 2018: 24). At this point, to (re)gain its political aspect, I returned to the roots of the concept. I use intersectionality to exhibit the intersectionality of oppression structures with its emphasis on politics. This requires an analysis that will focus not on identities or categories but on the interrelationship of social power axes that constitute them, enabling a “cross-politics” that will allow broad coalitions (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In other words, intersectionality provided a way to interrelate the heteropatriarchy, capitalism, racism, and other power systems. It helped me recognize how subject experiences are shaped around these structures, and different subjects can create a coalition for social change. Thus, I used intersectionality to understand the experiences, desires, and subjectivities of refugee women, which I claim to be shaped around heteropatriarchy, racism, capitalism and asylum regime to make visible the relations of these systems with each other, and to dismantle these power structures. Moreover, keeping Collins' matrix of oppression in my mind, I considered that refugee women are not a homogeneous group. Although they have common oppression due to being a refugee and woman, their positions may change through the different social categories they occupy. This also caused me to realize that my

legal status, sexuality, class position, etc., are not fixed and differ according to the context and situation.

Finally, keeping the critiques of feminist scholars in mind, which deconstruct the hierarchy between emotions and reasons, and links emotions and power (Ahmed, 2004; Lorde, 1984; Young, 1990), I include emotions and affects in my analyses. Feminist critiques to Cartesian binary thinking, which is based on the separation between mind/body, nature/culture, reason/emotions (Holland, 2007), show that these binaries work for the legitimation of women's oppression both in philosophy, politics, and science, and they revalue the emotions for a holistic understanding of the reality (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002:37). Feminist scholars were aware that Enlightenment thinking was legitimatizing male domination under the name of rationality. These critiques enable me to deconstruct these dualities and show me the centrality of emotions to capture the social and knowledge production and their embeddedness into the experiences (Denzin, 1984 as cited in Holland 2007). Thus, I keep in mind the critical questions such as “what do emotions do?” and “how emotions circulate between bodies” (Ahmed, 2004:4), “how power circulates through emotions,” raised by feminist scholars during the fieldwork. I was very aware of the centrality of emotions, affects, and their significance in the constitution of women's experiences and subjectivities. As Ramazanoğlu & Holland mention:

Feminists struggle to find useful ways of recognizing both that social lived are lived in material bodies, and also that bodies and emotions are, in significant respects, socially produced and culturally variable (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002:99).

Interviews that I conducted with refugee women also revealed the importance of emotions and affects for understanding women's stories. Some women had ‘crying jags’ while describing the gendered violence they experienced. The felt life of refugee women was varied and complex. Fears, excitements, frustrations, anxiety, joy, sadness, and anger were embodied in women's narratives about their past and hold an explicit place in their future imaginations. Therefore, during the fieldwork,

I also included emotions in analyses and asked specific questions on emotions during the interviews, such as: “If you had to briefly describe your life in Yalova with three emotions, which three emotions would you say?”, “How do you feel when you imagine your future?” By doing so, I reveal the significance of emotions in women's experiences and how certain emotions are embodied into survival and resistance strategies and shape women's subjectivities. Emotions also give insights into interlocutors' relations with the city (Yalova). On the other hand, including emotions into analyses also made me recognize my own emotions, frustrations, anxieties during the research. For instance, I felt frustrated during some interviews due to violent stories heard. After some of the interviews, it took me a pretty long time to fall asleep at night, affecting my energy and excitement for the fieldwork. However, sharing emotions and feelings with each other provided us ground to create feminist questions together.

2.1 Positionality of the Researcher: From Feminist Research to Feminist Companionship

We are 9-10 people at home, eating and drinking wine together. There is no music playing on the background- only our laughter. Later in the evening, we hear that someone knocks on the door. As soon as I heard that our Iranian friend who opened the door said, “there is a Turkish citizen at home” I stand up and automatically head towards the door. When I reach the door, I see the police. He says that he is here because of the neighbors’ complaints of the noise. I take a breath, calmly talk to the police to prevent further problems. When I return to the room, I realize that my citizen status spread some comfort among my friends.

**

Elya has two children. Since she moved to a new neighborhood this summer, she wants to change the children's school to another one close to their new home. One day, while I was spending time with children in their home, Elya came from work

and said we should go to school together tomorrow to transfer children's registration. When I say “okay, but I am not very good at bureaucracy,” Elya immediately interrupts my words and says, “It is difficult for us, but you are a citizen; you can manage it easily.”

I can sort many stories like those that I experienced during my fieldwork. ‘In case of need’ my citizenship status, which I forgot or did not remember much in daily life, was one of the first things that came to my friends’ minds. There were certain convictions that being a citizen would make things easier in any encounter with the bureaucracy and the state - for example, in enrolling children in school. Yes, they were right in some cases, but it was also based on the context, and situation. Even though I went to school for children's enrollment in the case of Elya, I could not manage to solve the problem. The school director considered me a person who ‘solves refugees' problems’ for money and did not speak to me. And the day after, Elya could solve it by herself¹⁹.

Still, at the end of the day, these encounters reminded me that citizenship status is a legal and material reality, and it is a privilege. I have internalized privilege of the citizenship, like many other privileges, and rendered invisible advantages coming with it. It led me to rethink the ‘equal’ relationship we are trying to establish or that I have dreamed of establishing during my fieldwork. Thus, my main questions, during all my fieldwork, were: How is it possible to establish a sisterhood/companionship despite these papers? Or how to approach these differences for knowledge production without creating a hierarchy between researcher and interlocutors? I did not ignore the power relations that make a significant difference between me and refugee which caused by papers. There are material inequalities among us. I try to be reflexive into my position during the research. And feminist methodology, with its emphasis on the multiplicity of

¹⁹ Elya was working in one of the *Kahve* (Coffee Shop) where she got a connection from the Ministry of National Education.

positions, and critiques to definition of researcher as “knowing self” provide a ground to minimize hierarchy and foreground the commonalities.

Feminist scholars criticized many times, and a long time ago, the claim of Enlightenment thought that researchers had to leave their feelings and subjectivities behind and do research rationally is the only condition for producing scientific knowledge. The feminist perspective states that knowledge production and subjectivities cannot be separated from each other, and nothing can be independent of the researcher’s subjectivity, including his/her/their own positioning during the research process and the method he/she/they chooses. Going one step beyond, some feminist scholars argue that claim of “objectivity” is only “replicates colonial and extractivist forms of knowledge production” (Berry et al., 2017:539). Thus, emphasis on the knowledge is social situational, conditional, and partial (Haraway, 1988) indicates that from the beginning of the research, we have actually chosen our side, and we have started to produce knowledge from “a certain place” rather than “out of nowhere.” Thus, situational knowledge claims that social position systematically affects our experiences, shapes and/or limits what we know. It also makes visible how existing power structure shapes and constrains the knowledge production, the subjectivity of the researcher, and the phenomena we study. Claim of situational knowledge inevitably points to the relationship between knowledge production, the subjectivity of the researcher, and power relations during the research processes. Feminist methodology criticizes the hierarchical position of the researcher, offers us to consider the research process as a mutual learning process for researcher and interlocutor. And dismantling the power structures, which is one of the strong emphases of feminist methodology, could only be done together. Thus, feminist research foregrounds the experience of oppressed as a source of knowledge and employs socially and historically situated knowledge as a potential for liberation (Harding, 2004).

Moreover, feminist methodology reminds us of that refugees' subject positions are shaped by exile, migration, and transnationality but researchers' too. Not only

migrants move between worlds, identities, and systems, but also the researcher. As (feminist) researchers, we are also shaped around many cultural, social, and historical subject positions (Wolf, 2018). Teresa de Lauretis (1987) argues that the gendered subject is a subject determined by race, ethnicity, and class at the same time. “This subject occupies different subject positions at different moments and can by no means be determined by a single discursive apparatus” (Lauretis 1987: 137 as cited in Ong, 1995:351). Considering my own experiences, as a young woman, living in a country where there is a limited research scholarship and opportunities for postgraduate students, trying to do a Ph.D. by working on research projects from time to time in insecure positions, helped me to find communalities between me and refugee women. It also made apparent that my subject position is not fixed and provided a ground to question, class, gender, race together with refugee women, and include my embodied experiences. For instance, even though the amount I earn is much more than the refugee women I interviewed, I remember my monthly salary was almost equal to the one-night accommodation price of the research group in a hotel or the bill for a one-night dinner in some projects I worked. Or, I have been working since 2013 in various jobs which defines as “qualified” – research and NGO based-; during these years, I only worked 17 days with social security. On the other hand, the coup attempt in 2016 in Turkey and following restrictions on human rights, increasing censorship, and control over the field of migration affect the freedom of speech and my fieldwork processes. For instance, I could not get permission to interview the head of DGMM due to the security reasons. Also, during the interviews I conducted with NGO experts, they beware of being critical of the government and its migration policies. Also, being a feminist and migration activist made me encounter police and state violence several times, criminalized political activities -solidarity with refugees- I also involved.

Thus, insecurity, exploitation, flexibility, marginalization, and violence are concepts that I know beyond theoretical discussion. My life experiences reminded refugee women of their own experiences from different aspects, and they were

making an analogy between my experiences and theirs, as I did with theirs'. For instance, it was not hard to imagine the difficulty of pursuing a Ph.D. without financial support for refugee women who assigned to satellite cities by state authorities without any social or financial support. Every refugee knew what it meant to receive less money than you deserve or work without social security. While I was writing these pages in March 2022, 3 refugees, like many others, were at risk of deportation just because they participated in the demonstration against the withdrawal of the Turkish state from the Istanbul Convention.

Even so, what I am trying to mention here is, of course, does not claim to conduct research without hierarchies, and to reject the specificities of refugees' experiences. These commonalities do not erase the hierarchies at all. On the contrary, to demonstrate the possibility of feminist research, being aware of my advantageous/disadvantageous positions, and of relative privilege reflectively approaching my subjectivities and my relations in the 'field' and using this (dis)advantageous situation to create new collective spaces that serve collective processes and struggles. I see the first way to do this is to recognize the political subject positions of the people in the field that I am conducting research. This also means rethinking my own research and daily life experiences (and, more broadly, scientific/activist knowledge production) within frameworks that I use to understand the experiences of migrant women, such as capitalism, border politics, labor exploitation, gendered violence, uncertainty, and insecurity. That led me to recognize that we have experiences, struggles, and desires that are shared, not separate from each other, and refugees' experiences not 'exceptional.'

I also reflected awareness of these commonalities during the interviews. First, when I was listening to how refugee women are affected by the uncertainty in the asylum process, I remember the academic, financial or political uncertainties I have experienced myself. Instead of asking the following question to the person with whom I am interviewing, I reflected on my own experience or feeling, and I was sharing it with that person. These commonalities helped me free from the we/them

dichotomy -we as researcher, and them as research objects- and paved the way for a conversation about how structural uncertainties (or violence, insecurity, heteropatriarchy, informality) affect us all in different spheres and ways. Moreover, such conversations and exchanges laid the groundwork for the question of “how can we struggle against them together” and allowed us to think about reciprocity in a common struggle beyond cooperation and solidarity. Perhaps the most exciting and hopeful aspect of feminist research is, “what can we do with what we share, and what we learn” question, making the production of knowledge an indispensable part of changes in daily life and enabling us to see research itself as a process that prepares the ground for new encounters, togetherness, and change.

Accordingly, I first chose not to hide myself and my subjectivities throughout the field. I shared everything about me with interlocutors, including my loves, sexuality, economic conditions, family, etc. I approach the concept of intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989) pointed out by the feminist methodology, not only an analytical category that I would only use to understand the differentiated experiences of refugee women around different power systems but also as a political tool that creates a fertile ground for a feminist companionship. For instance, we started to discuss comprehensively what we can do in Yalova with one of the interlocutors, who was living in Iran before migrating to Turkey, defining herself as a feminist activist. Our first step was to search for the institutions and groups in Yalova that could meet the needs and desires of women. Then, I asked each woman I interviewed about what she wanted and dreamed of doing. We have made attempts, even small ones, to bring together refugee women in the city. For instance, on the 25th of November -International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women- we tried to organize a picnic where many women had a chance to meet with each other. On the other hand, I started to contact with women I know from the feminist/women's movement in Turkey. I received contact information of woman from Turkey who actively participated into the women movement in Yalova. After our meeting, their group started to discuss migration issues, and even though they invited one refugee woman as a speaker to

the feminist event they organized. I also had conversations with different political groups that I was in contact with in the other cities. With all these groups, we discussed what can we do in Yalova together. Although some of these plans did not happen, I can say that, in the end of the 10 months, there are women who have started to come together and have had little contact with feminists from Turkey. These small contacts and the process itself can be considered the first steps towards a not-yet constructed feminist world.

Moreover, during my fieldwork, I have repeatedly felt and experienced women's solidarity beyond an abstract political imagination. These women made my life in Yalova easier. They listened to my problems. We collectively worried about my dissertation, cheered up for Marjan's receiving an interview date from DGMM or became sad about Elya's sickness. There was mutual care that we were building together. This care work sometimes intersected with actual works, when I shared my contacts with them for a job, or simply talked with the house owner, etc. Sometimes I went to some of their workplaces to show their employers that they are not alone and 'have Turkish friends.' Our deep conversations that lasted until the mornings, the everyday solidarity practices we created together in daily life to survive in a city foreign to all of us are the first steps of feminist solidarity and the world we dream to live.

2.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork of my dissertation started with the preliminary interviews I conducted in January 2019. While involving the 'field' and establishing relationships with interlocutors, I was careful not to use any NGO or institution as a gatekeeper. Because my previous field experiences have shown that being involved in the fieldwork through NGOs profoundly impacts the interlocutors' relationship with the researchers. Refugees who received support from these organizations usually hesitate to share their opinions about the organizations and asylum policies.

More importantly, they reluctantly agreed to participate in the interviews in the hope that they would receive extra help.

Participating in migrant solidarity networks and working in the field of migration since 2013 provided me an advantage at this point. I started calling my refugee friends that I had met before in the migrant solidarity networks and migration politics, talked about the research I was planning to do, and asked if they had any friends who wanted to meet me. Following the contact information I received, I respectively traveled to Manisa, Denizli, Çanakkale, Eskişehir and Yalova. I met several refugee women from different communities in these cities, including Iranian, Pakistani, Afghanis, and Iraqis. Before starting the in-depth interviews, another method of this research, I made it clear to refugee women that I wanted to spend time with them rather than only interviewing without hiding that I am conducting thesis fieldwork. I can clearly say that these conversations with women shaped many stages of the research, from designing the field to the details of the subject I will be searching on²⁰. Just as feminist methodology advocates, I have shaped neither the field nor the subject I am researching with individual decisions from the above. I never positioned the interlocutors as the object of the research and myself as the ‘knowing subject’ who has an ‘objective’ and ‘distance’ to interlocutors. Instead, I tried to organize research steps as a collective decision-making process with the research interlocutors.

Different reasons such as refugees' ‘satisfaction’ to the researchers or women's choices not to contact other refugees from the same communities for security reasons show me the impossibility of meeting with other women in some of those cities I travelled. Finally, when I set off on a journey to Yalova in March 2019, my acquaintances in the city convinced me to start the field from there. We

²⁰ Of course, other structural factors play a decisive role in research design. For example, as a researcher, receiving Şirin Tekeli Research Award enabled to extend my fieldwork. Therefore, as a researcher whether or not to receive a research grant directly affects my time in the field.

immediately became close with the women I met. One of these women identified herself as a feminist, and the other was fluent in Turkish and very open to sharing her experiences led to the rapid development of this rapport. At this point, I can say that two women opened the doors of the ‘field’ to me, and I reached my first connections in this city through them. I continued to travel to Yalova during April and regularly met with five Iranian refugee women. I stayed at their homes during these travels. During all these visits, they introduced me to other refugee women. While I was in Ankara, I stayed in touch with all of them via phone and social media.

The deep relationships I established in Yalova and the relationships that did not improve in other cities led me to move the field to a single city and concentrate there. For this reason, I carried out my ethnographic fieldwork in Yalova and conducted in-depth interviews with twenty Iranian refugee women between April 2019 to January 2020. Moreover, I conducted five more interviews with Iranian women who were assigned to Yalova but preferred to live in Istanbul. During my ten-month field research in Yalova, I also regularly traveled to Istanbul. I had the chance to socialize with the women I interviewed many times during these months both in Istanbul and Yalova. I also repeatedly interviewed ten of them at different time intervals in Yalova, which enabled me to capture changes in women's lives with their own expression²¹. My interlocutors are women who have different sexual orientation, sexual identity, different marital status and religious backgrounds. They are straight, lesbians, cis and trans women, single mothers, and Christian women, married women, but most of them were single and/or single mother women. This diversity provided me to see differentiation in their experiences of asylum processes, and everyday life. Sixteen of the women I interviewed are

²¹ However, I need to say that the knowledge I have on migration does not limit to this fieldwork. Since 2013, I have participated in more than ten research focusing on migration/asylum in different parts of Turkey and conducted interviews. Moreover, my involvement in migration politics enables me to approach migration issues from a critical perspective, affecting my thoughts a lot. Throughout this process, the conversations and discussions I had with many of my friends -both citizens and refugees- formed my knowledge of this field.

university graduates, five of them were high school graduated, and the other four obtained master's degrees. Their age varies between 18 and 41. I conducted only six of the interviews through an interpreter. I conducted the rest of the interviews in Turkish and/or English by myself. The interviews generally lasted between one and a half to two hours.

I also involved myself in my interlocutors' everyday lives, sharing and contributing to their daily practices. I was deeply engaged in all their everyday life events. I went to their houses; they came to mine, we cooked together, drank, went shopping. I also participated in-home meetings, helped single mothers' children with their school duties on certain days of the week, went to various public institutions according to interlocutors' needs (Provincial Directorate of National Education, the state hospital, DGMM, etc.). Sometimes we spent time together in public places where they like to spend their free time, visit their workplace, accompanying women to hospitals, asylum authorities, NGOs. I learned as much from listening to them spending everyday life with them. Sharing everyday life made participant observation more like participation rather than “observation”.

Establishing close relationships and sharing everyday life also influenced the stories women shared with me. While I never asked the women I interviewed directly why and how they arrived or any questions related to gendered violence, almost all mentioned gendered violence stories they faced in their migration experiences. Many women, openly, shared their stories of gendered violence with me. For instance, during my visit to Manisa, where I had spent time with a woman from Afghanistan who escaped from male violence, she started showing cigarette and iron burns on her body and had cry jag in the middle of the conversation. In the beginning, I did not know what to do, so I just hugged her until she relaxed. Fortunately, my intervention worked that time, but I was perplexed about how I should behave. After this experience, I contacted my friends from Mor Çatı

Women's Shelter Foundation²² and got some advice. Thanks to their feminist interventions, they warned me of the possible risks of physical touches at those moments. The long conversation I had with them push me to I reconsider my attitude in those moments.

Before the interviews, I informed all interlocutors that we could finish the meeting/interview anytime they wanted, even though most of them continued to explain their violence experiences. At the end of the interviews, some women mentioned that it was the first time they had talked about these experiences. I believe, despite our close relationships, my being 'outsider' of the community made women feel more 'secure,' and these interviews worked as relaxation sessions.

Moreover, to better understand how the asylum regime works and to present a holistic picture, I also conducted interviews with three asylum lawyers based in Ankara, Yalova, and Istanbul. I also conducted interviews with one state official-migration expert- in Yalova PDMM²³ twice at different times. Also, I had short and unstructured conversations with two security guards in the PDMM in Yalova. I tried to organize an interview with DGMM in Ankara; however, in the beginning, due to security reasons and then due to Covid-19, I could not get permission for this interview.

In addition to that, I also interviewed 5 NGO workers from the three NGOs (MUDEM, ASAM and Kilit Mültecileri Destekleme Projesi) who actively work with refugees in the city. I interviewed these NGOs to illustrate a holistic asylum picture of the city. But also, I included them in the research because they are institutions that refugee women refer to in their narratives and daily life talks too

²² Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation is a feminist organization established in 1990 to combat with violence against women. For more information: <https://en.morcati.org.tr/about-us/who-we-are/>

²³ These interviews did not reflect the official views of the DGMM. They were conducted on the initiative of the migration expert.

often. I also attended some of the events organized by NGOs for refugees and local women. I participated in painting and football workshops of one these NGOs, as a “local²⁴” participant. Participating in these events allowed me to observe the stories refugees tell about NGOs. Moreover, I had the advantage of sharing my flat in Yalova with two women working in two of these NGOs. In this way, I had the opportunity to have long conversations in the evenings with them about everything I was curious and wanted to understand. And my request for an interview with UNHCR has been waiting to be answered since 2019.

2.3 Limitations and Dilemmas of The Research

The main limitation of the research was the language barrier. My interlocutors’ mother tongue is Farsi. However, I cannot speak Farsi. Thus, this became a barrier to reaching more women. On the other hand, due to the long resettlement processes, refugee women spent many years in Turkey, and some of them learned Turkish fluently. Besides, the high education level of my interlocutors again provided me the opportunity to overcome this limitation. The ones who did not know Turkish were also fluent in English, so I could conduct some interviews in English. Even so, I conducted six interviews with the interpreter. As an interpreter, I worked with one of the Iranian women who was also a refugee in Yalova. She had a social science background, and she was familiar with research processes and defined herself as feminist activist. She helped me translation of interviews from Farsi to English. Besides, my reason for working with her is also rooted in my motivation to contribute to her subsistence²⁵ as a member of the community. During some months of my fieldwork, I was earning my subsistence money doing

²⁴ When I wanted to participate in the activities organized by NGOs for refugee women, NGO workers directed me to the activities they organized for the integration of Turkish and migrant women. Although I moved to Yalova after many migrant women in the city, it was NGO's choice to register me as a "local" participant.

²⁵ However, she never accepted my salary offer and supported me voluntarily.

translation which was also creating another commonality between us. However, working with an interpreter from the committee affects interlocutors' self-expression and feelings in some interviews. Interlocutors were less open to sharing their inner personal stories and emotions during the interviews I conducted with the interpreter.

Second, conducting ethnographic research and my activist background enabled me to establish deep friendships with my interlocutors throughout the fieldwork. I have been part of, witnessed a lot of intimate moments and information. At this point, I was constantly in dilemma whether I reveal the resistance practices of refugees and my effort to 'make visible' their experiences can cause to weaken them in the encounter with power structures -employer, state, patriarchal relations, etc. In other words, I constantly ask myself that may I cause any new restrictions and control mechanisms to be created by the state exhibiting the resistance practices of refugee women?

On the other hand, this 'intimacy' not only worked one-sided but also affected the relationship that interlocutors created with me. Some of the interlocutors consider this 'intimate' relation between us to access mechanisms to meet their needs related to hope of I can reach to people and mechanism which they cannot (Davis, 2013). At that point, having two flatmates working in the NGOs has affected that will. A few interlocutors asked if I could help them by receiving any financial support for them from the NGOs that my flatmates work. However, I can say that it was not a common attitude since women were aware that researchers are 'dysfunctional' in transforming their lives from their previous experiences with other researchers. Also, I never promise them to do anything I cannot, always was honest. Women were very aware of my position, what I could do, and what I could not. At this point, I never promised things I couldn't do. However, I informed the interlocutors when various job positions were opened at these NGOs - such as interpreter position - and even helped them with their job applications. Also, when some of my friends from Turkey wanted to provide financial support to refugees, I put them

in contact with the refugee women I met in Yalova. But, I positioned myself only as a mediator who work to keep them in touch and let each other know. I prefer that they create a separate relationship with each other.

Third, starting fieldwork through certain persons/gatekeepers made me create close relations only with specific groups of people. Some of the interlocutors, who concealed that they are in Turkey even from their relatives in Iran for security reasons, also avoided contacting the Iranian community in Yalova. Besides, some women did not want to get in touch with specific groups of people. For example, one ciswoman was very distant toward trans women due to her prejudices/transphobia against the trans community. Refugees' prejudices against each other or being distant from the community affect the research process. I came close to a certain group of people and put too much effort into convincing other women I met that I did not belong to any particular community. At this point, I am also aware that this research does not represent the whole refugee women's experiences in general and even in Yalova.

Lastly, even though I centered my embodied experiences of being woman, feminist, activist, and emphasized the importance of including the emotions and experiences of the researcher in the research, in the writing process, it was hard for me to include my embodied experiences, emotions and feelings. Including my own experiences made me feel like I was taking the stage from refugee women, foregrounding my own which has risks making refugee women's experiences invisible. Thus, the thesis writing process made me face the 'positivist inside me' and realize how difficult it was to convey my own feelings during the knowledge production process. Moreover, writing some parts of the thesis frustrated me a lot. I had hard times especially in writing the Chapter 3, where I discussed the gendered violence. I felt depressed and reluctant and needed to put more energy to reviewing my fieldwork notes, and interviews.

CHAPTER 3

MAPPING GENDERED VIOLENCE IN REFUGEE WOMEN'S LIVES

It had been a few months since I moved to Yalova for my fieldwork. The city's waterfront was only 10-minutes walking distance from where I was staying. Being that close to the seaside was an incredible luxury for me as someone who has never lived in a city with the sea. Thus, whenever I had some free time between meeting my interlocutors or after a long day of conducting interviews, I would go to the seaside. That day, while I was sitting by the beach again, one of my housemates came. We had created a ritual of meeting by the beach to have a beer and talk about our days. Ayşe worked as a child specialist in one of the three right-based NGOs working with refugees in Yalova. She usually talked about how her day went, her activities with refugee children, and her conversations with their parents. She was in a bad mood that day. She sat next to me and said, "Something awful happened today. A man from Iran killed his Iranian wife by beheading her on the beach". She knew the woman who was killed; her children regularly went to the NGO and attended the activities they organized for refugee children. "The children are very young and will be taken into state protection. Can you believe he killed the woman with an ax on the beach"? Ayşe said. Later, she mentioned that the woman came to the NGO before she was killed and explained the violence she experienced. However, the NGO didn't offer any practical support other than giving her some generic information about divorce procedures. I vividly remember what Ayşe said: "We were afraid that if we encouraged her to divorce, the violence she experienced could have increased. Who knows, perhaps the husband could have killed her earlier. We can't take such responsibilities".

A few weeks later, I met an Iranian woman to interview her for my dissertation research. The subject came to the murder of the woman on the beach without me asking anything. She said:

Did you hear that someone killed his wife on the beach? We escaped from this violence in Iran. Here the same thing happens again. That woman wanted to divorce, but because her refugee resettlement was tied to the husband's asylum case, she was scared of being stuck in Turkey or deported to Iran. She [the one who was killed] could not speak up, and she would have lived if she could. She came all the way to Turkey and was killed by her husband here. How brutal. Nobody deserves this.

Everyone I met and encountered in Yalova mentioned this femicide in our conversations for a long time. The killing of a woman, whose name we did not even know, deeply impacted everyone. Especially refugee women who migrated to Turkey to escape domestic violence seemed to be particularly affected by this brutal murder, which reminded them of their past experiences of violence and the possibility of something similar happening in Turkey where they did not have access to adequate protection mechanisms. Mina, for instance, is one of those women who fled Iran, with her 14 years old son from her previous marriage, and applied for international asylum protection in Turkey to save herself from her ex-husband's violence:

I married a person. I was married for 3-4 months. I didn't have sex. At the end of 4 months, I said I don't want him. The man tried to rape me. I hired a lawyer and got divorced. He threatened to spill acid on me. I escaped from Iran. I'm walla scared Cemile.

As Mina's words illustrate, the killing of the woman on the beach, which created a shock effect throughout the city, is not an exceptional situation experienced by women. Even though the way how she was killed sounded exceptionally 'savage',

femicides are a widespread phenomenon worldwide²⁶, including in Iran and Turkey. However, this is not the only form of gendered violence that refugee women experience. Since I started my fieldwork, my interlocutors' experiences and narratives showed me that whether they escaped from domestic violence or not, multiple forms of violence shape every aspect of their everyday lives and migration experiences. In this chapter, I focus on these experiences and narratives to offer a multi-layered mapping of gendered violence in refugee women's lives, including their encounters with the asylum regime and their everyday experiences of living and waiting in Turkey. I argue that together with the general features of the asylum regime that is gender-blind and the Turkish state's 'satellite city' regulation, which restricts refugees' freedom of movement and confines them in small cities creates multiple forms of violence in refugee women's lives.

Since the 1970s, especially with the slogan of "personal is political," second-wave feminists have demonstrated that our personal experiences, including violence, have a pattern and that the violence women face is not exceptional but rather systematic. Feminist scholars have shown the importance of violence in controlling women's bodies, labor, and sexuality and emphasized how the fear of violence shapes their actions (Brownmiller, 1976; Walby, 1989; Valentine, 1989). Furthermore, black feminists have long highlighted that race, migration status, and gender need to be conceptualized as intersecting systems of power to understand the forms of violence women (of color and black women) experience (Collins, 2017; Crenshaw, 1991). Following these insights, I use the concept of "gendered violence" to highlight the intersectional relation between heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism that shape refugee women's lives (Collins, 2017; hooks, 2000). I argue that heteropatriarchy, or in a narrower sense, gendered violence, are inextricably linked to other forms of violence and intersect with other systems of power. Therefore, to capture gendered violence experiences of refugee women,

²⁶ For instance, while I am writing these lines, feminists at the Cannes Film Festival protest femicides in France. <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2022/05/23/protest-group-invades-cannes-film-festival-to-highlight-violence-towards-women> date of access: 25.05.2022

intersectional approach keeps us away from thinking of heteropatriarchy in isolation, rather allows us to explore how gendered violence is rooted in various systems of oppression and disperses into all aspects of women's lives. In other words, the concept of "gendered violence" does not only refer to violence against women and feminized bodies, but rather links that form of violence to other forms of violence (Gago, 2020:20).

Refugee women experience gendered violence in every aspect of their lives, ranging from their institutional encounters with asylum authorities to their mundane practices. The lack of adequate rights and the insecure legal status make refugee women more open to gendered violence in those daily and institutional encounters. However, focusing on the legal insecurity is not enough to understand the gendered violence refugee women face in Turkey. Confinement mechanisms of satellite city regulation meet with the perception of 'foreigner women' in a society where they often work interdependently with legal status to control and constrain refugee women's lives and bodies. As a result, the hierarchy between citizens and refugees gives citizens, mostly men, a sense of being able to do anything in this system where heteropatriarchy and racism work hand in hand, making refugee women more open to gendered violence. At this point, to comprehensively capture the gendered violence that refugee women experience requires to use an intersectional approach.

Before I go any further, I should clarify that my emphasis on the absence of legal status here does not mean that I see the state or inter/national regulations as the only entities that make refugee women vulnerable to gendered violence, which, later, runs the risk to consider the state only 'solution' for ending that violence. Instead, throughout the chapter I illustrate that considering the state (or more specifically, legal status) as an isolated entity is not enough to fully understand refugee women's experiences. Likewise, without abolishing heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism, the intervention of state and legal institutions will not be enough to end gendered violence. On the contrary, as the Marjan's, one of the

refugee women, case illustrates in the following pages, such state intervention even has the potential to (re)produce gendered violence (Law, 2012). Thus, by saying that the asylum regime is not free from other oppression forms and that it increases the (possibility of) gendered violence experienced by refugee women, I argue that state/legal mechanisms occupy an undeniable place in refugee women's experiences of violence (Smith, 2015). However, without rejecting the importance of such statal and legal frameworks, I also emphasize the foundational role of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism in producing gendered violence and argue that we can better understand women's experiences by focusing on intersecting systems of power and examining how they operate together in different levels.

Although there is growing literature on refugee women in Turkey, the studies in feminist refugee studies of Turkey focus on the experiences of refugee women and the violence they experience have increased with the migration of Syrian refugees. These studies focus on Syrian women and LGBTI+'s experiences of violence from different perspectives - legal, economic, political, every day (Baklacioğlu, 2017; Kıvılcım 2016; Kıvılcım & Baklacioğlu, 2015). Among these studies, we see works on violence experienced by women in camps (Barın, 2015), forced marriages of Syrian girls (Yaman, 2020), experiences of domestic violence (Aktaş, 2016), the role of media in producing violence against women (Doğutaş, 2019), violence and women's resistance strategies (Herwig, 2017), gender-based violence in everyday lives of Syrian women before and after the war (Ramadan & Ababneh, 2022). Until this date, limited studies focus on refugee women and their experiences. One of them is Sema Buz's study (2007), which focuses on Somali and Iranian women and men, presenting a feminist approach. Her work is a pioneering study making women's differing reasons for asylum, and violence in their experiences visible. At this point, the number of studies focusing on the experiences of violence of refugee women living in satellite cities in Turkey from a feminist perspective is almost non-existent (Coskun & Beril, 2019; Sarı, 2021). In this vein, in this chapter, I aim to fill this gap by focusing on the multilayered

gendered violence experiences of Iranian women in Yalova from intersectional feminist perspective.

To do so, in the first section of this chapter, I focus on the formal and semi-formal spaces of gendered violence. That is, I explore how asylum institutions and legal arrangements are constructed as gender-blind and how existing legal mechanisms of asylum regimes lack any gender-sensitive protection. More specifically, I examine how the Geneva Convention and the UN regulations as well as the Turkish state's legal frameworks and asylum regulations (or lack thereof) affect refugee women's experiences of gendered violence. This inquiry enables us to detect how gendered violence is embedded in institutions and legal mechanisms. Furthermore, going one step further from the institutional and legal violence, I also explore women's experiences of gendered violence in their personal and semi-formal encounters with asylum authorities. I show how DGMM officials, encouraged by the asylum regime's discretionary nature, abuse their formal power to hold control over women's asylum cases and how, in turn, subject them to multiple forms of gendered violence.

In the second section, I map gendered violence in refugee women's everyday life. Although everyday life seems to be independent of the asylum regime, the daily lives and mundane practices of refugee women are directly affected by this regime. The relationality does not only stem from women's legal status. Rather, the Turkish state's satellite city regulation, which turns refugee settlement cities like Yalova into waiting rooms for refugees, interlink the legal system and everyday lives. Therefore, satellite city as a space where multiple forms of violence become embodied in everyday life experiences and disciplinary power on women's bodies, activities and desires.

In bringing in these aspects, I conclude this chapter by focusing on the exit permit regulation²⁷ of Turkey. Exit permission regulation creates the conditions to capture the relationality between the asylum regime, everyday practices, and gendered violence more concrete and also illustrates how legal status and existing legal frameworks are embedded in women's everyday practices and (re)shape these practices.

3.1 Formal And Semi-Formal Spaces of Gendered Violence

3.1.1 Gender-Blind Transnational Asylum Regime

The 1951 Geneva Convention, which is the primary regulatory framework for migration regimes worldwide, defines a refugee as a person who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of [her] nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [herself] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of [her] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Article 1A (2)).

As this definition illustrates, although gendered violence is widespread across the world and forces many women to leave their countries of origin and migrate elsewhere, the Geneva Convention does not include the concept of gender in its definition of the refugee and does not recognize gendered based violence and heteropatriarchal oppression as persecution. Examining Geneva Convention, Doreen Indra highlights that the refugee definition in Geneva Convention is gender-blind in two senses. First, it ignores the role of gender as a reason for making people refugees, and second, it dismisses differentiated experiences of refugees based on their gender (Indra, 1987:3). She also emphasizes that the

²⁷ As I will explain in the last section, refugees have to obtain an exit permit from Turkey to be able to go to a third country for resettlement.

definition of persecution outlined by the Geneva Convention focuses on the activities that mostly take place in the public sphere. However, when it comes to violence and persecution that take place in the private sphere, the Convention goes silent. This approach not only reinforces the problematic distinction between private and public spaces but also renders invisible the domestic sphere, which is where violence is more strongly felt. In doing so, it willfully ignores that the private is political. In other words, “state oppression of a religious minority is political, while gender oppression at home is not” (Indra, 1987:3). However, research show that gender-based persecution cannot be separated from the forms of persecution defined by the Geneva Convention. Rather, it is often a continuation of other forms of persecution (Coşkun & Eski, 2019). These studies, which draw attention to the “continuity of gender-based violence,” demonstrate that forms of gendered violence are everywhere, ranging from war to everyday life (Cockburn, 2004). In doing so, they show us, once again, the importance of dismantling the public/private dichotomy. Therefore, by emphasizing the male-centric and gender-blind refugee definition in the Convention, we need a new definition that considers gender-related issues as political and that enables us to include gendered violence as persecution (Spijkerboer & Council, 1994).

The literature on asylum regimes and the Geneva Convention shows the differences between men's and women's experiences of being refugees that need to be taken into account when studying asylum regimes and refugee experiences (Ager et al., 1995; McSpadden & Moussa, 1993). Women can have the same reasons as men for asylum due to their political, racial, and religious activities. Women can experience gender-specific forms of persecution, such as rape and female genital mutilation, or they can be persecuted just because they are women (Binder, 2000; Crawley, 1997; Freedman, 2016). In those cases, many women link their asylum claims to the category of “membership of a certain social group²⁸” as defined by the Convention.

²⁸ For more discussion on this category, please see: Nilsson, E. (2014, September). The ‘refugee’ and the ‘nexus’ requirement: The relation between subject and persecution in the United Nations Refugee Convention. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 46, pp. 123-131). Pergamon.

However, evaluating the asylum cases of women under the category of “membership of a certain social group” causes three different problems. 1. While other persecution reasons (race, religion, nationality) in the Geneva Convention are considered sufficient political reasons for asylum, excluding the gendered violence experienced by women as a reason for persecution shows that asylum authorities do not define gendered violence as a political category to seek asylum (Akis, 2012:386). 2. Defining women as “members of a particular social group” neglects a nuanced understanding of women’s diverse experiences - assuming all women have the same experiences. Besides, it is essentialist in the way it treats the category of woman as a unified, steady, unchangeable since the Convention defines the category of woman as “innate and immutable” (Nilsson, 2014: 127). 3. Defining women as “members of a particular social group” delinks gendered violence from other power systems such as heteropatriarchy - which also depicts gendered violence only as a women’s problem.

Furthermore, in many cases, women's asylum cases are linked to the men in their families when they migrate with their male family members. As illustrated by the case of the woman killed by her husband in Yalova, this situation causes women to continue to be subjected to gendered violence even after leaving the country of origin and prevents them from seeking existing protection mechanisms due to the fear of deportation or the rejection of their asylum cases.

Fortunately, these discussions conducted by feminist researchers and activists have recently pressured the UN to consider gendered-based persecution in asylum applications. Guidelines prepared by UNHCR in 1991 (revised in 2002) and 2012 emphasize that granting refugee status for both women's and LGBTI+'s asylum requests related to gender should be interpreted as gender sensitive (Kivilcim, 2016; UNHCR, 2002). These guidelines state that gender should also be considered a basis for persecution, while not expressly defined in the Convention. However, these guidelines still take the gender-blind refugee definition of the Geneva Convention as the main ground in the asylum process. As Article 4 puts:

Adopting a gender-sensitive interpretation of the 1951 Convention does not mean that all women are automatically entitled to refugee status. The refugee claimant must establish that he or she has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UNHCR, 2002: Article 4).

As this Article illustrates, while the international asylum authorities and their legal guidelines (theoretically) condemn gender-based violence, they do not guarantee that the asylum process would recognize gender as a ground for persecution. Furthermore, since the nation-states have the ultimate authority to decide on the recognition or the rejection of refugees' asylum claims, they are not required to take these international guidelines into consideration when conducting refugee status determination processes. This discrepancy between the existing guidelines at international levels and their implementation at national levels increases the power of the nation-states to control human mobility and decide who deserves asylum and who does not. Current studies show that since gender-based violence is not interpreted as persecution in the Geneva Convention, many women's asylum claims are rejected. Mona was 35 when I met her. She escaped from her husband's violence in Iran and reached Turkey in 2015. When she arrived in Turkey, she registered with the UNHCR and was granted refugee status. In the meantime, she was also interviewed by the Yalova PDMM. However, despite her recognition from the UNHCR, she received a rejection decision from Yalova PDMM because "her case does not meet the criteria for international protection". When I met her, she was filing an appeal to the decision while facing the risk of deportation.

I have a UN acceptance. They [Yalova PDMM officers] are also granting status within the Geneva Convention, don't they? I asked them, why did you reject my case? The officer there said, 'your case is not enough to be a refugee.' My case is not enough? I got cigarette burns on my body, my husband and his family will kill me if they find me, and the Turkish state is not convinced that I deserve to be a refugee. Nothing changed in my situation since the UN recognized me as a refugee, except that I face more violence in Turkey (Mona, 2019).

By mentioning her friends' stories, Zahra also highlights these risks and how refugee women became vulnerable to gendered violence and threats of

deportability. Zahra mentioned that newly arrived refugees, especially lesbians, are mainly rejected by Yalova PDMM, saying that your case is not enough to be a refugee. Those who want to apply for international protection are directed to apply for a residence permit. By mentioning her friends' stories, Zahra highlights these risks and how refugee women became vulnerable to gendered violence and face with the deportability.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the Geneva Convention does not recognize gender-based violence as persecution informs the rejection of Mona's asylum claim. This gender-blind nature of the Convention provides the states and national asylum authorities with a perfect ground to legitimize and justify their rejection of women' asylum cases. The case of Mona's rejection by the Turkish authorities also illustrates the symbolic place of the UNHCR in the asylum regime even before 2018, as I explained in the Introduction– one that cannot go beyond providing guidelines which may or may not be implemented by the states. This reminds us of the importance of looking asylum regimes at both the transnational and national levels to fully understand refugee women's experiences. Such examination demonstrates how gendered violence is embedded in and naturalized through asylum regimes transnationally.

3.1.2 The Context of Turkey

There is no special regulation regarding women and LGBTI+ refugees in the national legal regulation of Turkey, namely LFIP. The LFIP has regulations on women and gender under the category of “group with special needs.” Those defined under the “group with special needs” have priority to benefit from the rights and services provided to refugees. According to LFIP (Article 3), unaccompanied minors, disabled, elderly, pregnant, single mothers or fathers with children, and persons subjected to torture, sexual assault, or other serious psychological, or physical or sexual violence are counted as persons with special needs. However, there is no separate regulation regarding the specific needs of

refugee women and LGBTI+s. Besides, consideration of women refugees under this category shows that the state treats women as victimized and dependent subjects since it indicates women as “‘pregnant,’ ‘alone with children’ or ‘the victim of physical or sexual violence’” (Kıvılcım, 2016:200).

Although there are no specific regulations on gender and gender equality in the LFIP, the recommendations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR Program Executive Committee and UNHCR's guidelines, other international conventions that Turkey is a signatory, and Turkey's own domestic laws and regulations address refugee women only when they face gender-based violence.²⁹ The explicit recognition of gender-based violence as a form of persecution for refugee women and emphasis on gender equality have been recognized with the Istanbul Convention enacted in 2011 to specifically fight with the violence against women and girls and domestic violence. It is the first and only Convention prepared throughout Europe on this subject. The Convention includes granting refugee status to women and LGBTI+ if there is a risk of gender and sexual orientation-based persecution. It also imposes responsibilities on the signatory state, from residence permit to refugee status, to guarantee the principle of non-refoulement. However, Turkey withdrew from the Convention in 2021 and, thus, an international framework that directly addresses the gender-based persecution and protection for migrant women has been removed from Turkey's migration and asylum regime. Needless to say, this withdrawal is likely to significantly affect both Turkish citizens and refugee women and jeopardize their access to safety and protections³⁰.

²⁹ The leading international conventions and national laws, and other regulations that can be applied in the fight against gender-based violence against refugee women can be ordered as follows: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on human rights, CEDAW at the international level, and Turkish Constitution, Turkish Penal Code, Turkish Civil Code, *Law No. 6284 on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women*.

³⁰ Although the interviews I conducted before Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention demonstrated the rights violations faced by women and the lack of gender-sensitive support

Illustrating the Geneva Convention's male-centric structure, feminist scholars also emphasize that the gender-blindness of the Convention prevents women from accessing effective rights and protections (Helton, 1983; Johnsson, 1989), and reinforces the existing gender biases in refugee receiving countries (Crawley, 2000; Sansonetti, 2016). They emphasize the importance of gender-sensitive mechanisms in asylum processes. Because whether violence is among the reasons for migration or not, women's exposure to gendered violence on the migration routes, during and after the migration is closely related to gender-sensitive mechanisms. From government officials to law enforcement, social workers, and interpreters, everyone refugee women encounter should be gender-aware and act accordingly. Otherwise, as Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2006) illustrates in her article where she focused on the Sub-African asylum seekers' experiences in Cairo, conducting refugee status determination processes without gender sensitivity marginalizes women, and the country of asylum became a place of new forms of violence (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2006) where the violence and sexual abuse experiences by refugee women (Friedman, 1992).

In my interview with a migration expert in Yalova PDMM, the migration expert mentioned some of the trainings they took. Still, none of these courses were related to gender and gendered violence. It is also challenging to find not the slightest evidence of the implementation of gender-sensitive guidelines, which is very clear in the statement of refugee women.

Almost all of my interlocutors stated that they had to talk about the violence they experienced during their asylum interviews in graphic details over and over again. They mentioned that the interviewing personnel were not sufficiently knowledgeable about gender and gendered violence, and refugee women had to

mechanisms, it is pretty worrying how this current withdrawal from the Convention will affect the experiences of refugee women.

repeatedly remember and retell violence during their asylum process. For instance, Elya, who is single mom describes the violence that she experienced with the PDMM officials in Yalova when she wanted to add her name to a so-called 'list,' which she heard from other refugees³¹:

There was also a man in the room sitting at the table, and he was awful and rough. He said, 'What's your situation? Have you been beaten or raped? Why should I put you on the list?' I didn't tell him anything but thought to myself: I don't know, should I be raped and beaten to be on the list? (Elya, 2019).

My interlocutors also stated that the DGMM officers did not pay attention to women's personal privacy during the interviews. They stated that other officials constantly entered the room where the interview was conducted:

I went to the interview with my friend. They said that my friend could not come, and when I went to the room and wanted to talk to the officer privately, there were other people. When I entered the room, four other people, other Iranians, were being interviewed. They could hear what I was saying, it was not a private space (Aida, 2019).

Although such experiences are mainly based on the absence of gender-sensitive mechanisms and a well-established asylum regime, they cannot be explained by legal regulations alone. In most cases, refugee women's experiences of violence stem from the asylum authorities' abuse of power, which create semi-formal spaces of violence where legal and semi-legal violence intersect and enrich each other. For instance, Niyaz, who is a trans woman living in Yalova since 2018 described her encounters with the PDMM officers as the following:

The ones who work in Migration Office have no idea about LGBTIs. The officer looked at me and said, 'Did you go to the doctor because of your problem?' He meant transsexuality. I didn't want to get into a debate with him, so I just said yes. Then he came close to me and asked, 'Did you get

³¹ When I was in Yalova, women often went to the DGMM to add their names to these "lists" that they mainly heard from their refugee friends. These lists were sometimes for the third-country resettlement, sometimes for refugee status determination interviews, and sometimes for financial support. However, what exactly those lists were for, and whether they work or not, is still unknown to me and my interlocutors.

your surgery?’ I didn't know what to answer to this question. I had already done the surgery, but I was confused about what the problem was and why it was important for my case. I told him, ‘Yes, I did.’ He said, ‘Okay, after three weeks, we will call you.’ Since then, four months passed, and nobody called me from there (Niyaz, 2019).

Niyaz was right to believe that the surgery has anything to do with her case. But when she went to PDMM to inquire about those mysterious RSD lists, she encountered the officers’ sexist and transphobic attitude. Even though the question about her surgery was not related to her asylum case, she had to answer the question since her refugee status and resettlement process were tied to the PDMM officers’ decision, since at the end of the day, PDMM officers decide who deserves to be a refugee and who does not. Lesbian women are another group who faces questions about their sexuality during interviews with PDMM Yalova. Almost all lesbians stated that they were exposed to questions such as: how was their first sexual experience, and what are their favorite positions in sex? They were asked questions about their sexual lives in the PDMM interviews.

Women encounter the PDMM staff the most when they go to the asylum office to obtain travel permission and complete their mandatory signature duty. Refugees are required to sign every two weeks in Yalova due to the satellite city regulation and cannot leave the city without obtaining travel permission. Although, refugee experiences in different satellite cities illustrate that Yalova PDMM is different from most PDMM offices that are known for arbitrary rejection of travel permits, my interlocutors stated that they encountered questions that had nothing to do with the permit process. However, some women mentioned that they were asked irrelevant questions by officers, such as, “Who are you going with?” and “Will you be alone?” Women repeatedly face such intrusive and personal questions and sometimes even harassment by PDMM officers. These violent encounters do not solely stem from the asylum law, but more so, rooted in heteropatriarchy and refugee women's insecure legal status.

Mistreatment is another common experience that women face in the PDMM, as illustrated by Yasna's narrative:

I recently lost my identity. We were moving into another apartment, and my identity card was lost somehow. When I went there [PDMM office] in the morning, the woman who deals with ID cards said, 'Do we have to see you in the morning before breakfast?' She wasn't even interested in learning why I was there. They are always acting up like that (Yasna, 2019).

The power of interpreters also cannot be ignored in women's PDMM encounters. Interpreters play a critical role and work as gatekeepers in refugees' access to migration experts in PDMM offices. They also play an essential role during asylum interviews. Almost all the women I interviewed talked about experiencing maltreatment by interpreters in Yalova PDMM. Refugees claimed that the interpreter, whom they described as an Iranian who had a residence permit,³² constantly humiliated them and sometimes made mistakes in the translation process. However, refugee women often mentioned that they did not call out interpreters' maltreatment of refugees or correct their mistakes, because they feared that interpreters might deliberately mistranslate their narratives during asylum interviews.

There's also a lady there; she's misbehaving too. She's shouting. But I treat them well. I try to be nice to everyone. Each time I say, 'Hello, *kolay gelsin* (take it easy).' I don't want to be too mean to the translator either, because maybe she'd attend my interview and write whatever she wants. But I remember the woman who made me wait one hour only because she was drinking coffee (Sharaen, 2019).

Establishing good relations with the interpreters is key to refugee women's access to migration experts, and thus, refugee women pay special attention to be nice to interpreters:

I struggled for three days to get an appointment. Finally, I made an appointment; but they gave appointments to seven more people on the same

³² It is a common practice in Turkey that DGMM officers use refugees or foreign nationals who have resident permits as interpreters.

date. I waited until 5 o'clock but couldn't get to my appointment before the DGMM was closed. Then I approached one of the interpreters. She normally treats everyone badly, but that day must have been her good day. She took my phone number and my name. They called me the next day (Negar, 2019).

In addition to these violent encounters with PDMM officers and interpreters, many refugee women across Turkey also experience (and sometimes report) sexual assault and abuse at the hands of PDMM officers. Although none of my interlocutors in Yalova have experienced such overt assault, I have heard stories of sexual harassment from other refugees and researchers in cities like Eskişehir, Denizli, and Çanakkale where PDMM officers abuse their power to get sexual benefits from refugee women. This includes getting women's phone numbers from their asylum files and calling them repeatedly in late hours, asking them out, or forcing them to have sex. Although these incidents are often silenced due to refugee women's fear of being denied asylum or being deported to their home countries, in some rare cases, mainstream media also report such violence from PDMM officers³³.

Considering all these experiences, I argue that the asylum regime in Turkey makes refugees vulnerable to gendered violence, humiliation, and maltreatment rather than treating them as subjects who are protected by rights. Employees of PDMM often abuse their power, which stems from and is justified by the absence of necessary gender-sensitive legal frameworks. As a result, these formal and semi-formal political-legal structures and spaces make refugee women more open to gendered violence. In the next section, I will focus on how these political-legal structures also cause multiple forms of violence in daily lives and mundane practices of refugee women.

³³ For one of the examples: <https://www.diken.com.tr/gocmen-kadina-taciz-iddiasi-akpli-vekilin-goc-idaresi-muduru-kardesine-gozalti/> date of access: 26.05.2022

3.2 Everyday Life of Gendered Violence

3.2.1 Satellite Cities, Freedom of Movement, and Confinement

The satellite city regulation occupies an important place in Turkey's asylum regime and refugees' everyday lives and, thus, and provides an essential site to explore the experiences of gendered violence and how the gendered violence shapes and dominates the daily experiences of refugee women. As I discussed in the Introduction, in Yalova, refugees have to give signatures every two weeks. And, compared to other cities, such as Denizli and Kayseri, Yalova is a relatively 'relaxed' city for obtaining travel permission. The women I interviewed mentioned that it was easy to get permission to travel to other cities from the Yalova PDMM. They could get a permit for five days for Istanbul and seven days for other cities. They stated that it was often enough to give an ordinary reason to obtain these permissions, and they could do this without getting an invitation letter from the institutions or the people in the places they want to go. However, the same women also stated that although they usually do not have any problems getting permission from Yalova PDMM, they are still not comfortable being subjugated to compulsory sign-ins. For instance, Zahra likened her experience of getting travel permits to being a prisoner: "We don't have any problem for obtaining permission, but we feel like we are in jail" (Zahra, 2019).

Zahra's expression illustrates that the satellite city regulation evokes the feeling in refugee women that they are in prison. The feeling of being in prison is not just because they are confined to a bordered geographical space. As a small city, Yalova does not offer many social activities to its residents. For women, especially for those who migrated from Iran's big cities, being forced to live in Yalova feels like a punishment, as illustrated by the following interlocutor's words:

When we arrived at Yalova, I said, 'It's a nice city, green, it has sea. It is peaceful.' But, you know, just because it's green, you can't live in one city for four years. There is nothing to do here. The city is smaller than our

holiday places in Iran. You can relax in those places but only for ten days (Farah, 2019).

In the absence of social activities and opportunities, engaging in sports is one of the common social activities among refugee women in Yalova. Almost all the women I met there were doing regular exercise, and some even going to the gym. However, some women like Marjan also complaint about the lack of spaces for such physical activities: “There is nothing in Yalova, like a course or an activity. I want to go to a place where I can improve my body and physical abilities. But there’s none” (Marjan, 2019).

In this restricted social environment, regular travels for fun and leisure activities to Istanbul were common among refugee women. The time period and the length of stay vary according to their class status, the job they work, and parental responsibilities. However, I can say that all women I met had been to Istanbul at least once during their stay in Yalova. Most of these visits were with permission by PDMM. Although it is not difficult to get those permissions from Yalova PDMM, the need to ‘get permission’ to travel to another city creates emotional burden on women and constantly reminds them that they are refugees who have limited rights and who are considered as subjects who need to be managed and controlled. To avoid this feeling (or to avoid any encounters with PDMM officers), some women would also travel without permission. However, traveling without permits causes women feel anxiety and stress due to the fear of being caught by the authorities and deportability, as narrated by an interlocutor:

There is nothing in Yalova. I want to go to Istanbul, but you can't always get permission. I went one time without permission. I didn't even realize that I was walking around and running from every cop I saw. When I returned to Yalova, my whole body ached due to the anxiety I had (2019).

This stress of being caught by the police, coupled with the negative feelings of asking for travel permission from asylum authorities, make most of the women stay in their assigned city. Thus, even though satellite cities are not closed areas surrounded by walls, fences, and wires, the compulsory sign-in requirement and

travel permits demonstrate the carceral nature of migration control practices. This carcerality simultaneously produces gendered violence, inscribing legal mechanisms onto women's bodies and mobilities and embedding these carceral disciplinary practices in their everyday lives. Furthermore, as I will illustrate in the following sections, the satellite city regulation also affects refugee women's encounters with various institutions and spheres, such as accommodation and access to healthcare, as well as their socializing practices and use of urban space, all of which create different forms of gendered violence in women's lives.

3.2.2 Accommodation

After assigning refugees to satellite cities, the state does not provide any support for accommodation, including neither helping them find a place to stay nor giving any financial aid for rent. Thus, until they leave Turkey for resettlement to a third country, refugees have to find housing on their own. Not surprisingly, finding housing is one of the most important challenges that refugee women face. They are often denied housing as soon as the landlords realize that they are refugees/foreigners, as illustrated by Sina's words:

I was walking the streets. I had 10 different housing listings written on a paper in my hand. Maybe 9 of them said, 'we don't give houses to foreigners.' It's tough to find a home. Very difficult. I said, 'why don't you rent your apartment to us?' I even argued with the landlord once. 'What is the reason? What are we doing differently? Let me know what you want from me; if I don't fulfill them, you have every right to reject me. But it is not nice to say that we do not give our house to foreigners from the beginning.' I'm really allergic to this sentence. I'm tired of hearing it anymore (Sina, 2019).

In this discriminatory environment, refugee women's social networks play an important role in finding housing. Most of my interlocutors had personal networks consisting of friends who migrated to Turkey before them, and they stayed in their friends' flats until they found a house to rent, as in the case of Aida: "I had a friend, a refugee in Turkey. He told me how to be a refugee in Turkey too. He went to

Canada 5 months after I came. He helped me a lot, and I stayed at his house when I first came” (Aida, 2019).

Moreover, community and religious networks also help women in this process of finding housings. For instance, Christian women often get help from the church in Yalova, including receiving information about accommodation and sometimes asking for financial support. For instance, when Malihe realized that she and her husband had to leave Iran due to their religion, she reached out to their father of the church who was living in Istanbul. Malihe explained the bad things that happened to her in Iran, and the father of the church told them to come to Istanbul and stay with him. This is how she decided to move to Turkey and insisted on the moment of registration to asylum authorities to assign them to Yalova, since it is the nearest city to Istanbul. With the help of the father of the church, they also utilized church networks to find accommodation.

Sometimes, women do not need to know anyone who migrated before them personally. In those cases, the well-known figures of the Iranian community who have strong ties to the institutions in satellite cities help women find housing and adopt to their new environment. I met with one of these well-known figures, who is a journalist from Iran who migrated to Turkey as a refugee and then withdrew his asylum case and rather obtained a residence permit. He has been living in Yalova for more than six years by the time we met in 2018. He was well known by the Iranian community in Yalova and was actively using his social media. In one of our meetings, he introduced me to an Iranian woman who also reached him via social media before migrating to Turkey. He was helping her find accommodation and employment by using his networks.

As these examples illustrate, personal, social, and communal networks play an essential role in finding accommodation. However, finding housing becomes a more challenging issue for those who do not have any networks in the city. In addition to facing numerous difficulties of finding a flat in the city that they do not know and in a language that they do not speak, women also encounter racist and

xenophobic discrimination by landlords and neighbors. For instance, the amount of rent automatically increases when the landlords realize that they are refugees/foreigners. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, some landlords do not rent their flats to refugees. Some even do not even bother to give a reason for rejecting them. Others legitimize this discriminatory attitude by using neighbors as an excuse and saying, “neighbors do not want refugees in the building.” On top of these common racist attitudes towards refugees, being a woman increases the discrimination that refugee women face. In addition to racist behaviors, they are also subjugated to gendered violence and sexual harassment by landlords. As most of my interlocutors mentioned, one typical attitude is that the landlords offer a sexual affair to the women in exchange for a renting house:

I was searching for a flat. One of the ones I saw was nice but quite expensive. The landlord started to ask me the questions, like ‘do you have a husband?’ ‘with whom will you live here?’ etc. When he learned that I would be there with my children, he offered me a discount. But you know, this offer is not something for free. He knew we were refugees, and no one supported us. If they feel that you are a weak person, that you need someone to get support from, they try to get something back from you. So, they try to take advantage. He said, ‘I would help you.’ But in return, he wants something. In fact, no one will offer you anything for the sake of charity; they always want something back from you (Samira, 2019).

Unfortunately, this attitude is not limited to landlords, as it also includes real estate agents. Sara, who migrated with her family when she was under 18, for instance, mentioned that she did not encounter this attitude, but she knew that it is very common since she had many friends who experienced it:

The situation for girls who live alone here is very bad. They [real estate agents] don't give them a house. ‘You stay with me,’ real estate agents say, ‘I'll buy you a house, and even I'll pay for everything.’ So, these girls will either accept those offers or they live like Iranian men³⁴, you know, 15 people live in the same house. What does a person do in this situation? (Sara, 2019)

³⁴ My fieldwork does not include male refugees; however, it is common among male refugees to share rooms and houses with other refugees to reduce accommodation costs.

Yalova is well known for its high rents. Especially in the previous years, the increasing number of tourists and foreigners from Gulf countries visiting the city, and increase in the number of selling real estate property to foreigners have caused an enormous increase in rents. As Sara mentioned, sometimes, sharing a flat becomes a strategy for women to decrease living costs. However, the risk of abuse also prevents women from doing this. For instance, Roya who lives with her two children, mentioned that she does not want to share her flat with others since she does not feel secure regarding her children:

How can I know what will happen to my children when I am not at home? She [referring to another refugee who wanted to become housemate] is nice, I know. But, you know, maybe her friends are bad people. You know my story [the sexual abuse]. So, I prefer to work more and ensure that my children are safe (Roya, 2019).

Roya was working 12 hours per day to give herself and her children feeling of security. Once, Roya and I were sitting in her kitchen. The landlord called her. “He wanted to increase the rent. He calls me repeatedly”, said Roya. However, she was already paying a high rent. “How can I find a new house with my children in the middle of the winter anyway? I’m at work all day”, she said with a sigh. Roya’s sense of helplessness was related to the difficulty of finding housing as a refugee woman, as mentioned earlier. However, it was also closely related to her economic situation and labor practices. That is, what kind of housing women can find, or whether they have to share a flat with others or they can live alone are inseparably shaped by their economic conditions, class status, and labor practices. Thus, in addition to discriminatory and sexist attitudes from landlords and realtors, it is also necessary to look at women’s wealth in Iran, different income resources and, most importantly, the working and labor processes. Working occupies a great place in women’s daily lives and experiences, including finding and maintaining housing³⁵.

³⁵ We cannot comprehensively capture the violence refugee women face without examining labor and work experiences since the deportability and informality of refugee women nourish the gendered violence. However, to show the specificity of these concepts and the importance of labor in refugee women’s lives, I will analyze women’s work experiences in detail in the next chapter, including the gendered violence in workplaces.

Women's problems with landlords continue to exist even after they rent a house, whether through social networks or through a realtor. Landlords come to women's homes at irrelevant and late hours and try to control their lifestyles, increase the rent whenever they want, and, worse, evict women abruptly without giving any reason. Narges describes the phone call she received from the landlord when she went out of Yalova. The landlord told Narges that she had to move out within three days because he had sold the house:

He said, 'you will leave the house in 3 days.' I was not a bad neighbor. I wasn't making any noise. I told him, 'You could ask the neighbors if you want. You want to sell the house, okay. But let me know a month ago. Tell me I'm selling the house and you need to find another place. But in 3 days, where will I go?' Then I said, 'I'm not moving; this is my home. I have a contract. I will make a complaint about you.' He said, 'You are a refugee; you cannot do anything' (Narges, 2019).

These stories of gendered violence, and exploitation in the realm of housing are not limited to encounters with citizens. Refugee women can also be subjected to gendered violence by men in their community during the migration process. Niaz, a trans woman, talks about an Iranian man she lived with for a month. Niaz and her partner stayed in one room and the flatmate in another. After a month they lived together, the flatmate asked for more money for the house. Niaz and her partner did not accept, and the flatmate asked them to move:

One night, he came to the flat; he was drunk. He beat my partner and me and kicked us out in the middle of the night, at 2 am. We slept on the beach for three nights without any money. No one can be trusted here, no one, no one (Niaz, 2019).

As these experiences and narratives highlight, women's experiences do not draw a peaceful picture as the motto "home sweet home" illustrate³⁶. Their stressful relations with landlords, realtors, and neighbors and the discrimination, abuse, and

³⁶ Of course, it cannot be generalized to all refugee women, and the meaning of home changes according to the situation and conditions. In the next chapter, I will focus on how homes turn into counter-spaces to save women from gendered violence and exploitation.

exploitation they experience make it hard to see ‘home’ as a secure and safe zone. Rather, home becomes a space of control and surveillance, which demonstrates that the gendered violence experienced in the so-called private space cannot be considered a private issue. Instead, women’s experiences demonstrate how ‘private’ experiences are inseparably tied to, and shaped by, women’s legal status, gender, and class positions. Therefore, the slogan which hold the truth in the case of refugee women is not “home sweet home” anymore, but rather “private is political”.

3.2.3 Healthcare

Access to healthcare constitutes one of the significant spheres of everyday life and provides an important site for us to understand how and where legal mechanisms intersect with everyday practices. Before 2019, LFIP was providing free health insurance to refugees. Accordingly, refugees could benefit from general health insurance with their identity cards after they registered with the asylum authorities. However, this regulation has changed in 2019 (24/12/2019 Official Gazette Law dated and numbered 30988). While refugees could benefit from the health care services for free and without any time limitation before, this new regulation has narrowed the scope of the right to health. Even though refugees can benefit from emergency health services for free without any time limitation, in other circumstances, the state has begun to cover healthcare services only for one year following the registration of refugees. However, considering the long waiting processes for resettlement that often last many years, this one-year regulation deeply affects the refugees’ access to healthcare services. “We had only one right, which was the healthcare, and now that was gone too” was a common sentence I heard from almost all of interlocutors.

LFIP states that those in the “special needs” category may extend their eligibility for free healthcare services at the end of the first year. However, it remains a question mark in practice to whom this right is given. I remember the day when her

other refugee friends informed Elya that the right to healthcare is limited to one year. In the following days, Elya went several times to PDMM to prove that she has a chronic illness. According to the asylum law, her insurance needs to be the extended since she has a chronic illness, but in practice, it did not. That day she returned home while I was there helping children at their school duties. Elya was visibly angry. She threw her ID on the table, and said: “No, the only good thing in this system was the right to health, and now that's also gone. No work permit, no right to healthcare, no salary. What should I do here? How should I wait” (2019).

It is not difficult to understand the anger of Elya, and it is also challenging for other refugees to benefit from paid healthcare services as it is for her. In the satellite cities where they stayed for years, covering private health expenses is almost impossible as refugees must pay high fees and earn very little.

Furthermore, after the withdrawal of UNHCR on September 10, 2018, the registration process and satellite city regulation also changed as I discussed in the Introduction. To remind it briefly, before 2018, refugees were assigned to satellite cities after entering Turkey and registering with the Turkish authorities. Now, they can go directly to satellite cities after entering Turkey and start their registration in the cities they choose. My interviews with refugees and migration expert in Yalova PDMM show that the main problem in this new situation is being ‘undocumented’ for refugees. Being undocumented does not mean that they do not have any paper to ‘legitimize’ their presence in the country. Rather, it is an obstacle to benefiting from existing rights. In Yalova, PDMM no longer gives a registration date for the newly arrived refugees; however, they continue to accept asylum applications. Thus, most refugees are given appointments for the registration after a long time - sometimes one year - after their arrival. During that time, refugees cannot benefit from basic rights such as access to healthcare as they remain ‘unregistered.’ The interview with a PDMM official reveals that it is a strategic decision. While accepting an application, they save refugees’ information, but they prevent refugees’ access to basic rights without registering them. The official clearly puts

it: “They come, apply for asylum, get registered; therefore, they benefit from your health system for free; it's a burden on us” (2019).

In addition to the fact that reaching the healthcare system itself is challenging and problematic, refugee women continue to experience structural difficulties when they finally reach out to healthcare services. They often face discrimination and violence in hospitals. One of the first challenges refugee women face is language barrier. Yalova has one state hospital where women cannot access health services with an interpreter. They mostly ask NGOs to provide translation support, and NGOs sometimes refuse their requests due to limited capacities. Women also ask other refugees who know/have learned Turkish for translation. Since children can learn Turkish quickly and many of them go to school as they wait in Turkey, women with children also ask their children for translation. However, I need to say that many women I met during my research have already learned Turkish, and the experiences they shared with me were about the language barrier that is mostly based on their earlier years in the country. They mentioned that they face problems in the hospital due to the language barrier. They could not express themselves in their mother tongue and, therefore, did not get a correct diagnosis, as in the case of Parisa:

I had a pain in my back. At that time, I was working 14 hours a day at a job I was working, I was doing all the work there, but I was just saying, okay, I, at least, have food on my table. Then my back started to hurt. I went to the state hospital. They sent me from this office to that office. ‘Go to the heart department, go to internal diseases department.’ I went back and forth between different departments for 2 hours. Then they sent me to the orthopedist, and he gave me a cream. But I knew the problem was something else, and I couldn't explain it (Parisa, 2019).

Although the gendered violence and discrimination they experience in healthcare system is mostly rooted in the language barrier, speaking Turkish does not save women from racism. There were many women among my interlocutors who stated that they were discriminated because they were ‘foreigners’ and ‘refugees.’ Ana, who listened to the conversations of the healthcare workers and other patients

while waiting her turn, summarizes is as: “I understand what is said about me, knowing the language is bad” (2019).

As Parisa, most of the interlocutors mentioned that they began to have physical pain after arriving in Yalova. These pains are not only rooted in their harsh working conditions. Most of these pains are related to the gendered violence they faced during and before their migration. They believe that the bodily expression of pain is primarily rooted in their psychology and their previous experiences, as illustrated by one interlocutor’s words: “We’ve come so far; I’ve been through so many difficult things. It all comes out when one relaxes a bit. I have pain in all my body”.

The gendered violence and difficulties women experience, unfortunately, continue in Turkey. In addition to many other forms of violence, feeling constant anxiety about their future and experiencing control over their bodies, mobilities, lifestyles, and desires make them sick, in their own words: “When people can’t do the things they want, they get sick; women are always like that”.

However, refugee women mostly cannot get adequate medical treatment and psychological support. Since they cannot access health services in their mother language, they often do not feel that they have been correctly diagnosed. Also, most of them mentioned that doctors do not listen to them and quickly check them just to give medicine and send them home:

One of the NGOs I went to referred me to a psychiatrist. When I went to the psychiatrist, he only talked to me for 5 minutes and gave me medicine. When I took that medicine, I was dizzy all day. I felt numb. The doctor in the state hospital had said I would get used to it, but I couldn’t (Narges, 2019).

Receiving a wrong diagnosis as a form of violence is common especially during psychological treatment. Refugees are usually considered as “suffering from depression” by doctors, while the social, economic, and political embeddedness of

their emotional problems are ignored (Tilbury, 2007). For instance, Negar narrates their encounters in the hospital as the following:

I was in a depression; I didn't even leave my room for nine months. In Iran, I had my own job, my own life, and now, here in Turkey... In the end of 9 months, I went to the state hospital. There was a psychiatrist, he didn't talk to me but just gave me some medicine. The day I took the pill, I felt like I was dying. I just took a taxi and went to the local clinic (*sağlık ocağı*). They asked me what had happened, and I showed them the pills. They also said I should use it. However, those days, I asked my friend who had a psychiatrist sister in Iran, and I started therapy with her. She listened to me. You know, I had a panic attack, and the pill doctor gave me in state hospital just worsened it (Negar, 2019).

Abortion also occurs as another problem for refugee women. Abortion is legal in Turkey to all women up to the 10th week of pregnancy, however, the de facto ban on it in recent years prevents refugee women from accessing free abortion. Malihe, who went to the state hospital for an abortion, was denied the abortion by the hospital. Furthermore, healthcare workers made racist jokes to her about the high fertility rates of refugee women. Trans women are also particularly marginalized in this system, as they stated that their gender was constantly questioned with questions such as “are you a woman or a man?” and that some doctors were even reluctant to treat them³⁷.

Another important issue that refugees face in accessing healthcare services is the discrepancy between law and practice regarding the ambulance and emergency services. As mentioned above, on paper, although refugees should be able to use ambulance and emergency health services for free even if they do not have health insurance. But in practice, once the healthcare professionals realize that they are ‘refugees,’ refugees face many difficulties accessing these services. I remember one night I got a call from a refugee friend in Denizli, which is another satellite city. She had a panic attack, but neither she nor I knew that. She was hardly

³⁷ For more detail: <https://kaosglidernegi.org/images/library/2019lgbti-multeciler-ile-imtihani-web.pdf> date of access: 20.05.2022

breathing. I called the ambulance for her and never forgot my conversation with the health worker when she asked her name. “What did you say? Panah? Isn’t she Turkish?” As soon as the person on the phone heard my friend’s non-Turkish name, she immediately tended to ignore her emergency. It took me more than 10 minutes to convince them to go and check her. I could manage to do that day, but this is not possible every time, and impossible if refugees are alone. Interviews with refugee women show that hospitals deny emergency services to most refugees simply for not having social insurance. Together, these experiences show us how refugee women are affected by racism, heteropatriarchy, and insecure legal status and, thus, continue to face discrimination and gendered violence in every step of their access to healthcare services.

3.2.4 Anonymity, Freedom, and the (Male) Gaze

Although satellite cities operate as a confinement mechanism for all refugees under international protection, being confined to small satellite cities also have significant gendered implications for refugee women in terms of anonymity and freedom. In these small cities, layers of gendered violence, surveillance, and control by various actors - including male community members and citizens - are embodied in women's lived experiences. Being a small city, Yalova is a city where one can feel a (male) gaze, and women constantly feel a sexist and heteropatriarchal disciplinary power over their behaviors, bodies which also effect their use of public space, and mobility (Valentine 1989: 315; Pain, 1991: 421). For instance, although I am from Turkey, my neighbors repeatedly asked me where I came from and/or who my guests were on my way home. Rebecca Hall reminds us that many women are “never offered the privilege of ‘privacy’ by state or society to pursue the life they desire.” (Hall, 2015:397). Refugee women are among those who do not have the privilege of privacy to pursue their wants, needs, and desires because of their womanhood and refugeeness, they are more open to male gaze and constantly interrogated by others. This gaze manifests itself in the form of neighbors

complaining to the house owner, calling the police on the pretext of ‘loud noise’ in daily life. This constant gaze also affects women with non-normative genders and sexualities negatively. For instance, Marjan, a lesbian woman, narrated her experiences as the following:

In Turkey, I'm in the same situation as I was in Iran. I escaped from Iran to here, and the only change is that here, I can dress the way I want more comfortably. But they [locals] constantly hint at my situation at work and on the streets. Did I escape for such a life (Marjan, 2019).

As a lesbian, Marjan and her girlfriend faced homophobic gaze by Marjan’s colleagues and sometimes by strangers in a café or by the seaside where they aimed to ‘relax’. Marjan’s disappointment about Yalova illustrates once again that the confinement women feel is not only geographical and solely related to freedom of movement. This confinement in small cities prevents women from being themselves and pursuing their desires (Wilson, 1992). This situation prevents women from feeling comfortable and free, forcing them to pay attention to their behaviors and activities constantly. Referring to her two children, Roya also complains about the size of the city and being under constant surveillance due to the lack of anonymity: “Yalova is like a 2+1 house. In our house, even though Arsham and Fariman can hide things from me, there is no way to do anything secretly in Yalova” (Roya, 2019)

Some women who were formally assigned to Yalova take the risk of deportability and move to Istanbul to live. Even though Istanbul is a more challenging city with higher rents, it nonetheless provides women anonymity. All women I met living in Istanbul had lived for a certain period in Yalova and then decided to move to Istanbul. Zeinab was one of them. She lived in Yalova for two years and then moved to Istanbul:

I was sick of living in Yalova. In the summer it is better. At least, there are many people around. But in the winters, oh my god! There are only a few people in the streets, and everyone is aware of each other. Endless looks, everyone knows what you do in the city. In Istanbul, no one is aware of me (Zeinab, 2019).

This need for anonymity is sometimes intertwined with security reasons and leads women to live in Istanbul by taking all the risks including detention and deportation. Farah was one of them:

In Yalova, you're going to the beach, and you see Iranians. You are sitting somewhere; there are Iranians. What if someone recognizes me? What if s/he/they tells people in Iran that I'm here? I don't feel safe (Farah, 2019).

As these experiences demonstrate, for women, living in small cities make refugee women more open to different forms of gendered violence in public spaces (Hanmer, 1978: 229; Pain, 1991; Valentine, 1989). For those women who cannot afford to move to bigger cities like Istanbul (either because of the risks or expenses), this also means confinement to a private space. As the next section will illustrate, my interlocutors in Yalova often mentioned that they try to protect themselves from gendered violence by avoiding using certain parts of the city or trying not to be alone on the streets at certain hours. However, in most cases, they spend most of their free time at home, which further restricts their freedom of movement and confines them not only to their assigned cities but also within the private space of their homes. In that vein, the Turkish state's satellite city regulation does more than confining women in the geographical borders of a specific city. Rather, it effectively restricts women's freedom of movement not only within the country but also within the city, confining them in the private spaces of their homes and giving them a sense of imprisonment and confinement.

3.2.5 Gendered Violence in Everyday Encounters

One evening, me and a group of interlocutors were sitting at Negar's house, who was a common friend of us and was also refugee in Yalova. Our usual gathering suddenly became my birthday party when Negar realized that that day was my birthday. We were four women, drinking wine and chatting. The conversation was getting deep, and time was past midnight. When I decided to go home, Negar said that I should not go home at this hour. My house was not far, at all. But Negar was

worried that something bad might happen to me on the way since the streets in Yalova were deserted at night.

That day I listened to Negar and stayed in her place. Later in the night, she explained the reason for her insistence. She said that one of the men she met at work followed her persistently, and although she didn't want to be with him, he didn't give up on stalking her. One night, as she was crossing the road where I was planning to go home, he held a gun to Negar. Fortunately, Negar escaped that man that night. But the violence she experienced continued to be felt and prevented Negar from using that part of the city ever again.

Gendered violence is embodied in all women's experiences, independent of time and space. Growing up in one of the big cities of Turkey, the capital Ankara, I have also faced harassment in my life at different times. In many parts of the world, women demand streets by lightening, feel nervous when going home at night, and constantly check behind to see if someone is following them or not (Kern, 2020). These experiences have been voiced by feminist researchers and feminist activists, which remind us that gendered violence (or its possibility) is a widespread phenomenon. In that vein, Negar's experience of violence is not exceptional; heteropatriarchy makes all women's lives difficult, dangerous, and violent. But what makes the situation worst is Negar's unsecure legal status and the men's awareness of her vulnerability. As also explained in the case of landlords and realtors who abuse or exploit women, the fragility of women's legal status encourages men, both refugees and citizens, to easily perform any forms of gendered violence.

Almost all the women I interviewed in Yalova said they did not feel comfortable on the streets, especially at certain hours. Furthermore, all the women stated that they had been subjected to verbal and/or physical abuse on the streets. The most common form of gendered violence they encounter in daily life is verbal harassment, as illustrated by the following narrative:

You go to buy bread, and they look at you in such a way as if you are something different. I mean, you are neither so beautiful nor so awkward, but for them, it does not matter. As if it is enough for them to understand that you are a foreigner. I don't often encounter such things, but they do happen (2019).

Women are constantly being considered sexually available subjects due to the established perception toward foreign/refugee women in Turkey. This perception that foreign women are more sexually available goes back to 1990s to the migration of women from post-Soviet countries (Erder & Kaska, 2003:28), and is also very common toward all other foreign women, including my interlocutors.

Men are sick, both in Turkey and Iran. It is like that everywhere. According to some men, Iranian women are more attractive. And they look at us; they do this more comfortably because we are foreigners. I do not look, do not hear, and pretend not to see. It's everywhere; I've experienced it. I used to go to the beach for sports every day, a man was doing something to annoy me. I've decided I'm not interested anymore. I ignore it (Sina, 2019).

Sina's emphasis on "everywhere" can be found in many of the interlocutors' expressions of gendered violence they face. While most of them do not use the word "heteropatriarchy", they repeatedly emphasize how widespread the violence is, as Sina did. Once, my interlocutors and I had a long conversation comparing different contexts -Iran, Turkey, and potential third countries such as Canada, USA. What was important in that conversation was, we all were aware of the ubiquity of gendered violence in each and every context. Refugee women knew that reaching the third country would not end the violence; and yet, they were dreaming of a country where, at least, they could apply anti-violence mechanisms.

It is important to emphasize that women's awareness of the existence of violence elsewhere enables them to discuss gendered violence beyond the 'culture.' It also prevents the categorization of gendered violence as a 'bad' behavior of some 'sick' men. Rather, it provides us an opportunity to find commonalities between different contexts and between different women's experiences. In our group, for instance, there was hardly anyone found who was not verbally and/or physically abused and/or attacked on the streets. However, this common ground does not mean that

all women experience violence in the same way. For instance, while the gendered violence mostly targets women and feminized bodies, the experiences of trans women differentiate from cis women. Trans women were constantly exposed to transphobic attacks and experiencing verbal abuse and physical attacks occupy a considerable place in their lived experiences. Ayda was one of the refugees subjected to transphobic attacks before I started my fieldwork in Yalova. I could not meet her, but almost everyone in Yalova (and almost all Iranian refugees in different cities of Turkey) knew her story. On her way home, she was attacked by a crowded group of local men who beat her up until she became hospitalized. Unfortunately, I listened similar stories during the fieldwork. Ana, for instance, mentioned that local people punched her in the face just because she is trans. “It was the first blow to my face in my life; I felt like shit,” she told me.

In addition to streets, public transportation (namely, *dolmuş*/minibuses) in Yalova is another place where women constantly experience abuse and gendered violence. The women who live in the city center rarely use public transportation. However, those who live in faraway places, such as TOKİ³⁸ houses or Çiftlikköy, use minibuses regularly. Some of them also have bicycles which are very common in Yalova, since the city has bicycle roads that make using bicycles ubiquitous. Considering my own experience, I share the feeling that using bicycles for transportation makes life easier and faster than using public transportation. Women who use bicycles in the city agreed with me. However, another reason for women to choose bicycles over public transportation was safety, since almost all women who used public transportation mentioned that they faced sexual harassment. These harassments were defined as ‘compressing from behind’ and ‘touching’ different parts of women’s bodies. One of my interlocutors also mentioned that once at night, the driver pushed her out of the *minibus* (minibus) since he realized that she was a refugee and trans.

³⁸ TOKİ (the Public Housing Administration) is a social housing program of the Turkish state. For more detail: <https://www.toki.gov.tr/en/>

These experiences and narratives illustrate that gendered violence towards refugee women is widespread in public spaces. They also show us that women take numerous precautions to protect themselves. While their precautions decrease the possibility of gendered violence, it simultaneously restricts their social activities and their use of urban spaces. For instance, due to the constant threat of gendered violence and harassment, many women prefer to live in the city center even if it means paying higher rents. Especially women who work until late in the evening do not want to be alone in the deserted streets of Yalova at night and tend to rent places in or close to downtown. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, many women engage in sportive activities both to compensate for the lack of other leisure activities and to look beautiful and stay fit. However, it should be emphasized that there are also numerous women who did sports to protect themselves from possible violence in public spaces. For instance, Sara, a young woman, mentioned: “You know, I regularly go to the gym in the morning before going to work. That way, I feel more secure in the nights when I am alone. You need to see how confident I walk in the streets” (Sara, 2019).

Similarly, Yasna mentioned that she knows Kungfu and takes pepper gas with her when she is out at night since she has been exposed to abuse in the street:

I beat a person once. He tried to touch me, so I beat him and ran. After all, I know Kungfu; I know how to protect myself. It was about four years ago, in the first weeks of my arrival to Yalova. Around midnight, I was returning home from work. Then, a person came after me, took my hand from behind, and started to hug me. There was no one, and we were on the street. And I took his hand and turned it, and boom! I hit him in the face a few times and ran away before anyone came. But I always have pepper spray with me. I think you can carry it, too (Yasna, 2019).

In our next meeting, Yasna gave me a pepper gas as a gift. This was the second time I received pepper gas as a gift. When I had moved to another city for my undergraduate studies from the city where my family lived, my mother had gifted to me pepper spray and said: “Let it stay with you when you go out at night”. When I told this story to Yasna, she laughed and said: “I am on your mom's side”.

Of course, women's experiences of gendered violence do not limit to streets and public transportation. Although they talked about domestic violence in Iran, they only briefly mentioned the domestic violence they experienced in Turkey. This can be explained with the fact that domestic violence is a sensitive topic that is hard to talk about for many women. It could also be explained with the fact that the majority of the women I interviewed were single moms and/or single women. Of course, this does not mean that domestic violence does not exist among refugee women in Turkey. The story of a woman who was brutally killed by her spouse that I told at the beginning of the chapter proves the opposite, and partner violence constitutes one of the common forms of gendered violence. Considering my fieldwork, I can say that my interlocutors who had Turkish lovers and partners felt continuous control over their bodies and lives and experienced oppression over them. For instance, Samira's boyfriend was a long-distance driver. When he was not in the city, I witnessed many moments when he called Samira by phone every evening and asked her to explain what she had done during the day and with whom she spent her time.

In another case, Mina felt quite uneasy as she was not sure for a long time whether her lover was married or not. While I was at her home one day, her boyfriend stopped by. This was Mina's indeed 'secret' plan. She asked me to be there as an observer to meet her boyfriend and have a conversation with him in order to try to understand if he was married or not. Although her boyfriend said he was not married, he could not convince Mina. These concerns stemmed from the fact that they did not spend any time in public, that he was returning home from Mina in the middle of the night, and that he did not introduce Mina to his friends. We could not get a definite result from the meeting that day, but Mina continued to feel insecure and carried on the relationship without determining whether he was married or not.

3.3 Exit Permit or Where Legal, Semi-Legal, and the Everyday Intersect

Marjan was subjected to sexual harassment when she was returning home from work late evening. She worked as a waiter in a café, and the man who harassed her was one of the customers. Marjan couldn't remember how many times she rejected him, but he didn't give up stalking her. That night he followed Marjan after work and sexually harassed her.

Marjan reported this violent incident to the police that night. However, she felt great disappointment when the police believed the attacker instead of following the necessary procedures and eventually released him. In other words, the police did not protect Marjan and rather, stood on the side of the man who attacked her. “Do you have any proof?”, “You must have misunderstood”, were some of the sentences that Marjan still remembered from that encounter with the police. This experience made her lose her belief in ‘justice’. “I don't think I want to make a complaint anymore”, she said. The experience that Marjan went through, unfortunately, is pervasive. Racism and heteropatriarchy are embedded in the criminal punishment system and the police and existing justice mechanisms push women to stay silent. The system does not provide justice but only brings more violence.

While impunity is one of the reasons why women do not apply to the police when they experience such acts of violence and harassment, perhaps a more important reason that prevents refugee from reaching out the police is Turkey's “exit permit” regulation. Refugees have to obtain an exit permit from Turkey to be able to go to a third country for resettlement. Article 94 of the LFIP, “permission for resettlement in a third country and exit from our country”, states that this permission will be made by DGMM and, if necessary, by governorates. Although there is no information in the law regarding the situations in which the exit permit will not be granted, refugees experience arbitrary delays and sometimes rejection in receiving exit permits. Moreover, if someone has an ongoing lawsuit, it may also affect

getting exist permit. Many women are afraid of not getting an exit permit in case of their resettlement and, thus, choose not to complain in the face of any gendered violence they experience in order not to prolong or jeopardize their resettlement processes.

This specific regulation shows us how legal status and existing legal frameworks are embedded in women's everyday practices and (re)shape them. Exit permit determines the limits of what women can do legally and how far they can enforce their rights. It influences the justice and protection mechanisms that women can (or cannot) develop against gendered violence. Women experience various forms of violence and, of course, develop solidarity and resistance practices against them as I will explain in the Chapter 5. But, here, I would like to underline that the fragility of refugee women's legal status, which is illustrated by how the exit permit regulation prevents them from using of legal anti-violence mechanisms. Refugees know that existing protection and justice mechanisms do not work for their benefit and rather, leave them at the hands of sexism, racism, and xenophobia and make them more vulnerable to gendered violence – this time including stuckness in Turkey.

3.3.1 Thoughts on Framing Confinement, Gendered Violence and Satellite City

Throughout the chapter, I traced gendered violence in different spheres of life to illustrate how violence is embedded into refugee women's migration experiences. In doing so, I paid special emphasis to how legal mechanisms, semi-formal encounters with authorities, and everyday life are inextricably related to each other, and how together, they constitute what I call “gendered violence”. Since the Geneva Convention does not recognize gender as a reason for persecution, refugee women begin to experience gendered violence as soon as they enter the asylum regime and apply for international protection. The absence of special regulations regarding gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation in Turkey's asylum law and the

pervasive sexist, racist, and homo/transphobic attitudes in reaching existing protection mechanisms cause women to be subjected to additional forms of violence as they navigate the complicated and arduous asylum processes in Turkey. This legally produced gendered violence extends into other spheres too: First, gendered violence is maintained and exacerbated by asylum officials who abuse their power through discretionary practices in their semi-formal encounters with refugee women. Second, gendered violence is also exercised by various actors that refugee women regularly interact in their everyday life, including landlords, realtors, neighbors, health workers, interpreters, employers, and so on. Thus, women constantly navigate these various forms of violence as they wait and live in Turkey.

That is to say, the gendered violence refugee women face is dispersed through everyday encounters across bodies, emotions, and images, as well as the legal processes and semi-legal encounters with authorities. Therefore, an analysis of gendered violence should not be confined to one site or space. Rather, to fully understand refugee women's experiences of gendered violence, our analysis needs to include how gendered violence is produced and reproduced in intersecting spheres, which shape and inform each other. Legal mechanisms (re)produce rigid gender roles, racial and sexual oppression that are embedded in the asylum regime where heteropatriarchy and racism gain more power on the women bodies and lives.

At this point, "satellite city" as a unique form of refugee settlement provides a futile ground to illustrate the relationality between these different levels and various forms of violence and shed light on how legal, semi-legal, and the everyday work together and shape women's experiences. In the literature, spaces of incarceration and confinement have been mainly discussed through the camp settlement for many years (Agier, 2002b; Peteet, 2005). In recent years, an emerging body of scholarship focused on different confinement spaces such as ships and islands (Mountz, 2020), hotspots, ferries (Spathopoulou, 2016;

Spathopoulou & Carastathis, 2020), and deportation centers (Mountz et al., 2013). On the other hand, literature on urban refugees is discussed as a self-settlement by scholars (Chatelard & Morris, 2011; Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Jacobsen, 2006). They mostly focus on the livelihood of refugees and argue that urban settlement provides some advantages to refugees, such as anonymity and higher income when it is compared to rural areas (Fábos & Kibreab, 2007). But at the same time, refugees face exploitation, xenophobia, and marginalization in the urban areas (Grabska, 2006; Jacobsen, 2004). Turkey's unique satellite city regulation enables us to merge these different settlement practices and to see how confinement spaces disperse through urban itself. Satellite city highlights how legal mechanisms operate in the everyday, and how legal mechanisms and everyday practices undergird the gendered violence, exploitation, confinement, heteropatriarchy, and racism.

Carceral spaces are often understood as spaces of compulsory closure and enforcement, while urban settlement is associated with self-settlement and, thus, perceived as a freedom of choice for refugees. However, the satellite city concept blurs the boundaries between city and camp as well as between incarceration based on coercion and self-settlement based on free choice. In the context of this unique resettlement form, you can live in a city, but you can't choose which one on your own. You can leave your city without necessarily crossing wires or walls, but you need to sign in with authorities regularly, and you cannot leave your city without a travel permit. You seem to be able to dwell in every part of the city you want to, but in practice this is not possible since you do not receive any social and financial support. By analyzing how these possibilities and impossibilities shape refugee women's lives, in this chapter I showed how satellite city locates carcerality in the urban context and highlights how the confinement is lived and felt in every aspect of the everyday life and produce legal, semi-legal, and everyday forms of gendered violence.

Throughout this chapter, I focused on the satellite city regulation not only because it is a unique form of refugee settlement but also as form of disciplinary power at the crossroads of legal, semi-legal, and everyday lives to map out dispersed practices, mechanisms, and spaces of asylum regimes. These intersections enable us to link different and multiple layers of violence, including interpersonal, legal, medical, institutional, economic, and emotional. This approach allows us to move beyond a single definition of violence – which is often confined to domestic spaces and explained through cultural frames. Rather, by “mapping [the violence’s] simultaneity and its interrelation” (Gago, 2020: 57) this intersectional approach provides us with the opportunity to discern violence through its links with other systems of powers such as medical, legal, and institutional, while also making visible the role of gendered violence in the continuity of these power systems.

Second, such intersectional intervention to violence enables us to comprehensively understand refugee women's experiences which are shaped through a nexus of different systems of power, while also revealing the specificity of their experiences. Refugee women are subjected to gendered violence not only because they are women but also due to their legal status, the existing societal perception about being a foreigner woman, and the presence of formal and informal barriers to their exercise of rights and protections. In this context, gendered violence turns into a tool to dominate women's bodies, mobilities, sexualities, desires, labor, and daily lives. This domination merges with other domination forms and constitute refugee women as subjects who are targeted simultaneously by heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism.

Third, focusing on multiple forms of violence prevents us from considering violence as something that only refugee women experience. Even though our experiences may differ, and intersectional understanding of violence highlights that all women's bodies work as a battleground. Therefore, rather than staying stuck in the “victim refugee women” narrative, we should take a step further to recognize women’s agency and start building our common feminist struggle. At this point, I

would like to remind us, again, Marjan's experience of gendered violence and her struggle for justice, which demonstrates how gendered violence is reproduced and maintained through legal, semi-legal, and everyday encounters. In that story, we saw how being a refugee and a woman, as well as a lesbian, makes Marjan more open to various forms of gendered violence while also closely shaping and affecting the anti-violence mechanisms that she (and other refugee women) could develop. Refugee women often cannot respond to the racist and sexist attitudes of the authorities and cannot complain about the gendered violence they experience in their everyday lives since the "exit permit" regulation silences women. Like the satellite city regulation, exit permit regulation, again, allow us to understand how legal, semi-legal, and the everyday work together to shape refugee women's experiences of gendered violence.

CHAPTER 4

BETWEEN (IN)FORMALITY, (IL)LEGALITY, AND DEPORTABILITY: LABOR PRACTICES OF REFUGEE WOMEN

I arrived at Samira's house earlier than her. While I was on my way to her flat, she texted me: "I am coming, but Farishta is at home, knocked on the door". Farishta is a friend of Samira who arrived in Yalova just a few weeks before. She came with her passport as tourist but was searching for ways to stay in Turkey since she did not want to return to Iran. Just a few days ago, we tried to apply for a residence permit for her, and Samira found Farishta a job in the *kahve* (coffee shop) she works. When Farishta opened the door, we greeted each other with a few Persian and Turkish words we knew. After a bit, Samira arrived home. She started commenting on her day sarcastically: "These men think we are stupid". Samira has been working in a *kahve* (coffee shop) for 2 years, and the job she found for Farishta was also in the same place for a different shift. Samira began to tell us about how tired she was from the attitudes of the men who frequented the *kahve* (coffee shop).

That day, one of the customers insisted on giving Samira a ride home. She politely turned down the offer a few times, and in the end, accepted the offer thinking that there would be no serious consequences. "Of course, I didn't let him know my address and got out of the car a few streets before," she said. While Samira secured her address, she couldn't protect herself from facing sexual abuse. The customer insisted on going to his place along the way and tried to touch her leg when she got out of the car. Unfortunately, this was not the first time Samira has experienced sexual harassment, and she made fun of that customer since he tried to do the same thing to Farishta yesterday. "These men think that we are stupid," Samira repeated

ironically. She continued with a laughter: “They know that Farishta is my friend. At least, he could wait a little longer to try his chance with me”.

As I explored in the previous chapter, refugee women’s experiences of gendered violence start with legal realm and disperse into every sphere of daily life. While refugee women are constantly exposed to racism and gendered violence as they navigate the legal and everyday life of waiting in Turkey, they also become open to exploitation in the labor market, are forced to work for low wages for long hours, and as we can see in the case of Samira, continue to face gendered violence from customers, employers, and co-workers. Thus, women find themselves in the cycle of gendered violence in Turkey, and gendered violence also occupies an important place in women’s labor practices. In this chapter, I explore how these multiple forms of gendered violence continue to shape and affect women’s labor practices. To do so, I analyze refugee women’s labor experiences hand in hand with the structural conditions that subject them to gendered violence in their workplaces and vis-à-vis authorities.

When we examine the studies in the field of gender and migration in Turkey, we see that research generally focus on labor migration. There are studies examining the experiences of women who work as migrant domestic workers (Akalın, 2007; Kaşka, 2009; Keough, 2006; Kümbetoğlu, 2005; Lloyd, 2018 005; Lloyd, 2018), women in the entertainment and sex sector (Coşkun, 2015; Erder & Kaska, 2003; Gülçür & Ilkcaracan, 2002), and women who make shuttle trade (Yukseker, 2003). Scholars also examine the textile industry, ready-made clothing workshops (Dağdelen, 2008; Dedeoğlu, 2011; Daniş, 2016), and seasonal agriculture (Dedeoğlu, 2018), where migrant labor is mainly concentrated.

Since refugee (political) and migrant (economic) distinction plays a dominant role in migration studies in Turkey, as in many other places and countries, studies focusing on the labor practices of refugees are very limited when compared with the “labor migration”. However, with the changing migration patterns of Turkey and increasing number of Syrians in Turkey, scholars have recently turned their

attention to the Syrian labor force, and Syrian refugee women in the labor market (Akbaş & Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2018; Ozturk, et.al, 2019; Körükmez, 2021; Körükmez et al., 2022). What is absent in this picture is studies focusing on refugee groups other than Syrians, especially refugees who are under international protection regime. Although such studies on non-Syrian refugees have started to increase in recent years (Mülteci-Der, 2014; Sert & Yıldız, 2013), there are still limited studies on the labor processes of LGBTI+ and women refugees in the satellite cities (Coşkun & Eski, 2019; KAOS GL, 2019; Topateş, 2021; Sarı, 2021).

At this point, focusing on the labor processes of refugee women in Yalova, I aim to make the labor practices of refugee women in satellite city visible. By doing so, I do not only contribute to international refugee studies with an empirical study from Turkey but also will bring a much-needed analysis that takes gender as important analytical category to understand refugee women's labor experiences. Considering the unique role played by the satellite city regulation in shaping women's labor practices, I aim to show how the asylum regime in general and the satellite city regulation in particular create numerous obstacles to women's access to work permits and make women open to exploitation, and gendered violence.

Treating women's labor practices in satellite cities as distinct from other aspects of their lives, considering them simply as insecure work practices, is not enough to understand labor practices and make visible the structures that shape them. Therefore, to make the relations and experiences of refugee women in the labor market understandable, it is necessary to discuss the structural conditions that shape these experiences. Satellite city, which has a founding place in the asylum regime with its compulsory signature practices, travel permits, and restrictions on freedom of movement, representing control, confinement, violence and surveillance. The asylum law limits women's freedom of movement and deprives them of work permits, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and gendered violence with deportability. Therefore, to better understand women's experiences, the intersectional nature of all these structural mechanisms (Crenshaw, 1991) and

power relations needs to be included in our analysis, revealing the role of heteropatriarchy, racism, and capitalism in shaping refugee women's labor.

Women, who are obliged to live in satellite cities by the state, are not offered any work opportunities, and there is very limited financial support mechanism that women can benefit from. Supports for refugee women under international protection is mostly provided by NGOs rather than the state, and these supports are insufficient to meet women's needs. Moreover, the limited financial support of non-governmental organizations in Yalova makes it difficult for women to receive support from these organizations. In addition, women refuse to apply for these supports because of the humiliating and maltreatment behaviors they face in NGOs. While refugee women cannot benefit from any financial support offered by the state and NGOs, they have to work to survive during the long waiting periods they must spend in Turkey. Since obtaining a work permit is practically impossible, the asylum regime compels refugees to work in the informal sector.

It is important to emphasize that informality becomes the most prominent feature of refugee women's labor processes³⁹ which also differentiates their labor experiences from other experiences of their lives. The satellite city regulation exposes non-stop control and surveillance over women. It aims to stuck women into the formal/legal space by controlling and observing every aspect of their lives. However, by not giving work permits and not providing any social and financial support, the state does not give refugees a possibility other than to work in informal labor market, and women, who are legally recognized as asylum seekers, suddenly find themselves in the space of informality and illegality when they start working. Thus, while the asylum regime compels refugees to work to live, it makes refugees disposable and exploitable subjects by pushing them into informal labor market

³⁹ However, this informality is not only limited to refugee women's labor. Informal employment is an important feature of Turkey's labor market, especially for women (Erdoğan et al., 2013; Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2000; Özyeğin, 2005).

with the threat of deportability. On the one hand, working in the informal sector causes them to work very long hours for very low wages, often receiving little or no wages; on the other, it makes women open to gendered violence. Furthermore, women cannot use existing protection mechanisms to report the gendered violence and exploitation they face in the workplace, because they face deportation if the informal -and illegalized- nature of their work becomes disclosed. Thus, by producing “legal illegalities” the state ensures the continuity of the exploitation and gendered violence and prevents women from applying any complaint and protection mechanisms through the threat of deportation. The deportation regime, at this point, not only ensures the exploitation and gendered violence but also reveals the risk of being kicked out of the asylum regime where refugees become ‘illegal’. Refugee women, who are constantly pushed into the informality and face the risk of falling into illegality, occupy an ambiguous space in-between these two spaces and constantly navigate them as they wait in Turkey.

To figure out the conditions that oblige women to work, I first explore the existing NGO support mechanisms and the refugees’ perception of and accessibility to these mechanisms in the first section. Then, I will discuss the work permit regulation in Turkey to demonstrate how work permit is a practically impossible right for refugees and exclude them from the formal labor market. In doing so, I will illustrate the conditions which push refugee women into the informal labor market.

After that, in the second section, to better understand the women’s labor experiences, I will focus on the informality and the illegality and illustrate how these categories, like other ones, are produced by the asylum regime. While asylum regime -with its im(possibility) of work permit- causes the informal work conditions and illegality of refugee women, the employers are also complicit in the creation of such informality and illegality for hiring refugees without obtaining work permit for them. I argue that these produced categories and conditions create “legal illegalities” and cause exploitation, gendered violence and disposability of refugee women. Therefore, in the following section, I will focus on women’s

informal work experiences shaped by gendered violence, exploitation, and insecurity.

Finally, the last section focuses on the deportation regime of Turkey to understand the role of deportability in shaping refugee women's labor practices. I will show how deportability works as a mechanism to provide the continuity of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and racism and prevents women from opposing the exploitation and gendered violence they face in the workplace.

4.1 (Lack Of) Support Mechanisms: NGOs

We gathered in Parisa's house. We had several kinds of food and drinks on the table, and she cooked us Indian food that evening. After praising her delicious food and catching up on what we've been doing these days, the conversation suddenly comes to NGOs. Marjan had previously worked as a translator in one of these NGOs that work in the realm of refugee support and protection and had many problems. The discussion Marjan started attracted everyone's attention, and everyone in the room began to talk about their experiences with NGOs and vent their anger towards them. Our host Parisa mentioned that a friend of her with a tumor only worsened because of the delay of in the operations of one of those associations. She said, "NGOs don't do shit; they just do what anyone can do when they know a little Turkish; they don't take responsibility". The word "responsibility" immediately reminded me of what my flatmate, who was also an NGO worker, said about the (brutal) murder of Iranian women on the seaside that I mentioned in Chapter 3: "We couldn't take more responsibility".

Ana enters the conversation by saying, "They do nothing; they do not find a job or find a place to stay for people". Everyone seemed to agree on this one. I, on the other hand, continued to think. Is it the duty of NGOs to find work and accommodation for refugees? When I shared my question loudly, Ana interrupted my words and said, "they are paid to help us, but they treat us like animals; they

don't even look at us". Parisa added with a laughter, "if they see us here drinking and eating together, they will say we are fake cases; we cannot convince anyone that we are refugees". Now, her laughter spread to other in the room.

Defining refugees as 'helpless', 'miserable' and 'victimized' subjects is quite common everywhere, academia and politics alike, and, sadly, right-based NGOs working in this field for years are not exempt from this hegemonic approach. Depoliticization of civil society, professionalization, and bureaucratization of NGOs are key factors in these attitudes. While refugee women had all the right to be angry towards NGOs, the impasse created by the current regime requires us to rethink those NGOs and their roles. In the era of neoliberalism, a decrease in the state-run social services and shifted roles of institutions make NGOs carry social services, especially for marginalized groups (Wies, 2013:56). In the context of Turkey, the Turkish state also delegates its welfare role toward refugees to NGOs where state-run services started to be provided by them. This type of "NGOization of social policies" (Maniatis, 2018: 906) causes refugees to wait for a solution from NGOs to resolve structural problems they face. At least, they expect that NGOs provide them with basic rights such as accommodation and financial support. While this might sound unrealistic, this is not an unfounded expectation. The interviews with NGO workers⁴⁰ reveal that state institutions, including DGMM, direct refugees to NGOs to find accommodation or provide financial and psycho-social support.

They [DGMM officials] direct many cases to us. Also, many cases are directed from schools. Especially the teachers in psychological counseling and guidance can direct refugee children who they think should get psychological support because they know there are psychologists here. Or DGMM experts are calling us to see if we can provide financial support and accommodation for a refugee who will be transferred to another city (MUDEM, 2019).

⁴⁰ As I discussed in my Methodology Chapter, my research is based on refugee women's experiences; therefore, I consciously do not include many citations from interviews I conducted with NGO workers.

These words belong to an NGO worker whom I interviewed in Yalova which clearly illustrates the changing roles and responsibilities of state institutions in the last years. It also makes it obvious how NGOs have become active actors in migration management and the migration experiences of refugees ever before. Especially after the mass migration of Syrians in 2011, the number of NGOs in Turkey highly increased. According to the General Directorate of Civil Society Relations data, while the number of active associations in Turkey was 87,963 in 2011, this number increased to 121,678 in 2022 (General Directorate of Civil Society Relations, 2022). Associations working in the field of humanitarian aid also have an important place in this increase, and humanitarian aid associations appear as the 6th area in which associations are active (General Directorate of Civil Society Relations, 2022). Within this increasing humanitarian realm, right-based practices in the field of migration have almost disappeared and left their place to “humanitarian government”(Fassin, 2012), where politics of migration are constructed based on humanitarian logic rather than recognition of rights. As scholars of humanitarianism remind us, in the “absence of political principles and practices,” where humanitarianism became a new form of politics “discriminatory and even violent consequences appear” (Ticktin, 2006:34). These consequences have two axes: First, such humanitarian migration regimes (Malkki, 2005; Rozakou, 2012; Ticktin, 2011) dehistoricize and depoliticize the refugees and approach them as only helpless victims. And second, as a result of this approach, the ways NGOs’ support is provided to refugees became discriminatory, even sometimes effect refugees’ worthiness to be supported.

In Yalova, there are three right-based NGOs⁴¹ that support both Syrians and other refugees under international protection. These NGOs are well-known in the city among refugees. There are also faith-based community associations, but none of my interlocutors knew and got assistance from them. Refugee women who are

⁴¹ My current contacts in Yalova informed me that there is a newly established Iranian association after I complete my fieldwork.

forced to live in satellite cities without any financial and social support go to these NGOs for different reasons, including financial support. They apply them until they find a job and sometimes when they are unemployed. Besides financial support, NGOs also provide benefit-in-kind aids such as food packages and hygiene kits⁴². Of course, to be eligible for these different kinds of support, refugees must meet various criteria. For many NGOs, being LGBTI+, single parents or single women and living with a chronic illness are the first criteria for receiving support. However, these criteria are alone is not sufficient as most NGOs conduct further investigations to see that refugees are ‘really’ in need.

As I was visiting Mina’s home once, I entered the kitchen to cook us coffee. I didn’t find the coffee machine and asked her where the machine was. She said that she just hid it because ASAM would come to her place to see her house to determine if she deserved financial support or not. NGOs do these home visits whenever they want and only give extended time slots without specifying time of their visit. This time slot sometimes takes one week or sometimes longer. They enter the private space of refugees whenever they want to check if refugees ‘deserve’ this supports or not. Mina said the coffee machine could look like a ‘luxury’ item and thus, might prevent her from receiving financial support. This was not an unfounded fear, as we Mina and I heard numerous stories in which refugees were denied financial aid due to their furniture or personal belongings which ASAM officers perceived as luxurious. In reality, however, Mina was a woman trying to live as a single mom with her son. When she made this application for the financial support from ASAM, she was apprenticing to a hairdresser for free to learn the job. And, like many others, she must live in Yalova until her resettlement to a third country without any support mechanism provided by the state. And yet, she might fail to meet the image of a ‘needy’ refugee in asylum authorities’ and NGOs’ mind because she had a coffee machine. Having a

⁴² There are other supports such as interpreter support, psycho-social support, and social activities, but I do not mention them in this chapter since I focus on financial support mechanisms and the conditions that make it compulsory for women to work.

coffee machine in these conditions may prevent her from accessing the economic support that will allow her to pay her bills.

As seen in the case of Mina, the criteria for measuring and determining this ‘real need’ are mostly symbolic⁴³ and serve to reproduce the existing helpless refugee narrative. Parisa’s previous statement that “if they [NGOs] see us here drinking and eating together, they will say we are fake cases; we cannot convince anyone that we are refugees”, exactly corresponds to reality. Because for NGO employees or donors who determine the eligibility criteria for services and support, real refugees shouldn’t live a pleasurable or luxurious life in which they drink alcohol, have a coffee machine, or have a good time with their friends. They should be desperate and needy. In fact, this hegemonic narrative of ‘needy refugee’ particularly applies to women refugees since they are mostly considered ‘victims’, who are dependent on family members and, therefore, people in need of protection (Schrover & Molony, 2013). Thus, this gendered dimension contributes to the existing narrative of the refugee woman as needy victims, homogenizes them as a group in need of protection while also pushing women themselves to perform this expected ‘refugeeness’ (Rivetti, 2013).

“As if we are all people with torn clothes, eating dry bread and fleeing the war. I had a house and a car in Iran. I came not to be executed. We are also normal people,” said Mina, in an attempt to contradict this homogenizing narrative of victimhood. Most interlocutors like Mina and Parisa had decent lives in Iran. Most of them graduated from university, had their professions, and came from middle-upper class backgrounds. However, the difficulties in obtaining a work permit, which I discuss in the next section, force them to request support from NGOs or work in the informal sector with low wages. Even though they work, jobs are mostly daily jobs and not enough for their subsistence. At this point, even

⁴³ Symbolic in two senses: 1. The system fails to identify real needs. 2. To define needs, the system only focuses on material needs and ignores desires, thus assuming refugees as subjects without desires, which is compatible with the existing refugee narrative.

employed women try to get support from NGOs. Most of my interlocutors applied these NGOs for financial support during their stay in Yalova. Nonetheless, some applicants could not meet the sufficient criteria to receive assistance. There were also some women did not go to NGOs again due to the maltreatment they faced in their first encounters. Together, their varying experiences illustrate us how the ways in which NGO support is distributed becomes a form of violence against refugees.

I don't go to associations. I can't go even if I have 100 problems. Once I went, they mistreated me. I cannot go again. I treat everyone well; they treat me very badly, and they don't even look at me. He [the NGO worker] constantly played with his phone while I was describing my problem. They don't take care of my problem, and maybe I'll have new problems if I go there. When I get out of there, I get depressed (Narges, 2019).

Narges was not the only one who faced maltreatment when she arrived at NGOs. Once, sitting together with Yasna and Sharaen in a café, I told them I was planning to participate in one of the NGOs' 25th November activities and asked if they would like to come with me. All two of them answered "No." They mentioned that they participated some of the activities organized by NGOs. However, the maltreatment they faced there made them feel very bad. For instance, NGO workers did not prefer to sit with them, sitting even far from them, and did not communicate with refugees at all. "Their demeanor was so bad that we're starving, and all we need is them. Yes, some refugees need their support, but even in those cases, they also [NGOs] do not fully help them," said Yasna. As this experience illustrates, NGO workers do not see refugees as equal subjects, but as vulnerable beneficiaries. Consequently, this hegemonic attitude prevents many refugee women from going to NGOs for financial and other support even if they need it. As one of the interlocutors puts it: "Even in the Göç İdaresi [immigration administration], they treat us better. These associations are useless. I prefer working non-stop but never go there" (2019).

Some women also do not prefer to go to NGOs due to the hopelessness of receiving any aid. Once when I encouraged Roya to go to an NGO to apply for rental

support, her answer was obvious: “Forget about it; I am sure I will not meet the criteria”.

In addition to failing to meet the eligibility criteria, another reason for being hopeless about NGO support is rooted in the fact that field workers and interpreters in one of the NGOs in the city were refugees. There is a widespread perception among refugees that refugee workers only provide support to those they know and like. Women also do not feel secure since they are not sure whether these refugee interpreters will share their problems and stories with other refugees or not.

Despite these obstacles, some refugee women still knock on the doors of NGOs, even if they are uncomfortable with the way the support is given. The financial support provided by NGOs include support for rent, food, and medicine, and travel allowance for access to health services. These are mostly short-term or one-time allowances and are not enough to cover all needs of a person. I also need to underline that among the women I interviewed, only one woman, Leili, was receiving financial support from an NGO⁴⁴. The only interlocutor receiving financial support from NGOs was receiving rental support. Since rental support counted as emergency support, it was a one-off, and like all other supports, it did not create a sustainable and empowering effect on Leili’s life.

NGO workers are also well aware that such short-term or one-time support do not empower women or offer sustainable solutions to their problems. In my previous research, I remember the words of NGO workers I interviewed:

Also, a lot of money flows into this field from abroad. I think there should be more solid projects. We talked with a friend the other day, and maybe the UN would go and establish a factory there with the money given here, open a nursery next to it and teach women how to work there, encourage them to work in some way, etc. It could have been much more useful. It could be such a benefit. From time to time, some things seem to be done incompletely or just for the sake of being done (MUDEM, 2018, Izmir).

⁴⁴ Some women participated in the events organized by NGOs from time to time. Apart from this, some interlocutors went to NGOs for legal advice several times.

The words of that senior NGO worker illustrate that humanitarian interventions fail to deliver what they promise. However, by saying this, I do not want to argue that all humanitarian supports are useless. Instead, I want to pay attention to the second part of her speech and the lack of meeting refugee women's needs in the long term. It is clear that existing support mechanisms do not empower women or help them construct their own lives. As I mentioned before, financial support provided by NGOs are primarily short-term, and refugees have to meet numerous eligibility criteria that are mostly symbolic and re(produce) the dominant narrative of refugees as 'in need', which serves to humiliate and victimize refugee women. Needless to say, this victim narrative has the potential to silence refugee women (Malkki, 2005) and prevent them from receiving supports. In this context, refugee women in the satellite cities waiting for the resettlement for many years must work to make their lives.

4.2 Impossibility Of Legal Working: Work Permit Regulation

Refugees, who face many difficulties obtaining financial support from NGOs, are not provided any regular support⁴⁵ by the state. At this point, refugees have no choice but to work to survive. To better understand the working conditions of refugees and the (im)possibility of working legally in Turkey, it is necessary to scrutinize the work permit regulations.

Foreigners' access to the labor market in Turkey was regulated according to the Law on Activities and Professions in Turkey Reserved for Turkish Citizens (Law No. 2007, dated June 16, 1932), which constrained foreigners' participation in the

⁴⁵ They can access socio-economic support through the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SYDV). But none of the women I interviewed received support from this institution. In fact, almost half of the interlocutors were not even aware of these supports. Again, since these supports are one-time and in small amounts, women can't maintain their lives without working and only by receiving these supports. Besides, single moms were receiving *Şartlı Eğitim Yardımı* (Conditional Cash Transfer for Education) of their children' school participation, which was around 40 TL per child. For more detail: <https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/conditional-cash-transfer-education-ccte-programme> date of access: 08.08.2022

labor market through some professions such as actors, waitress, photographer, dentist, midwives, lawyer, etc. This regulation was changed with the Law on Work Permits for Foreigners (Law No. 4817, dated March 15, 2003), which simplified foreigners' access to the labor market. The LFIP, which came into the force in 2014, gave "refugees" the right to work directly (only those from the Council of Europe country); this right is somewhat limited for non-European asylum seekers. With the *Regulation on Work Permit of Applicants for International Protection and those Granted International Protection*⁴⁶, issued in 2016, the right to work has been expanded. According to this regulation, refugees (conditional refugees) have been granted the right to work on paper. However, due to the many obstacles encountered in practice, defining this as a real right is impossible.

According to this regulation, refugees can legally apply for a work permit six months after following the lodging date of their international protection application. As I discussed in Introduction and Chapter 3, Yalova PDMM, which has given a new registration date to a future date which takes almost a year, continues to receive applications. Refugees are given a deadline of one year to register. Since refugees remain 'unregistered' during that one year, they cannot benefit from basic rights such as health and education. Furthermore, before they pass the registration stage, they cannot apply for work permits, since registration is the first condition for applying for a work permit.

Those who can get registered into regional DGMMs continue to face restrictions about the jobs they can work. According to the regulations in other laws, some professions in Turkey can only be performed by Turkish citizens. Thus, there are restrictions on the employment of refugees in specific fields (dentistry, lawyers, nursing care, pharmaceuticals, etc.), and work permit applications for these

⁴⁶ Regulation on Employment of International Protection Applicants and Persons with International Protection Status: <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160426-1.htm>

professions are automatically rejected. Thus, even though they have university degrees and professions in their country, refugees face this legal obstacle to performing their occupation with a work permit in Turkey. The law does not give any chance to apply for a work permit in certain occupations and pushes them into low-skilled jobs. For instance, Leili was a dentist in Iran. However, she does not have any legal possibility to perform her profession in Turkey. On the other hand, international protection applicants and conditional refugees who want to work in seasonal agricultural and livestock farming jobs can work with a work permit exemption. As a result, these sectors become markets with a concentration of certain refugee groups. For instance, Afghans primarily work in livestock, (Kaya & Yılmaz-Elmas, n.d.) and Syrians (Dedeoglu, 2022) in seasonal agriculture. As this picture clearly illustrates, the law creates a segregation based on legal status (between Turkish citizens, European refugees, and refugees under international protection regime) in accessing the formal labor market and locates refugees at the bottom of this segregation by limiting some fields to them and directing them into certain ones such as agriculture and livestock farming.

When we examine the work permit details, we see that one refugee can work for 5 Turkish citizens in a workplace according to the employment quota regulation. This creates another obstacle to obtaining a work permit and makes it almost impossible for refugees to work formally in smaller businesses.

I was going to work at a workplace, a beauty center. They said we'll get you a work permit. The wage was lower than a café job, but whatever, the boss would get a work permit. However, it didn't happen either because 2 Turks were working there; it was necessary to have 5 Turks get a work permit. I want a work permit; they [DGMM officials] say, let the workplace get it for you, but I say, if there is no work permit, the workplace will not hire me. No, they say that's not the case (Aida, 2019).

At this point, the requirement that the employer makes the application on behalf of refugee workers points to the contradiction that Aida mentioned. As a general rule, the employer must make work permit applications. However, as Aida stated, most

employers and workplaces do not want to deal with long and tedious application processes, which leaves the formal employment of refugees at the mercy of the employer rather than a right. Thus, refugees' work permits are tied to the employers and their personal will and economic interests. Furthermore, the high costs of obtaining the *çalışma izni harcı* (work permit fee) and *değerli kağıt bedeli* (valuable paper fee) also discourage employers from hiring refugees with permission. In order to avoid such costs, employers prefer to employ Turkish citizens who have lower costs for employers or employ refugees without work permits. "Why should the boss spend so much for me while someone else can do what I do? Most of the Turks are unemployed anyway" (Sharaen, 2019).

As Sharaen mentioned, Turkey's high citizen unemployment rate is a factor that retains employers to reject the application for work permits for refugees easily. On the other hand, even if refugees pass these obstacles and obtains a work permit, their work permit is tied to a single place of employment, which means that the work permit obtained would be valid only for one particular workplace. This increases the possibility of exploitation and silence refugee workers since they fear getting fired and thus losing their work permit.

Finally, the satellite city regulation is also considered a 'burden' by employers and make them not get a work permit for refugees. Since work permit is valid only in the city where the refugees are assigned, for all travels outside the province of residence/satellite cities, a travel permit must be obtained from the PDMMs, even though refugees have a work permit. Now, suppose the employee is assigned outside the city by the company s/he/they works for. In that case, the employee must also obtain the relevant permission from the PDMM in person. No employer wants to deal with such restrictions and barriers, and since the asylum regime once again restrict and criminalize refugees' mobility even within the country, refugees lost their chance to access the legal labor market.

As I explored in this section, legal barriers to work in certain sectors, both employers' refusal to pay these high costs and social security premiums, and the fact that many workplaces employing refugees are already unregistered (Sarı, 2021:167-168), combined with the difficulties of the first late registration date have led to refugees' exclusion from formal employment and causes them to work in the informal sector.

4.3 Between Informality and Illegality

Critical migration researchers make visible the relationship between refugee labor and legal statuses, saying that distinctions and statuses such as legal/illegal, regular/irregular, documented/undocumented, insider/outsider are produced by states and that these categories cannot be considered outside the state order (De Genova, 2002; Mezzadra, 2010; Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2015). Emphasizing that these distinctions are constituted as a result of historical processes that are not fixed, and that migrant labor is shaped according to legal-political and socio-economic processes (Krenn et al., 2009 as cited in Ritterberger Tılıç, 2015:89), is also important to understand the labor practices of refugee women in satellite cities.

Although work permits and legal employment opportunities, which are never easy to obtain in practice, and the surveillance and control mechanisms created by satellite cities seem to aim to exclude refugees from the formal labor market, these mechanisms also establish the conditions for refugees to work in certain 'desired' ways in the informal labor market. The long waiting processes created by the asylum regime, the control and surveillance created by the satellite city regulation, and the impossibility of obtaining work permit compel women to work in the informal sector, where they face labor exploitation and insecure working conditions and become open to gendered violence and harassment. This informal and (potential) illegal space is produced and constantly (re)formed by state institutions such as the police, DGMM, and the state that actively produce informality and illegality by incorporating refugees into the labor market as temporary and irregular

labor force (De Genova, 2002). Therefore, it is possible to define illegality as something produced by the state rather than seeing it as something outside the state order (Lloyd, 2018:80). Indeed, I define the illegality refugee women face as the “legal illegalities”. As Evalina Gambino puts it clearly in her research in which she examines the organization of labor migrant labor in Italy, “far from acting as barriers to ‘illegal’ or ‘exploited labour,’ the state’s bureaucratic machinery is instead functional in keeping people within the work system (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991:34; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013:74), depriving them of any contractual power and thus effectively producing the perfect exploitable subjects” (Gambino, 2017:260). As mentioned earlier, while the conditions of exploitation are created by the state and asylum regime, employers also benefit from this state-sanctioned illegality. Malihe, who was working in a greenhouse in Yalova, clearly articulates how refugees were compelled to work under these conditions, and how both the state institutions and the employers benefit from the production of this illegality and refugees’ informal employment:

They are telling us you should have permission for the work. But that permission is so expensive that no one can afford it. We can’t pay for that. At the end of the day, those bosses (patron) are happy to have us like this. Because, okay, it is *kaçak* (illegal), but it is good for them, with a lower price, they can make us work, and they are even not paying for the work permit or the *SGK* (social security) nothing like that. Because we need money to live here, we are forced to do that. We have to pay rent, and we have to pay *fatura* (bills) in our home. So if we are not working with them, we have no jobs to do (Malihe, 2019).

As emphasized in Malihe’s narrative, while the state and the asylum regime are primarily responsible for producing informal employment and the illegality, employers also benefit from this informality by using legal vulnerability of refugees. The employers are thus complicit in this informality and illegality by refusing to apply for a work permit for refugee women. By refusing to obtain work permits for refugees, employers, as much as the state, compel women to work in the informal market and push them to the risk of falling into illegality. The ongoing spectacle between employers and state authorities gives no other opportunity to refugee women other than working informally.

In this negotiation between informality/illegality and survival, refugee women, who are legally recognized as asylum seekers who organize all their everyday practices according to the satellite city regulations to stay in the legal realm of the asylum regime, suddenly find themselves in the space of informality and illegality when they start working. The spectacle between different actors illustrates the intersectional relation of state sovereignty, capitalism, racism, and heteropatriarchy. The flexible, insecure, and disposable labor of refugees works to preserve state sovereignty, capital accumulation, and heteropatriarchy. Refugee women are forced to work without work permits for lower wages in specific jobs which are gendered and insecure where the asylum regime constitutes them as subjects that are open to exploitation and gendered violence. In the next section, to illustrate the intersectional relation of state sovereignty, capitalism, racism, and heteropatriarchy, I focus on the informal work experiences of refugee women.

4.4 Informal Work Experiences of Refugee Women

Due to the lack of any reliable and long-term social and financial support by the state and NGOs, refugee women have to provide their subsistence on their own until their resettlement to the third countries. While some women receive financial support from their family and relatives in Iran, America, or Australia, most of them are cut off from communication with their families in Iran. Furthermore, the rapid depletion of their previous savings during long waiting periods in Turkey, and the inability to turn their real estate⁴⁷ into cash because they had to leave the country quickly are the reasons women worked during their stay in Turkey. Moreover, the economic crisis in Turkey as well as the high rents and prices make working necessary even for women who have support from their families.

There are many difficult things in Turkey, even for Turks, but the hardest thing in Turkey seems to be working. Everything is costly here. The money

⁴⁷ Some of the interlocutors mentioned that they had a real estate in Iran.

you work for is not enough for the money you spend. It's still not enough since you spent it very carefully (Sina, 2019).

These words of Sina were shared by almost all of my interlocutors. All women were complaining about the high prices and the amount of salary that was never enough to meet expenses. Besides economic reasons, a small number of women mentioned that they get depressed when they do not work, so they work to keep themselves active and busy. They stated that they prefer to work to establish a routine in their daily lives; otherwise, they would fall into a void and develop an unbearable 'depression.' Thus, in their words, working becomes more of a coping mechanism to handle the boredom and uncertainty of long waiting, and less of an economic need.

I had such a busy life that I was in Iran. Work, family, friends. I came here, nothing. How many months was I depressed? When I'm idle, I think about what I went through: why am I living this, etc. I feel very sad. That's why it's good to work (Farah, 2019).

Except for five of them, all women I met and interviewed had a job in Iran and came from the middle/upper⁴⁸ classes, and sixteen of them were graduated from universities. These women who used to actively work in highly skilled/prestigious jobs feel bad when they are not working in Turkey. However, they cannot pursue their own occupation due to the impossibility of obtaining a work permit. The asylum regime pushes them into the informal sector, where they generally work in the low-skilled, insecure jobs, which are also suitable for existing gender roles. Thus, as in many other contexts, the migration process functions as a process of proletarianization and de-qualification (Sert, 2016) for refugee women in Turkey.

⁴⁸ Although I will not have a class discussion here, I would like to briefly state that I define class not only through economic variables but also by considering social and cultural capitals. Or with Ria Mae Brown's words: "class is much more than Marx's definition of relationship to the means of production. Class involves your behavior, expect from yourself and from others, your concept of a future, how you understand the problems and solve them, how you think, feel, act" (cited as hooks, 2000:103). At this point, different reasons that push women to start working also show that they are in a class diversity, and their differentiation in the positionality of them according to place they occupy in the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000).

Even for different reasons, when women decide to work, their social networks make finding a job easier, like finding a house. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter through the case of Samira who found a job for her newcomer friend Farishta in the same *kahve* (coffee shop) she worked, women usually direct their friends who search for a job to their own workplaces or to similar jobs. Therefore, concentration on specific jobs is also related to refugees' personal and communal networks. For instance, Christian refugee women mostly work in the agriculture/greenhouse in Yalova. However, such community support is not for free every time. Some Iranians are involved in the chain of exploitation that find jobs for newly arrived refugees by demanding money in return⁴⁹.

Nasrin was 20 years old when we interviewed in 2019 and migrated to Turkey with her family when she was 17. Her father's political engagement in Iran forced them to leave. In the beginning, Nasrin did not want to move to Turkey, but there was no other choice. Since she arrived in Turkey, she had worked in various jobs. The following is from her experiences while searching for her second job:

Once, we were sitting on the beach with my friends. One man asked, 'Are you Iranian?'. We said, 'bismillah, we encounter an Iranian guy.' The man said, 'I would get you to work if you were my girlfriend. Pretend to be my lover.' With someone, he made a bet. When you need money, you accept anything. 'I'll perform like your girlfriend,' I said, 'okay.' We went hand in hand into the café. That's it; we just agreed to be hand in hand. He called me 'darling' and tried to hug me in the middle of the people. He broke the deal and tried to abuse me (Nasrin, 2019).

Even though the way they find employment varies, jobs that refugee women find are often low-paying and daily based jobs. Refugee women in Yalova⁵⁰ are

⁴⁹ Apart from this, a few women find employment by chance or through third-person they do not know.

⁵⁰ Yalova's economy is mainly based on floriculture and greenhouse cultivation in the agricultural sector, textile, chemistry, and paper in the industrial sector. Approximately 20% of the country's cut flower production is produced by Yalova. Tourism is another important source of income in Yalova, where summer and thermal tourism is popular with local and international tourists (Güloğlu et al., 2011: 34) which also expand service sector. Since the industry does not provide many job opportunities to women, informal employment increases for women (Özkaynak, 2008). Research show that especially employment in the agricultural sector is based on unpaid family labor and

primarily concentrated in the service sector, such as cafes, *kahve* (coffee shop), hotels, hairdressers, dishwashing, clothing shops, and tailoring. By the time I conducted my interviews, only three were not working in paid employment, but they also had previous working experience in Turkey⁵¹. Specifically, two of them worked online (translation, product sales, video shooting, etc.), and one of them worked as an English teacher. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, *seracılık* (greenhouse) is a common job among refugee women.

I have observed that there are clear hierarchies among these jobs regarding working conditions, wages, socio-cultural status, and prestige. The jobs women can work in this hierarchical order are shaped by the time they spend in satellite cities. Women who have just arrived in their respective city and have not learned Turkish yet usually work in greenhouses or in cafes and restaurants as dishwashers and earn 5-6 Turkish Liras per hour. The ones who work as dishwashers spend all their time in the workplace's kitchen, sometimes even without seeing the daylight, and work for 12 hours per day. Most of them get sick of their job routine and have constant backache due to the job they perform. Located at the bottom of the hierarchy, dishwashing is considered a temporary job for many women. One of my interlocutors, Parisa who was working as a tailor, mentioned:

Yes, I cleaned the dishes for a month, then saw that I know the language. They used to pay 30 TL per day to work for 12 hours [*in 2017*]. I had unbearable pains in my neck and back. No working hours less than 12 hours, even not for the Turks. Even the Turks were working with us in the places where I worked; of course, they earned more than us. I've noticed my Turkish is not that bad, so I applied for another job as a waiter (Parisa, 2019).

informal employment (Güloğlu et al., 2011; 36) in Yalova. In this framework, refugee women also generally concentrate in the service sector and agriculture, which are compatible with expected gender roles.

⁵¹ Although all the women were working in certain jobs at the time of the interview, they all worked previous jobs in different sectors and workplaces. For instance, an interlocutor working online has worked in the greenhouse before, and an interlocutor currently working as a masseur at home has worked as a dishwasher.

While knowing Turkish is an essential prerequisite for working as a waiter and/or barista, getting the hourly wage of 7-8 TL depends entirely on bargaining with the boss. Whether or not they get the tips again depends on the boss's attitude. Yalova has two streets full of cafes and restaurants in the city center, one is along the seaside and the other just next to it, which calls *kafeler sokağı* (street of cafes). Women generally work in center of the city in those cafes. They work at least 10 hours per day, with only short breaks. Once, I visited one of my friends in her workplace, where she worked as a barista in one of those cafes in Yalova. Even though the café was almost empty, we could only have small talks since she was not allowed to leave the bar for even a short cigarette break. Night shift is sometimes a problem for women working as waitresses and baristas. While women with children do not want to work the night shift because they do not have a place to leave their children, some women also do not prefer the night shift because of the harassment and violence they experience on the street as explained in the Chapter 3.

Greenhouse is another sector where refugee women work. Although it is temporary employment for some women, others continue to work there for a long time. Since the job does not require knowing Turkish, this job is also preferred by newly arrived women. Women work in 2 shifts, morning and evening. When they work from morning to night, they earn 60 liras, and when they work from evening to night, they earn 50 liras. Women working in this field especially talk about their physical fatigue. Christian women stated that they were discriminated against because of their religion in this sector. One interlocutor expressed this as the following:

For example, they did not sit where we sit, and they said it was dirty because some Christians sat there. We faced those kinds of problems a lot. Because we believe in mercy and Jesus, we believe that we have to give love to people in answer to this kind of thing. After one year, those people love Christian people. They got used to us over time, but they mistreated us at the beginning.

Another interlocutor, Sina, 40 years old, worked in the greenhouse at the beginning said that she later quit this job because she found the working conditions difficult and the working environment too humid. She expressed the reason for quitting the job as following:

It is very humid there, so it is difficult. Good for newcomers who had never worked in Iran before but not for me; I was already working. That job is a small job for me. Here they work daily, *yani* (so), black job. So, you don't know how long it will last (Sina, 2019).

The socioeconomic background of women and whether they can meet the ends without working also affect their ability to tolerate challenging working conditions and afford them the opportunity to choose between jobs. Sina, for instance, had an upper-class life in Iran and still received money from her relatives. Also, she migrated to Turkey with her husband, and thus, rather than trying to earn her livelihood alone, she had the opportunity to share them with her husband, which allowed her to stay unemployed for specific periods and search for the job she preferred to do.

In the hierarchy of jobs, *kahve* (coffee shop) appear as the places where women can get the highest wages in the service sector before the casinos. Women can find a job here for 10 TL per hour. Working in *kahve* (coffee shop), defined as 'men's spaces,' means both 'dealing with' men from different socio-cultural levels and increasing the domination over the female body. Like in other spheres, women have to struggle with intertwined racist and heteropatriarchal practices. One of the interlocutors stated that what tired her was not the job itself but the struggle against these practices: "I have to cut my nails because one of the men cursed that he did not want to drink tea from the long-nailed women's hand. I don't do a tough job, but those guys are always talking; it's hard to listen to them and give them tea all the time" (2019).

Elya who also works in a *kahve* (coffee shop) mentioned that men (customers) in the *kahve* ask her questions to learn whether she is Shiite or Sunni. Some of them

wanted to be sure that she was Sunni that otherwise will not drink the tea she prepared.

Again, in Yalova, women receive offers on whether they want to work at the 'illegal' casino through various channels - either by a friend doing this job or by a third party they met. These illegal casinos can be part of any 'regular' coffee shops or separate flats in the city. For instance, one of the customers in the cafe where Aida was working offered her this job:

For example, when I first came, when I worked at cafe, someone offered me this kind of job; they offered so brazenly that I was embarrassed. He said, 'come, put on this outfit, stand in the corner of the bar; I'll give you 3000 liras.' I said, no, I have many skills; I don't need to stand to earn money (Aida, 2019).

Women are also expected to do sex work in these casinos. Two of the women I interviewed, single moms, stated that they received an offer for sex work in the casinos, but they do not want to work in 'such a job' even though there is a lot of money in this business.

Independent from what they do, most women work at least 10 hours per day, only having one day off or sometimes even not that. Almost all the women mentioned that they feel physical pains due to the working conditions and long working hours. They mentioned the unbearable pains in their bodies and never felt rested. In addition to their paid labor practices, especially the women who live with their children or family face this "second shift" (Hochschild & Machung, 2012), and "triple working day"⁵² (Gago, 2020). Responsibility of care work and social reproduction of family members stay on women's shoulders. "I always wake up tired. How can I rest? Come home, cook, work outside and work at home, without stopping" (Mona, 2019).

⁵² "Work outside of the home, work within the home and the affective work of producing relations and networks of care." (Gago, 2020: 27)

This burnout meets with the exploitation and harsh working conditions in the workplace. Low payment, harsh working conditions, working long hours, and not receiving salaries are the main features of the informal economy and women's informal employment experiences (Kümbetoğlu et. al., 2012). Almost all women with working experience talk about the harsh working conditions, low wages, and the salary they could not get in their previous jobs.

It was my second day dishwashing at a cafe. Again, I went to work at 8 in the morning and left it at 9 in the evening. I called my mom, cried, and said: 'Mom, I can't do this.' I was working for 5 TL an hour. And on the second day, they gave me 30 TL less. He gave me the remaining money by throwing it in my face. We don't just do hard work here; they maltreat us, they hurt us (Nasrin, 2019).

This humiliation is embedded in almost all women's labor experiences, even when they work in relatively more prestigious jobs. For instance, English teacher Zeinab who lives in Istanbul now, but mentions her previous job experience in Yalova, and explains that she was treated well until her boss realized that she was a refugee and that his attitude changed for a moment when he realized her status:

I have never shown my refugee identity card to the places I work. Because when they realize that I am a refugee, the bosses' behavior changes instantly. For example, they didn't know I was a refugee in my first job, and they were pleased to work with me. They knew that I had just arrived in Turkey, they helped me find a house, they gave me new classes, everything was perfect. Then I had a problem with the bank, and the boss's cousin was also working at Ziraat Bank. The boss told me to call his cousin and solve the problem. When they learned from the bank that I was a refugee, their whole behavior changed instantly. The first question was, why did you flee your country? Then they started to talk in Turkish and laugh among themselves. The next day, they started saying that we cannot pay you this salary, we will pay less. I quit my job in that school. Afterward, I decided never to say I was a refugee. For example, one of my colleagues told my boss in Yalova that I was a refugee. The next day my boss brought me a bag. It's full of shabby clothes. He threw the bag towards me and said, 'Check them, and you can have whatever you want.' He was very, very aggressive. I felt so bad, and I quit that job too. That's why I never said I am a refugee again. When they asked for my ID, I showed my passport, and I said my Turkey ID had not been released yet. my Iranian passport was still valid when I first came to Turkey (Zeinab, 2019).

The fact that Zeinab becomes more vulnerable to violence, humiliation, and exploitation when her bosses learn that she is a refugee is a common experience shared by most other refugee women. Low wages, inability to receive their salaries, exposure to gendered violence, and exploitation in the workplace become inherent in the working experiences of refugee women. In this framework, women became disposable in their workplaces, and the stability of their jobs become tied to their employers' discretion, as explained by Sara's abrupt firing for her job:

It was my birthday; I went to Istanbul. I took leave two weeks ago. One of the employees was laid off that day. The boss called me and said come to work. I said 'I'm in Istanbul; I told you two weeks ago.' 'If you can't come then, don't come again,' he said. I was working there instead of 2 personnel; I was a barista, I was in the service, but he fired me a first moment I say I can't (Sara, 2019).

On the other hand, those who work as tailors and hairdressers can receive wages close to the minimum wage. In order to be able to work in these jobs that require crafts, women generally try to get certificates from Public Education Centers during their stay in Turkey, thus aiming to improve their quality of life. Most of the tailor women were working with another tailor, while one of the hairdressers was working for one, while two women were providing this service at home. In addition to hairdressing, massage is also among the services offered at home.

Five of the women I interviewed transform their homes into workplaces and offer services such as hairdressing and massage in their own homes. These services are offered to refugees rather than Turkish people. For instance, I regularly went to one of them to pluck my eyebrows during the fieldwork, and I was the only client from Turkey⁵³. Turning their home into the workplace, women create autonomous spaces where there is no exploitation of labor and gendered violence. Furthermore, women with children are freed from the search and cost of finding someone to share their care work. Given these conditions, when a home is turned into a

⁵³ When I was sitting in house Mona, I remembered that 2 Farsi-speaking Afghan women came to the house for a haircut. Of course, speaking the same language play an essential role here.

workplace where ‘private’ and ‘public’ spaces are intertwined, I see the home as an autonomous counter-spaces rather than a space of enclosure (Federici, 2004). This version of home is not a space of exploitation anymore. Women created these counter-spaces to save themselves from labor exploitation, gendered violence, racism, state control, and oppression in satellite cities. Therefore, unlike their white sisters, the household is less oppressive for refugee women (hooks, 2000: 37). It helps them secure themselves from labor exploitation, harassment of employers, and racist attacks.

On the other hand, although the house offers a safer employment area, working at home also causes problems with neighbors. Mainly the coming and going of the customers cause complaints from neighbors. But, of course, there is no absolute freedom or oppression since the experiences are also situational, contextual (Harding, 2004). Despite the financial and social empowering role of the home for refugee women, the houses continue to function as spaces of surveillance and control at the same time, as I mentioned in the Chapter 3. By finding methods that would not attract the attention of the neighbors, such as working by appointment, preferring to live in garden-floor houses, or letting clients introduce themselves as a friend to neighbors, women try to keep their autonomous spaces. More importantly, even though the surveillance they face, women still emphasize that they feel safer when they work at home.

There are also those women who work online from their homes, and those women do not have such problems with neighbors’ surveillance. Online working women also earn more than those in the service sector and are paid according to their work. Sina, who trades between Iran and Turkey, says that the internet interruptions made by the state in Iran affect their business, but apart from that, she was satisfied with her work. “I was already doing business in Iran. The job I know, I’m comfortable with”.

Even though Sina was content with her work, she still lacked social security and was doing piecework. Therefore, it will not be an exaggeration to argue that labor

practices of refugee women “are a deep reflection of the neoliberal regime in which migration is inscribed.” (Picozza, 2017:248) As explained in this section, women work informally for long hours for small amounts of money; are not covered by social security; and work under unending surveillance and control where they also open to different forms of gendered violence.

4.4.1 Gendered Violence in Workplaces

We met with in a cafe where she preferred to meet. I went there with Marjan, who supported me with translation during the interviews, as Mina was also her friend. It was the first time I met with Mina, and when we met to the café, Marjan introduced me and explained my research. Mina knew little Turkish, but she said that she did not need translation, and that we could let Marjan go. Marjan left us, and we stayed together. As Mina was telling me her migration story, she suddenly started crying and explained how her previous employer raped her. Even though I reminded several times her that we could stop the interview, Mina continued and explained all the details, which I do not want to mention here since I believe that it would reproduce the violence again. I was the first person with whom she shared her story. She said she had to deal with all the post-effects, fears, and anxiety alone. I still remember our conversation in every detail and her words that still haunt me to this day: “I feel breathless Cemile”.

Women are exposed to gendered violence at almost every stage of their migration experience, and their labor practices are also not free from this violence. Like Mina, two other interlocutors also mentioned that they were raped in their workplaces by their bosses and co-workers. Besides, all the women I interviewed said they were harassed at work, especially by their bosses, coworkers, and customers. Bosses “forced them to be with them” to give them a wage increase and sometimes as a condition to pay their wages.

Contrary to common sense, women are not subject to harassment and gendered violence only when they are 'single.' As seen in Sharaen's story, being married does not prevent the sexual abuse and harassment that women face. Sharaen, who came to Yalova with her husband three years ago, mentioned that she started working in a restaurant as a dishwasher when she faced sexual abuse by her employer and quit her job in the 4th hour: "He was acting so bad, I mean he sexually abused me. I could stand there for 4 hours, left the job, I was so angry" (Sharaen, 2019).

Harassment, rape or other forms of gendered violence experiences are not limited to specific workplaces or jobs. For instance, Niaz, 30 years old, stated that she applied to a club to work as a dancer during her time in Yalova, but her employer forced her to do sex work. "I am a dancer; I have danced professionally for 18 years. I went to a club in Yalova to work, and the boss said you need to go to the tables too. I refused. Then, he got a hold of me in a room, he touched me" (Niaz, 2019).

Even though women experience gendered violence is a widespread fact, the perpetrators may change. Gendered violence is not limited to employers and co-workers. Refugee women also encounter sexual harassment by customers during their working hours. Negar was working in one of the touristic resorts in Yalova as a masseur before I met with her. She spent one year trying to protect herself from one of the customers' abuses. The customer continued coming to her workplace, stalking her until her home, and pushing her to partner with him. Finally, she had to quit her job and change her flat to lose her trace:

I worked. Then I didn't want to continue working there because the man was constantly coming and sitting. You can't say anything to the customer. When I got annoyed like this, I talked to the place owner, and I said, 'I really can't do it, sir, I want to go' (Negar, 2019).

Of course, not all women do not experience the gendered violence in the same way. Lesbian interlocutors said they were exposed to discrimination and homophobia by the customers, the bosses, and other employees. A lesbian

interlocutor stated that she had to leave her previous job because of the constant comments about her sexual orientation:

When my girlfriend came to my work, they always made jokes about how beautiful she was and asked questions about our sex life. They were making comments to make me jealous. I was glossing over questions, and I couldn't say 'it's none of your business.' I couldn't take it anymore and left (Zahra, 2019).

Lesbians mainly mentioned that they had to hide their sexual orientation; otherwise, like Zahra, they are asked various questions and comments about their sexual lives. Trans interlocutors mentioned that they were constantly exposed to transphobic discourse even if they could find a job. Trans women are rejected in the job application just because they are trans and mostly forced to perform sex work. If they find a job in the service sector, they are never hired as baristas or waiters but as dishwashers so that customers cannot see them. And during their work experience, they face many transphobic jokes, sexual abuse and receive intimate questions that they do not want to answer.

As all these experiences illustrate, women's vulnerability to exploitation and gendered violence is established by the asylum regime through the work permit regulation and im(possibility) of working formally. This legal production of informality and illegality meets with the demands of capitalism, racism and heteropatriarchy, making women more open to exploitation and gendered violence. One of interlocutors, Samira, who has been living as a single mom in the Yalova for eight years (applied asylum in 2014), mentions about the violence she faced in the workplace and the sex work she was offered during these years, her bitter words demonstrates the gendered aspect of the current regime and the intersectionality between capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and asylum regime: "The state does not offer us any support; this system works so that we become whores. And if you reject, they treat you with the sending back to the country where you escape to live".

At this point, it is necessary to take a closer look at the deportation regime to illustrate how deportability make women open to gendered violence and to understand why women do not (and cannot) use existing complaint and protection mechanisms, and how deportability works to provide the continuity of this spectacle between state and employers.

4.5 Deportation Regime and Deportability

Roya gave me her chic shirt, insisting that I wear more elegant clothes when I go to meet with PDMM officials. Combining her shirt with my flatmates' skirt, I was ready to go there. I went to the Yalova PDMM, where I waited for my refugee friends who come to sign-ins every two weeks. I was hopeless in reaching any officer, and yet with the encouragement of my NGO worker flatmates and refugee friends as well as the elegant clothes they lent me, I decided to try my chance. The security guard directed me to an officer inside after telling him that I was doing a Ph.D. and wanted to meet with a migration expert in the international protection department. After passing three different offices in each room, I managed to reach the room of the migration expert I was going to interview. Even though I was pretty surprised that he agreed to meet with me without asking for any research permit, I tried not to show my surprise to him and started my general questions. At a certain point in the interview, he started to show me the files on his table and said: "We deported 234 people last year. We are in 26th place in Turkey. This is an important number. They said at the meeting that a total of 110,000 were deported from Turkey last year⁵⁴". While mentioning the people they caught in the Yalova custom who tried their chance to reach the EU zone⁵⁵ in the trucks, the officer continued:

⁵⁴ He refers to 2018.

⁵⁵ Although it was emphasized by the migration expert that Yalova is close to the border and that it is a migration route for irregular migrants, none of the interlocutors did even mention the existence of this possibility.

But we cannot deport people from certain countries. For example, an Egyptian was deported last year and executed in his/her/their country. That's why foreigners coming from Egypt, Libya, Russia, and Uzbekistan are put into detention centers. They are kept there for one year and then released with something called 'administrative control', You can't deport them (migration expert, 2019).

He then continued to talk about the 'difficulties' they experienced during the deportation process: the high road cost of Africans, problems in fingerprint matching, and the impossibility of identification. However, he proudly continued how the DGMM solved the problem with Pakistan that Pakistanis were deported too quickly when they caught them.

Although I do not hide my feelings from my interlocutors throughout the fieldwork, I put lots of energy into continuing to listen to this migration expert without making any mimics. And he continued to proudly talk about how they deported people to be at the top of the deportation list of the state. The files he showed me on the table were the list of people whom they will deport, which reminded me of Arsham's case. Arsham is one of my refugee friends who had recognized refugee status from UNHCR in 2012. Still, after living eight years in Turkey, he received a deportation decision by Çanakkale PDMM in 2020. When he went to Çanakkale PDMM and asked for the reason for deportation even though he has a legal status, one of the officials told him that they have a daily quota for the deportation numbers. He was shocked when he called me after his visit to PDMM and told me angrily that he received the deportation decision just because one official wanted to fill the daily quota.

Since that conversation with the PDMM office, I have also encountered many cases of deportation and put energy into setting our friends free from detention centers. My previous and ongoing research and activist experiences show that deportation has become one of Turkey's primary migration management tools. Random ID checks in the streets based on the racial profiling or mass deportation of Syrians, Afghans, and Africans are widespread in Turkey while I am writing this chapter.

The words of migration experts, and experience of Arsham also illustrate how the deportation regime in Turkey is arbitrary and discretionary. The legal framework also encourages this discretionary deportation regime even though the principle of non-refoulment.

According to the “non-refoulment” principle in the Geneva Convention, the deportation of a “conditional refugee” in Turkey is not possible within international law. Regulations regarding non-refoulment and the prohibition of deportation are also included in the LFIP. Article 4 of the law defines the non-refoulment, and Articles 53, 54, and 55 specify in detail who can be deported or not and the administrative and judicial mechanisms that can be applied against a possible deportation decision (Görendağ, 2016). When we examine these articles, the reasons for deportation are listed in detail in Article 54. Among these, working without a work permit is also stated as a reason for deportation. On the other hand, Article 55 lists those for whom a deportation decision cannot be made. According to this article, “those who have serious indications that they will be subjected to the death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment” in the country to which they will be sent (Article 55). /1-a, LFIP)⁵⁶ cannot be deported. This definition also indicates the ones who have international protection status. In other words, the law prevents the deportation of refugee women in satellite cities. Therefore, even though they are ‘caught’ by authorities working without a work permit, the situation of those under international protection should be evaluated both within the framework of non-refoulement and criteria for which a deportation decision cannot be made in article 55 of the LFIP. However, it is seen that the evaluation of deportation decisions for those under international protection is not taken based on these regulations in practice, and they face deportation when they work without a work permit.

⁵⁶ For more details: <https://www.goc.gov.tr/sinir-disi-etme>

Again, ambiguous definitions such as “member of a terrorist organization” and “threat to public safety and health, public order” in Article 54 (b, d, k) of the law pose a risk of violating the deportation ban. It is not clear whether asylum seekers and refugees are included in this scope. It leaves the decision-making authority to the discretion of the administrative units (Görendağ, 2016). On the other hand, an essential feature of these articles of law in the LFIP was that the deportation process could be stopped directly until the court decision when an application was made against the deportation decision. However, Decree No. 676⁵⁷, which came into force in 2016, did not automatically stop the deportation during the objection period, and the law was expanded to affect those under international protection, paving the way for arbitrary and unlawful deportation decisions for refugees. Thus, ambiguous definitions such as “public order or public health or public safety” assign discretionary powers to the state authorities to deport even legally recognized refugees.

Women’s narratives reveal that deportations occur very frequently, especially in the last years. A friend of Vida was working as a masseur who was caught working without a permit. She was taken into a detention center, and the authorities ordered her to be deported. Before starting my fieldwork in Yalova, I also encountered many cases where refugees were ‘caught’ in random police raids in their workplaces. Once, I remember how I received a phone call from an Afghan friend who was also a refugee in Denizli and asked me for a lawyer since police took his friend into custody due to working informally⁵⁸. Thanks to activists, refugees, and human rights lawyers, the deportation decision had stopped. However, one of the dozens of deportation decisions was taken without specifying why working without

⁵⁷ This emergency decree was issued after the coup d’etat attempt in Turkey with many others and serves to the securitization of migration management. For more details on the effect of the coup d’e’tat attempt on civil society and migration management of Turkey. Please see: Sarı, E., & Dinçer, C. G. (2017). Toward a New Asylum Regime in Turkey?. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, 3(2).

⁵⁸ For more details of this case: <https://kaosgl.org/haber/trans-multeciyi-sinirdisi-etme-inadi-suruyor>

a work permit poses a “threat” to “public order or public health or public safety”. My ongoing connection with refugee friends in Yalova also illustrates that the random police raids are increased even after the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this context, while deportation work to preserve state sovereignty (Albahari, 2015) and control over refugees (Peutz & de Genova, 2010:9), “it is deportability and not deportation per se” (De Genova, 2002:438). Refugees waiting to be resettled in a third country in satellite cities cannot get a work permit due to complex, tedious, and costly work permit procedures and employers’ unwillingness. They have to work informally to survive their daily lives, and yet they are faced with a constant threat of deportation while working informally. Deportability, at this point, renders refugee women’s “labor a distinctly disposable commodity” (De Genova, 2002:438). Since women have no other chance than to work, they all mentioned that they were afraid of being deported while working. Even though none of the women I met in Yalova were caught by the police while working, they obviously feel the fear of deportation in their bodies. They were alert all the time they work against any random police raids which make them tired more than the job they do.

This constant fear and anxiety of deportability – and its relation to working – became more apparent when I asked the women what could make their lives easier in Turkey. Almost all of the women said that giving them a work permit would make their life easier in Turkey. In their words, work permit would reduce the violations of their rights and labor exploitation they face. They also mentioned that work permit would allow them to have access to at least some complaint mechanisms when they were subjected to violence in their workplaces without fear of deportability. An interlocutor who defines working without a work permit as “being constantly alert”. Being deportable makes women work/live in constant fear and anxiety and prevent them from using any complaint mechanisms. Deportation became a “productive power that profoundly shapes their lives” (De Genova et al.,

2021:75); flexibility and exploitation are (re)produced each day with the threat of deportation.

The deportability shapes and disciplines women's work practices and their relations with employers, co-workers, and customers. Refugee women as deportable subjects at the same time become disposable and exploitable workers. As in the experience of Sara I mentioned in the previous section, they can be fired any time employers want. The threat of deportation, at this point, provides the condition for the labor force to be more exploitable and for labor to be "regulate" (De Genova, 2002). When this situation combined with the threat of deportation, it constantly criminalizes refugee women and (re)shapes their encounters with the state and employers.

On the other hand, the deportability also has gendered consequences and makes women more open to sexual harassment and gendered violence. As I mentioned throughout this chapter, all women face gendered violence in their workplaces. When women want to stand against the working conditions or the gendered violence they face, Turkish employers constantly threaten them, "I am a citizen; nothing will happen to me. If you want to go to the police, you will be deported". Narges, who was subjected to persistent sexual harassment by her boss at the workplace, could not stand this harassment anymore. However, when she confronted her boss, he threatened her with reporting to the police. She could not do anything, and she quit her job without even getting her salary. As this story illustrates, the threat of deportation works as a mechanism to silence many women, like Narges, in the face of insecurity, heteropatriarchal oppression, gendered violence, and exploitation. When they are subjected to gendered violence or/and cannot receive their salaries, they cannot use any complaint mechanism and become a docile workforce due to the threat of deportation. If women behave as expected in these encounters and become "acceptable workers" and "acceptable women," the risk of deportation becomes invisible for a specific period (Llyod, 2018:79). However, when women want to oppose exploitation and gendered

violence in their workplaces, as in the case of Narges, their statuses as refugees and informal labor become visible, not only making them vulnerable to gendered violence but also the risk of falling into illegality appear (Llyod, 2018:79). At this point, not only their legal status become visible but also heteropatriarchal oppression on their bodies also increase and they become target of gendered violence. Narges for instance, also threatened by her employer for telling other Iranian that she is a ‘dishonest’ woman.

As I discuss these intertwined mechanisms of informality, illegality, exploitation, gendered violence, and deportability, it is crucial to emphasize that Narges’s case, like many others, reveals that illegality and undeclared/unauthorized work performed by refugee women are openly known by the state and employers, and used to control, exploit, and silence refugees. Aida’s words, once again, illustrate this dynamic: “The police come to café from time to time. They are checking for any *kaçak* (illegal) workers. They say if we catch you, you will be deported. It is as if the state does not know that we are working illegally” (Aida, 2019).

As her words demonstrate, the illegality, directly linked to asylum regime and state’s migration policies which “ensures the relegation of diverse formations of transnational human mobility to a variegated juridical spectrum of ‘legalities’ and ‘illegalities.’” (De Genova, 2013:5 as cited by Gambino, 2017: 259). And this juridical spectrum is consciously produced by state. Therefore, (potential) illegality that refugee women face, and it increase in the case of opposition to exploitative work conditions and gendered violence can be defined as “legal illegalities.”

Still, refugee women make an unending effort not to fall into these “legal illegalities” by not delaying the signing days, turning their houses into workplaces and sometimes hiding their status. It is also very common among refugee women to pretend to be a customer or one of the customers’ girlfriends in the case of random police raids. Or refugee women who work in the same place, for instance, in the case of a greenhouse, also organize their holidays according to sign-ins days and

hours. There are also various other the practices I know from other refugees and researchers in other cities, such as Denizli, where refugees working in the textile industry arrange shuttle services from the factory to migration management offices for sign-ins. These shuttle services could be seen as a method that refugees developed not to jeopardize their jobs by asking the employer a day off, as well as to not to jeopardize their asylum cases by missing sign-in times. Thus, through such creative resistant practices, refugee women constantly navigate the ambiguous zone between informality and illegality, do everything they can to keep their informal jobs while also protecting themselves from falling into ‘illegality.’

4.6 Thoughts on Framing Deportability, (Il)legality and Exploitation

Treating women's labor practices in satellite cities as distinct from other spaces of their lives simply as an insecure work practice and exploitation is not enough to understand these practices. In order to capture the experiences of refugee women in the labor market, it is necessary to discuss the structural conditions that shape these experiences. Including intersectional nature of these structural mechanisms and power relations into the analysis to better understand women's experiences will make visible the role of heteropatriarchy, racism and capitalism in shaping refugee women's labor. In this chapter, focusing on the labor practices of refugee women in Yalova, I investigate conditions that push refugee women work in the informal labor market where they face exploitation and gendered violence and navigate illegality and deportability.

One of these structural conditions is the satellite city regulation, which serves to organize, manage, surveil and control refugee women’s everyday lives, including their labor practices. Labor practices have a significant place in the refugee women’s experiences and constitute the only space where refugees experience informality and illegality, since all other aspects of their lives are controlled and disciplined by strict laws and regulations. As I illustrated in the first section, NGOs only offer limited support, and by the conditions of their support, they serve

violence and discrimination against refugees, feeding the existing narrative of ‘impotent’ refugees and the vulnerability of refugee women. On the other hand, the lack of any financial support provided by state institutions prompt women to work, since they do not have any other option for their subsistence in their long waiting processes in satellite cities. Legal impossibility to obtain work permit push women to work in an informal labor market where they are subjected to insecurity, exploitation, gendered violence.

Although working in insecure and flexible conditions is a common feature of today, I argue that what distinguishes refugee labor practices from other forms of informal employments is their deportability. As explored throughout this chapter, the very same conditions that push refugee women to work in the informal labor market also make them face illegality and constant deportability. At this point, it is crucial to make these work practices and exploitation visible since these practices nourish capitalism, heteropatriarchy, racism and thus make refugee labor an exploitable, disposable and docile workforce. Moreover, they underline the importance of refugee labor and gendered violence in the continuity of these systems.

The (im)possibility of obtaining a work permit makes refugees more exploitable and open to gendered violence for employers. By assigning refugee women to satellite cities and obliging them to obey specific rules, the asylum regime positions them as controllable subjects in this legally produced formal space. However, labor appears as an area where refugees are constantly pushed into the informality and illegality of the asylum regime. Thus, the asylum regime compels refugees to work to live, making refugees disposable and exploitable subjects. It ensures the continuity of this regime with the deportability. Deportability, thus, is a crucial concept to examine the complex and intersectional relations that produce exploitation and gendered violence refugee women face, which (re)shape the work practices of refugee women in a satellite city. At this point, focusing on refugee women’s labor experiences in the satellite city enables understanding how

categories such as 'legal', 'informal' and 'illegal' get blurred in the everyday experience of those embodying them. Such distinctions might be meaningful from a state perspective or a legal framework. However, once refugees start their everyday lives, the distinction does not hold anymore: all of them need to find work to sustain themselves (thus become 'informal and illegal') and stay within the asylum regime until resettlement (thus try to stay 'legal').

What makes their experiences unique is that refugee women in this context are their non-stop move between different statuses during their everyday lives. At this point, the literature mainly focuses on the status of illegality and its relationship with the labor market (Gambino, 2017), migrants' 'illegal' presence in the host countries (Andrijasevic, 2010), or rejected asylum seekers who face illegality and deportability (Freedman, 2009). However, all these produced categories are intersected in refugee women's experiences in the satellite cities in Turkey. Refugee women in satellite cities become 'illegal' not through the rejection of their cases by through their unregistered work. In other words, they automatically become 'illegal' when they become labor power, even though most of them have legal refugee status. Thus, refugee women in the satellite cities wake up to a new day in the legal realm as registered and/or recognized refugees. However, when they begin to work, they fall into informality and illegality. And yet, when they complete their mandatory sign-in requirement, they continue to keep their legality. As this picture illustrates, legality, illegality, and informality inextricably work together and are produced by the asylum regime. In the same vein, refugee women's bodies became a place where legally, socially, and economically produced different status are inscribed. They cross between legality, illegality, and informality every day, which are artificially created by the asylum regime. Refugees, who must navigate between these spaces, also face the constant deportability. Therefore, deportability become embodied to their labor experiences.

As I have emphasized elsewhere, deportability has also gendered reflections. In the case of refugee women, deportability does not only turn them into a disposable and

exploitable workforce but also produces the gendered violence they face. I haven't met any women who have not faced harassment, sexual abuse, or rape in their workplaces. Even though the perpetrators change (employer, co-worker, clients), violence remains embedded in women's work practices. The deportability, at this point, prevent women from standing against this gendered violence and thus silence them. Sometimes women have to remain silent about the comments made about their clothes, bodies and sexualities at work. Therefore, their bodies and sexualities are disciplined by their deportability. And, current asylum regime continues to strengths capitalist, heteropatriarchal, and racist order.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN CLAIMING THEIR LIVES: SOLIDARITY PRACTICES AMONG REFUGEE WOMEN

Refugee women's stories are full of gendered violence and exploitation. As I have explained in the previous chapters, this gendered violence begins to shape and control refugee women's lives as soon as they enter the legal realm of the asylum regime and then, disperses into every aspect of their lives, ranging from work to home, from daily encounters to accessing healthcare rights and services. In addition to their vulnerable legal statuses that make women open to multiple forms of discrimination and gendered violence, women's labor practices as informal work force also leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, harassment, and sexual abuse. Among these different forms of violence, the Turkish state's satellite city regulation also deserves a special attention. As explained throughout this dissertation, satellite city regulation creates multiple and multilayered forms of gendered violence and restricts not only women's freedom of movement but also their right to live freely. Amidst these various forms of gendered violence, some women, like Marjan whom I described in the Third Chapter, request police or state protection against the gendered violence they encounter. Still, as my interlocutors' stories illustrate, these structural complaint and support mechanisms are often insufficient and even worse, have the potential to (re)produce gendered violence.

Given this grim picture, an essential question occurs for us to answer: Do women only suffer during their waiting in Turkey? Are refugee women solely victims of their partners, families, employers, landlords, and DGMM officials? Do they continue living their lives as suffering subjects in the nexus of gendered violence and exploitation? Of course not. It is true that the current asylum regime does not provide refugee women with any reliable and sustainable access to rights and

protections and prompt them to ensure their own justice and survival on their own. However, this does not mean that refugee women are only suffering victims of this regime. Quite the contrary, refugee women continue to create solidarity practices in the face of multiple forms of violence they encounter. Thus, to accurately capture their experiences of waiting and living in Turkey, we need to talk about solidarity and resistance practices - women's efforts to claim their lives - as much as we discuss gendered violence and exploitation.

In the previous two chapters, I focused on the structural conditions that make a particular group of women - Iranian refugee women - vulnerable to gendered violence, insecurity, exploitation, and harassment in a particular context. I illustrated how refugee women experience these structural forms of violence in their everyday lives. Due to the experiences of oppression, I argue that refugee women develop a distant way of knowing like other marginalized groups. W.E.B. Du Bois (2007) defines this distant way of knowing as a "double consciousness" in his book *The Souls of the Black Folk*. Double consciousness is something that blacks living in a white world have, and it stems from "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (Du Bois, 2007:8). In the social reality they live in, blacks have to carry the perspective of whites and learn their knowledge, experience, and perception. Du Bois sees having a second sight both as a deprivation and gift for blacks, but he argues that such second sight provides the ability to understand the social reality in which race relations are shaped. This particular advantage is also defined as a "particular way of seeing a reality" by hooks (hooks, 1990: 341), which provides a mode of seeing that is "unknown to the oppressor" and that "strengthens solidarity" among the oppressed (hooks, 1990:341). Therefore, the subject of this knowledge is a subject capable of being involved with the others, seeing something new with this knowledge, and transforming that knowledge into something else. More specifically, such knowledge enables the oppressed to find the cracks in existing social structures and develop tools that would enable them to claim their lives despite the systems of oppression. Therefore, a distant way of knowing provides marginalized groups

extra tools to reach a knowledge of society while also providing them with extra tools to resist systems of oppression. And in this chapter, I want to highlight these extra tools of resistance by focusing on women's solidarity practices.

By doing so, I utilize the feminist perception of solidarity from Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003). According to Mohanty (2003), solidarity is a concept that we can understand "in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities" (2003:10). Mohanty's definition of solidarity is a valuable conceptualization in the case of refugee women, which also provides a crucial tool to deal with the 'commonality' and 'difference' dilemma. As she puts it:

In knowing differences and particularities, we can better see the connections and commonalities because no border or boundary is ever complete or rigidly determining. The challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully. It is this intellectual move that allows for my concern for women of different communities and identities to build coalitions and solidarities (Mohanty, 2003:505).

In this vein, a feminist understanding of solidarity rejects to see all refugee women as a homogenizing unit. It dismantles the idea that all refugee women are the same and that they establish solidarity simply because they are women. Solidarity in this feminist reading/praxis is rooted in living in the same sociopolitical environment or living under similar conditions and sharing similar experiences that are shaped by heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism. Therefore, commonalities between refugee women do not automatically stem from the fact that they are women and/or refugees. Rather, solidarity practices among women are based on their lived realities and everyday experiences of being refugee women in Turkey. But it is important to highlight that even these similarities do not make refugee women identical parts of the same category. Even though they are all 'refugee women', there are also numerous differences between the lived experiences of lesbian and trans women, single moms, younger and older women, married and single women,

and so on. Besides, there are also many socioeconomic differences rooted back to their lives in Iran, such as the cities women come from, the schools they attended, the class positions they occupied, and the ethnicities they belonged to, such as Kurd, Azeri, and Persian. Therefore, solidarity among refugee women cannot be taken for granted as something that naturally occurs just because they are women, Iranian, and refugees. On the contrary, as Mohanty rightly emphasizes, “solidarity is always an achievement, the result of active struggle to construct the universal on the basis of particulars/differences” (Mohanty, 2003:7).⁵⁹

By emphasizing solidarity mechanisms and forms of resistance that refugee women practice, I do not mean to argue that refugee women do not suffer due to the gendered violence and exploitation they face during their waiting processes in Turkey. As I explained in the previous chapters, they often do. However, what I am trying to show in this chapter by focusing on solidarity and resistance practices is that women also navigate and negotiate these structures and constantly struggle to claim their lives in numerous, creative ways. These practices may not bring a complete emancipation or liberation. They can fail or, sometimes, negotiations and navigations even risk reproducing the normative gendered roles and existing hierarchies among refugees. And yet, refugee women keep their desire and energy to change their circumstances and maintain their hopes for a life. For that, women might sometimes occupy contradictory positions and constantly move between different positionalities. I argue that these transitions between different positionalities constitute the repertoire of everyday practices which provide women with necessary mechanisms to resist existing structures. Women use the victim narrative in particular contexts as resistance while they also reject this victimization narrative and emphasize their strength in different contexts. These changing practices provide them spaces for maneuver. Therefore, concepts such as agency,

⁵⁹ Since she also includes anti-capitalist, anti-racist perspectives in her approach, her definition of solidarity makes it possible to capture refugee women's experiences which (re)shape around these systems of power. Moreover, Mohanty's emphasis on the possibility of discursive colonization, especially the production of third-world women as monolithic and singular subjects, is an essential warning for this study, which was conducted with a feminist methodology.

victim, and solidarity, resistance intersect, and women are constantly navigating and negotiating among them to claim their lives. And, of course, these negotiations differ according to women's positions in the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000) which also reminds us to avoid the understanding of refugee women as a homogenizing group, and "... permit us to see that the subject is processually constituted through several positionings" (Andrijasevic, 2010:18).

Since feminism is not (and refutes) a politics of 'saving' other women who are in the 'bad conditions,' the notion of "feminist solidarity" offers us the opportunity to think about what we can do to get back our lives, our labor, and our bodies from existing matrix of domination instead of telling how refugee women are even more victimized, or how 'we' could and should save them. Therefore, focusing on women's solidarity and resistance practices means recognizing refugee women's agency and their power to resist, before anything else, in order to be able to create feminist grounds to collectively struggle against heteropatriarchy, racism, and capitalism. Revealing these systems that oppress us all in different ways show that the struggle against them is common and will make possible the condition of coming together in and for this struggle. "Commonalities in differences" (Mohanty, 2003:503) also remind us that there are no universal solidarity and resistance practices of refugee women (or anyone), just as there are no universal womanhood experiences.

Under the light of these considerations, in this chapter, I question how refugee women cultivate forms of solidarities and conceive individual and collective tools of resistance amidst the conditions of oppression, gendered violence, and exploitation? To do so, I first demonstrate the shared knowledge and experiences, mutual support, and care practices among refugee women as the most explicit solidarity practices in the satellite city where they are made vulnerable to exploitation and gendered violence by the asylum regime. I argue that refugee women not only circulate and share existing mechanisms but also take an active role in the production of new forms of collective knowledge, care, and support.

In the second section, I relate this solidarity practices with the political concept of “women claiming their lives” used by feminists in Turkey to underline the resistance practices of refugee women. I will discuss this political concept based on feminist standpoint theory where I will focus on the lived experiences of refugee women and illustrate how their practices of resistance are contingent, situational and intersectional. Combining this political concept with feminist standpoint theory has given us new ways of thinking about refugee women’s experiences and made us discern resistance practices differently. I tackle everyday practices of women who claim their lives as a form of resistance, which also enables us to recognize refugee women’s agency. I see solidarity -shared knowledge/experience and mutual care- as a basis of resistance that enables refugee women to claim their lives. Therefore, I argue that the condition of this resistance is only possible with shared knowledge, experiences, and mutual care and support between women.

These practices, shared experiences, and knowledge do not have to be feminist. Or perhaps defining them as feminist practices may even seem contradictory. However, I evaluate those practices which have a feminist potential. As Veronica Gago (2020) discusses in her book *Feminist International* where she focuses on the International Women’s Strike in Argentina, feminist potencia⁶⁰ is the “desire to change everything” (2020:3), desire to find new ways to be together “and transform all the spaces we inhabit on a daily basis, to create a new form of life” (2020:11) which start from the now, from our everyday experiences.

I bring this discussion on resistance and solidarity into a dialogue with the literature on the autonomy of migration and its focus on the movements of people, rather than the borders and restrictions. This dialogue, I believe, exhibits a great potential for understanding the political agency of refugee women and challenges hegemonic

⁶⁰ She differentiates feminist potencia from Aristotelian “potential” and rooted her concept in Spinoza and Marx. Benefiting from Spinoza and Negri, Clough also underlines the role of emotions and affects in politics and describes affect as “‘power to act’ which augmented through collectivity.” When I use potential, I also indicate this Spinozian and Marxian sense where I underline the relation between emotion, affects, and resistance (Clough, 2012:1669).

victimization approaches, which occupy a central place in the heart of refugee policy framework (Tazzioli et. al, 2018:14). As Papadopoulos and others underline (Papadopoulos et al. 2008: 199): “the proliferation of camps is a response to people’s escape. Escape comes first, not power. Power and control follow”. In the case of refugee women’s lives, satellite city regulation is the response to the refugees’ movement. The spatial control is based on their moves; therefore, migration comes first, and power and control follow. While the state continues to increase control mechanisms, refugee women continue to follow their lives and desires. And, more importantly, they establish the conditions for the continuity and collectivity of this struggle through solidarity. I believe this is an essential step in deconstructing the victim narrative that comes to mind when we think of the figure of a “refugee woman”. This is exactly what refugee women do by claiming their lives, and what this chapter aims to demonstrate.

5.1 Shared Experiences or Feminist Consciousness Raisings as part of solidarity

It was Roya and Elya’s day off from work. Since they worked six days a week, they only had limited time to meet all their needs for the new week on this day off. Among those needs was shopping, which was not simply a duty for them. Roya and Elya indeed enjoyed shopping and considered it as one of the joyful, free-time activities they could do on their off days. We met in the center of Yalova, and soon they started shopping as I was accompanying them. After completing the shopping, we returned home. In the rest of the day, Roya invited her friends to her flat for dinner and insisted that I stay and meet with her friends. According to Roya, I needed to join an evening activity where I could find new interlocutors for my research. She also emphasized that bringing me and her friends together would make her happy. Indeed, that night’s meeting had a special mission: to collectively find a solution to Roya’s confusion. Roya didn’t know what to do after her ex-boyfriend in Iran suddenly called her last week. She was confused about whether

she should stay with her current partner or choose the ex-lover. The dinner meeting was aimed to help her.

Our gathering lasted until midnight. Starting with Roya's love life, it soon moved to very deeply shared and felt issues, accompanied by crying and laughing sessions, in which we shared experiences, gave advice to each other, recognized other common experiences, and noticed the common points between us. It is hard to describe the healing effect that night had on me. But there was something else in this meeting that struck me as a powerful reminder of what feminist consciousness raising sessions do: to show us the importance of sharing experiences, or why our motto "the private is political" is real and important. Feminist consciousness-raising enables women to see the similarities between them and their personal lives and make connections between different experiences. In this sense, consciousness-raising groups also serve as a therapy⁶¹ for women. This night had the same healing effect and was also the first step to questioning heteropatriarchy as a group through our shared (and unshared) experiences and stories.

Such gatherings, moments, and experiences are crucial in refugee women's lives for many reasons. First, sharing their problems, challenges, and confusions in a space where they feel safe has a 'therapy' and 'healing' effect on women. Although these spaces are places where many emotions live together, they also allow refugee women to get rid of negative emotions such as fear and anxiety with the help of the feeling of togetherness. Second, these gatherings are usually accompanied by things like Iranian food and tea, which distract refugee women from their current time- space and take them to their 'old' lives, rituals, and routines. In doing so, these communal gatherings distract women from the state of being a refugee, which

⁶¹ Some feminist activists and some advocates of consciousness-raising criticize approaching consciousness-raising as a therapy (Allen, 1970; Hanisch, 1969 as cited in Rosental, 2009). While I maintain their main critique of the therapy as something that individualizes otherwise collective, structural, and political issues, I also believe that feminist consciousness-raising –with its 'therapy' environment – still plays a crucial role in the wellbeing of women since women have limited space for relief.

the satellite city regulation and almost everything else in their daily lives constantly remind them of. These autonomous moments and spaces, which women actively create through their gatherings and togetherness, make them have a feeling of ‘normal/ordinary’ life, where they forget (or are not reminded) that their refugeeness. Third and lastly, these meetings also become collective platforms where sharing experiences saves women from isolation and prevents them from seeing their problems as ‘bad fortune’ and ‘individual failure’. This collectivizing environment builds a space to discuss shared experiences about their (our) conditions, which then opens up a space for feminist questioning.

On that night, while Roya explained her relationship, others also joined her by sharing their experiences. These shared experiences -including mine- enabled us to question our bodies, our sexualities, the forms of violence we experience, and, indeed, our perceptions of our and others’ ‘womanhood’. For instance, women in Roya’s house were working in different *kahve* (coffee shops) of the city. At one point, they all started to talk sarcastically about their troubles with the customers at their workplaces. Roya mentioned that the customers in her *kahve* (coffee shops) always complain about her long nails and that she hates the fact that she had to cut her nails because the customers do not like it. To my surprise, Roya’s experience was shared by other women. One of them said: “Would be a woman with short nails”? Her question sparked a discussion of ‘womanhood’ and what constitutes a ‘woman.’ In that discussion, my short hair, which I cut during fieldwork, received different feedback from different women. Even though lesbian and trans women I met in different social gatherings often liked my hair very much, I could not find the same appreciation at Roya’s house that night. Roya’s friends mentioned they found my old long hair being to more beautiful and questioned why I cut my hair. These comments were followed by an emphasis that I am a beautiful woman and need to ‘take care’ of myself more, which inexplicitly meant that I should do make-up. This conversation made it visible once again that being a woman means something different to all of us. This differentiation shows us something important: “women,” “refugee women”, and “Iranian refugee women” cannot be treated as

homogeneous categories. The women category is not fixed but rather heterogeneous and emergent and open to expansion with each new or different experience. In a similar spirit, we also concluded that conversation at Roya's place by saying that different women will have different tastes and styles. "I wish everyone could be as they wish," added one of the women.

"I wish everyone could be as they wish". I want to emphasize this wish since it not only accepts and respects difference but also pushes us to think about 'things' that prevent us from being as we want; even if those 'things' can also be defined differently by different women. Undoubtedly, heteropatriarchy is a crucial power system that (re)shapes our shared womanhood, but in the story of refugee women, heteropatriarchy is not the only thing that save women from being/living as they want. In their everyday experiences and narratives, refugee women always link their experiences to the asylum regime. The biggest obstacle for those women to not being able to live as they want is being in Turkey as a refugee. They see the asylum regime and refugeeness in Turkey as the reason of working in jobs that they don't want to work, living in cities where they don't want to live, long waiting process of resettlement to the third countries, and the gendered violence they had to experience. I have noticed that when women discuss these issues, at some point their conversations always come down to being a refugee, the notion of racism, and Turkey's migration authority, the DGMM. In other words, the asylum regime is almost always embedded in refugee women's talks, whether it is about someone's love life or the work experience, which indicates the intersectional nature of refugee women's experiences and makes it impossible to think womanhood and refugeeness separately.

To delve into this issue further, I would like to reflect on one of my interview questions. I asked all the women I interviewed two different questions: what do you think it means to be a woman and to be a refugee? However, women's answers to these questions were often cross-cutting and hard to separate from each other. For instance, Nasrin, a 20 years old interlocutor, told:

It's like staying in between. It's not a very good feeling. You don't belong in your country; you don't belong here or anywhere else you're going. Turkey is a beautiful country, but people's thoughts and the way they look at you as a foreigner is annoying. Just because this girl is a refugee, just because this girl is a foreigner and that foreigners are easy people. There is a perception that people can do anything when they see a refugee girl (Nasrin, 2019)

To the same question(s), another interlocutor responded: "Being a refugee woman is hard in Turkey. If I knew that no one would prevent me and say, 'go from Turkey, but you have to go on foot', I would walk".

Although I asked these questions separately, I generally did not need to ask the second question, and the answer(s) to both questions came in one. The answers given by women illustrate the intersectionality of their experiences and carry the potential of establishing mutuality and solidarity grounds by focusing on common structures that shape differentiating experiences. Because, even if they defined womanhood differently, they all dreamed of living the way they wanted. The perception of being a "foreign woman" in the society, the humiliation of refugees, exploitation in the labor market, the restrictions created by the asylum regime, in other words, heteropatriarchy, capitalism and racism appeared as the reasons for this prevention- the barrier before their wish to live the way they wanted. Sharing experiences, at this point, create moments to free women from look themselves with someone else's eyes and enable them to define their own realities on their own terms (Collins, 2002:292), which also has the potential to provide a ground for women who have little in common to recognize their commonalities. Awareness of commonalities does not only cause awareness among refugee women but also provides an opportunity for togetherness between women independently of their legal statuses. This togetherness, I believe, opens up a space for feminist struggle. I mean that this likely has the potential to "cross-politics" (Yuval-Davis, 2006) that will enable a broad coalition to struggle against these common enemies without considering refugee women's experiences as 'exceptional' and different than citizens.

5.2 Shared Knowledge(s) as part of Solidarity

Solidarity practices among women are not limited to just sharing lived experiences. It also includes sharing more material and practical information that will enable them to survive within the asylum regime. As I explained in the Introduction, refugees must navigate ambiguous and discretionary regulations in the complex landscape of the asylum regime. This complex landscape changes constantly, and every new regulation complicates the asylum regime even further. Refugees are not given proper information about the procedures they need to follow. Women generally learn how to deal with the asylum processes and what procedures to follow through these shared knowledge channels. Sometimes this includes learning about narratives on how to make asylum cases more appealing and sometimes tactics on getting travel permits more quickly. For instance, those women who DGMM or UNHCR has interviewed before, inform new ones about the content of the refugee status determination interview. Sometimes they even pre-rehearse the interview among themselves. Or when the travel permits were restricted in the summer of 2021, women in Yalova started to request permission on the grounds of health issues by making fake appointments from hospitals in other cities. Marjan was the first to try this, and when she saw that it worked, she shared this tactic with her friends.

Circulation and exchange of knowledge and relations are also widespread for finding a house, home furniture, or job. The exchange of essential resources such as information about a job or accommodation is ubiquitous among refugees, including women. This shared knowledge primarily circulates through social media and specifically Telegram groups. Things that are happening in the city spread rapidly through these channels. For instance, any financial support given by NGOs, any announcements made by the UNHCR or DGMM, or any changes in the migration management system are shared in Telegram groups. Moreover, there are also Telegram groups and channels in which other refugees - same language

speakers, namely, Iranian and Afghans - sell furniture, eggs, homemade food, and so on.

The circulation of information is not limited to social media channels. Gossip and rumor are also other methods that help the circulation of knowledge among women. However, this way of circulation does not always establish spaces of solidarity. Quite the contrary, gossip sometimes works as a control mechanism for women. Some interlocutors stated that they try not to spend too much time with Iranians because there would be rumors about them, may it be their lifestyles, relationships, or work experiences. Second, rumors and gossip can also cause misinformation to spread to the community and circulate information that no one is sure of its accuracy⁶². For instance, the news about the ‘mysterious lists’ in DGMM, which I mentioned in the Third Chapter, were circulated through refugee networks primarily via rumors. While refugee women were not informed by the DGMM about the lists, they all heard about their existence from their refugee friends without knowing whether they worked or not or even without knowing what those lists were. Yet, although gossip is likely to spread misinformation, it also has the potential to keep women aware of news and changes in the city or in the asylum regime in the absence of official and reliable information channels.

Gossip, rumor, or the circulation of information through other means also work to establish rapport and trust for ‘strangers’ and newly arrived refugees and brings some recognition to these ‘outsiders.’ For instance, I have noticed that when my interlocutors talked about a new refugee arriving in Yalova, they often focused on whether that person is from Iranian intelligence service and/or is someone who would endanger themselves and their families. Or, for instance, there were some rumors about me at the beginning of the fieldwork, which was shared with me in the following months of my presence in Yalova. According to the rumors, Mona,

⁶² Of course, this is also true for Telegram channels as there are some misinformation about NGOs or asylum laws circulated. I believe some refugees also deliberately utilize these digital platforms to deceive or exploit others.

with whom I met through Marjan who is a self-identified lesbian, thought I was also a lesbian since I was a friend of Marjan. Mona and her friend Sina shared this with me only after we spent months together. I was a ‘stranger’ in the city, and there were speculations about me, which would help women identify who I was and whether we had anything in common. The belated ‘confession’ of that gossip shows that refugee women use gossip to see if they have shared perspectives⁶³ with someone they know⁶⁴ less or how much they can trust. Accordingly, the limits of what they can share with someone they don’t know much, and the bounds of trust and rapport are drawn.

Moreover, sharing knowledge also works as a protection mechanism. Talking about their employers or neighbors, women warn each other about possible harassment, non-paying employers and workplaces, or exploitative and noisy landlords to avoid. In this context, sharing experiences and knowledge provides women an opportunity for developing protection mechanisms. In doing so, they try to make their life and work experiences, where exploitation and gendered violence are abundant, a little more secure. Still, the fact that several workplaces in the city known for their abuse are blacklisted by women and made known to their friend, shows that women’s experience and knowledge sharing mechanisms create protection for women in the absence of formal protection mechanisms. Through gossip and rumor, this shared knowledge turns into a collective resource that also creates protection for other refugee women.

⁶³ The shared perspective in this example defines the boundaries of our conversation. For instance, can we talk about ‘men,’ or can Mona and Sina make jokes about homosexuality or not. Conversation themes and intimacy change according to my sexual orientation and identity since some cis straight women had very little relation with trans and lesbian women and believed that they were not trustful people.

⁶⁴ Murphy also mentions his experience in his ethnographic fieldwork in Spain, where he experienced rumors about his identity. For more details: Michael D. Murphy, “Rumors of Identity: Gossip and Rapport in Ethnographic Research.”

Shared knowledge is mostly decentralized and locally organized knowledges. However, it does not mean that their scale is only limited to local. Locally organized shared knowledge circulates and spreads on different scales and is shared in wider networks, sometimes more officially, but sometimes through rumors and personal, informal conversations. For instance, refugees in Yalova often know what is happening in other satellite cities such as Eskişehir, Denizli, and Kayseri. They receive this information through their refugee friends in those cities or social media and Telegram groups. For instance, during the time of my fieldwork, I've observed that some refugees attempted to change their satellite cities based on this shared knowledge. Niaz was one of them. She wanted to change her satellite city from Yalova to Eskişehir since she heard that rents in Eskişehir are cheaper, and that social life is livelier than in Yalova. Such shared knowledge also helps women find the cracks in the system and develop extra navigation tools. For instance, Parisa, who learned that couples who want to live in the same city can more easily change their satellite city than single refugees, tried to change her city by telling Yalova PDMM that her partner lives in Denizli. However, who lived in Denizli was her friend, not a partner. And yet, upon learning this from another refugee who had previously changed her satellite due to partnership reasons, Parisa also used it even though she did not manage to change her city.

In addition to local and national scales, the transnational level is another scale where these different forms of knowledge(s) are shared as a solidarity practices. For example, when I was conducting fieldwork, the third-country resettlement was almost stopped due to the states' border closures, travel bans, and refugee quotas. In that period, private refugee sponsorship began to be preferred by refugees, especially LGBTI+ and those who have Church-based networks. Although sponsorship mostly works through associations, it is possible to apply for sponsorship on an individual level. Also, individual networks play an important role when contacting associations. For example, two lesbian women I met in Yalova, who are now in Canada with sponsorship, became aware of this system

through an Iranian friend they knew before and applied for sponsorship through that friend's efforts from Canada.

By sharing their knowledge and experiences in different scales, refugee women try to make room for themselves amidst the limitations, gendered violence, and exploitation. Sharing knowledge(s) that is produced through women's own experiences and expanded, shared, and used by others creates the conditions for survival, protection, and collectivity. Together, such solidarity practices provide the women the necessary energy to continue and claim their lives.

5.3 Mutual Support and Care as part of solidarity

I looked at the lamp in panic. Was my head spinning, or was it an earthquake? Sounds from the apartment proved that it was an earthquake. A state of fear dispersed the corridors of the building. I opened the door and saw the neighbors running down the stairs. I went downstairs in panic, too. Yalova is one of Turkey's earthquake-prone cities. Even though many years have passed since the 1999 Gölcük earthquake⁶⁵, this large-scale and destructive earthquake has become a collective trauma not only for the people of Yalova but also for the entire Turkey. I followed my neighbors and exited the building, thinking the possibility of a similarly large-scale earthquake. As we waited outside amidst the panic wave continued with aftershocks, I received a message on my phone: "are you okay"?

The message came from Marjan. She wrote to check if I was okay after the earthquake. Then Roya's message followed hers, and the message traffic began between us. We all mentioned that if someone doesn't want to be alone, they can come to the others' house or we could spend time in the streets together. Eventually, I spent that night staying in my own house. When we met the next day,

⁶⁵ The 1999 Gölcük Earthquake was a 7.6 magnitude earthquake that occurred on August 17, 1999. The earthquake, which was felt in many cities in the Marmara Region, caused tens of thousands of deaths.

we talked about how we spent the night. Roya said, “We are used to the earthquakes here, but you are new in the city; you are not used to it, so I was worried about you⁶⁶”. “I was really scared,” I said. I was not the only one who feared the earthquake. The girlfriend of Marjan was very afraid of it too, and instead of staying in their own house, she and Marjan stayed at another friend’s house for a week since that the house had a garden where they could seek shelter in the case of an earthquake.

Women show mutual support to each other in such emergency and crisis moments such as an earthquake and the pandemic. Although I completed my field research before the Covid-19 pandemic, I learned from my contacts in the city that mutual support and care mechanisms have become more intensified in Covid-19. For example, when unemployment highly increased among refugees due to the pandemic, women started to share houses because they had difficulty paying their rent. Again, when Marjan received financial support from one of my friends⁶⁷, she paid her bills with part of that money and shared the rest with other refugee women in Yalova.

Of course, support and care practices of refugee women are not limited to emergency moments. Rather, they are multilayered and disperse into many aspects of everyday life. The most common mutual support and care mechanism among women is to accompany other refugees who do not speak Turkish to the routine

⁶⁶ Roya's statement of "we got used to it" also showed that they were not just waiting in Yalova for resettlement; they created deep relations and became part of the emotional accumulation of the city, and collective memories.

⁶⁷ This money, sent through the various solidarity budgets established during the time of Corona, led to the addition of refugee women to a wider mutual care practice. Dean puts clearly the potential and reflection of mutual aid projects as following sentences “Mutual aid projects, by creating spaces where people come together based on some shared need or concern but encounter and work closely with people whose lives and experiences differ from their own, cultivate solidarity.” (137). For more details see: *Spade, D. (2020). Solidarity not charity: Mutual aid for mobilization and survival. Social Text, 38(1), 131-151.*

doctor check-ups and help them with translation. Similarly, women also show support and care by welcoming newly arrived refugees, hosting them until they find their place, and helping them find housing and employment. Furthermore, caring for sick people and providing emotional support to people in crises are also among women's mutual care practices. For instance, Zahra had a friend who got an accident and became disabled. Zahra took on her friend's physical care, who started living in a wheelchair. They reached out an NGO to get financial support for the treatment; however, since the amount they received was not enough, Zahra and others also started fundraising for their friend. Then, Zahra accompanied her when her friend had to go to Istanbul because Yalova State Hospital could not provide adequate treatment services. And for the long-term treatment process, Zahra, with a group of friends, created a list of companions among themselves, who had to go to Istanbul regularly for her treatment.

The story of Zahra and her friend makes refugee women's layered carework visible. As mentioned above, mutual care performed between women is not limited to physical forms. As feminist scholars put it, care, or domestic labor with a broader definition, also includes emotional labor, which includes affects and feelings (Bakker, 2003: 32; Anderson 2000). Zahra and her friends cared for their disabled friend not only in physical/material ways but also provided emotional support for her. They also supported their friends in fighting the depression that sank after the accident. Indeed, this is something that refugee women do almost all the time: they support each other in fighting depression, stress, anxiety, and hopelessness caused by the uncertain asylum processes and difficult living/working conditions in Turkey.

Among different forms of care and support, childcare as a mutual care also constitutes an important solidarity practice among refugee women. I have noticed that the eldest child of the house is often the main partner in sharing the care work with their mothers. However, there are also women who share the care work with their friends. Childcare practices of refugee women might remind us of the black

women's strategies, where they share childcaring since they have to take care of white families' children for earning their livelihood and, in doing so, leave their own children with other black women (Collins, 2002). For instance, Farishta shared childcare responsibilities with Samira, whom she was staying with. Thanks to the different working hours, Farishta stayed at home with Samira's children, preparing their meals while Samira was at work. Likewise, when Samira was at home, she was doing chores such as cleaning and cooking. It is important to emphasize that this is not just care based on physical work. As mentioned before, there is also an emotional care and support involved in Samira and Farishta's solidarity practices, such as listening to each other's problems and seeking solutions together.

During my stay in Yalova, I also tried to spend regular time with my interlocutors' children regularly and help them with their schoolwork, as I mentioned in the Methodology Chapter. For instance, I regularly spent time with Elya's children and saw them two days a week. Elya had two children. One of them went to primary school, and the other one was an elementary school student. I met with children after school, had lunch with them, and helped with their homework. Besides, I watched Messi's football games a few times when his mother couldn't attend because she had to work. I tried to share Elya's responsibility for childcare since she was a single mom and had no one to share this responsibility with. Of course, I was not the only non-refugee in this care network. The women stated that sometimes they received support from a co-worker from Turkey and rarely from their employers at their workplaces. Women utilize these support ties with locals usually for finding housing and receiving advice on how to deal with landlords, and sometimes for talking about their personal lives and sharing problems. Malihe, for instance, was a woman who migrated with her husband and received support from her ex-employer when they searched for a new flat. Once, when Malihe and her family celebrated the Yalda night, a festive night in Iranian culture celebrated on the winter solstice, they invited me to their home, where I also met with Malihe's

ex-employer. While the employer supported Malihe and her husband in finding a home, Malihe and her family also invited the employer to their home and made her a part of their family celebration, since the employer did not have any family in Yalova. That night, she emphasized many times how she feels less lonely when she spends time with Malihe's family.

Of course, by mentioning these practices, I do not want to romanticize them by arguing that refugee women consciously decide to care about each other and organize around these practices as mutual aid projects do⁶⁸. Women do not always enjoy and perform such care labor with 'love' or willingly. Or they do not decide to develop such support and solidarity mechanisms collectively by saying "this is our only way to resist the challenges we face due to the asylum regime." In other words, solidarity does not always come in the form of conscious choices. Rather, different than making conscious choices or following a deliberate agenda like mutual aid projects do, emotions, feelings, and affect provide an important basis for establishing the ground for women's solidarity practices. Needless to say, the desire to cope with the feelings of exhaustion, desperation, loneliness, uncertainty, and insecurity often plays a crucial role in establishing such care practices. Furthermore, these practices are often born out of necessity. For example, single mothers repeatedly stated how tired they are of taking care of their children all the time. They also stated that taking on someone else's responsibility was much more tiring. However, they also underlined that this was only way to deal with insecurity where there was no other social support mechanism.

⁶⁸ For instance, since the failure of black children was rooted in constant hunger, which affected their concentration and success in school, in 1969, black panthers organized a "free breakfast program" for the low-income black school children, which started with 115 children and reached 20.000 at the end of the same year. For more detail: <https://www.solid-ground.org/the-radical-history-of-the-free-breakfast-program/>

On the other hand, some women cannot create spaces of mutual support due to their particular necessities or the lack of necessary personal networks. The only female interlocutor among my interlocutors who had a disabled child, repeatedly expressed how difficult it was to care for her child even if she shared the care work with her husband. She also added that she couldn't share her care work with anyone else because her child was disabled. And since her husband worked during the day, she couldn't leave the house or spend time for her personal care. Another interlocutor stated that when she first came to Yalova, she could not find anyone to take care of her child. Because she did not have money to hire a babysitter, her child waited in front of the door all day while her mother worked in the restaurant. These varying experiences show us that in satellite cities where the state provides limited services and support, refugee women produce various care mechanisms to continue their lives and survive. Sometimes, these are care mechanisms performed voluntarily and serve to support, empower, or heal each other; sometimes, they are practices that create a double burden on women and increase the feeling of tiredness that women already have in all their asylum processes. However, wherever their motivation stems from, women's mutual care and support practices show again that collective mechanisms help women claim their lives during long waiting times. As Dean Spade discusses in his article called *Solidarity Not Charity*, where he focuses on the mutual aid projects, these practices are "building new social relations that are more survivable" (Spade, 2020:136), and underlines that they cultivate survival and resistance collectively. In this vein, it wouldn't be wrong to argue that in a world where carelessness became so widespread⁶⁹ and "a systemic level of *banality* permeates our everyday carelessness" (Chatzidakis, et.al,

⁶⁹ Devaluation of care and domestic work is highly related to its association with women's labor and has been criticized by feminists for many years. For more different approaches to the care labor and domestic work, See: for the second wave feminism: Delphy, C. (1980). The main enemy. *Feminist Issues*, 1(1), 23-40., for Marxist feminist approach: Federici, S. (2012). *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction, and feminist struggle*. Brooklyn, NY: PM Press. Socialist feminist: Hartmann, H. (1976). Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex. *Signs*, 1(3). 137-169. black feminists: Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Pluto Press.

2020: 11), such care and support practices developed by refugee women become radical political action and enable them to claim their lives.

5.4 Resistance: Women Claiming Their Lives

Negar had problems with her husband in Iran. She told her mother about the violence she was exposed to and that she wanted a divorce. Her mother pressured her not to do it by arguing that being a divorced woman is hard and looked down by relatives. Negar didn't listen. Despite all the heteropatriarchal pressures including the risk of being rejected by her family, she was able to get divorced. Meanwhile, her then-husband threatened to kill her and pour acid on her face. Negar did not reunite with her husband; and fled to Turkey. She said, at least, she did not comply with her ex-husband's pressure.

After Negar decided to migrate to Turkey, she planned her travel. She did not know anyone in Turkey, but the country was the closest one without a visa requirement. When Negar arrived in Turkey, she went to the UNHCR in Ankara. Another refugee she met while registering with the UNHCR told her that she wanted to be assigned to Yalova or Eskişehir since she heard that other cities are hard to live in. According to Negar, this shared knowledge 'saved' her life: "They first want to send me to Kayseri. What would I do in Kayseri!" After arriving in Yalova, she stayed in a hotel for a week since she did not know anyone there. After a week, she met with an Iranian woman who also helped her with translation from Farsi to Turkish when she tried to find a house. "A cold house with no food. Since there was no money, I hired a house without gas. I was at home with two coats to be warm. I was sick for three months. But I endured harsh conditions, I was always strong".

Negar described her first days in her flat in Turkey with these sentences. As I explained in the previous chapters, during her four years of waiting in Turkey. Negar, as with many other refugee women, continued to face multiple forms of

gendered violence and exploitation, which started with legal violence and continued with everyday encounters. And yet, Negar never gave up. She struggled against this multilayered and multifaceted oppression and managed to build a new life for herself in Yalova.

Now, when I think about what I experienced all these years... I managed all these; if anyone told me I would experience these situations, I'd have said 'I could never cope with them.' But I did; actually, I was stronger than I expected (Negar, 2019).

Negar's story is not a unique success story. Millions of women like Negar migrate to claim their lives around the world. Contrary to traditional migration literature, their migration is not dependent on men; many women decide and plan their migration on their own and mostly do so to claim their own lives. To understand their migration experiences, I utilize the political concept "women claim their lives" coined by the feminist movement in Turkey.

In 2015, Istanbul Feminist Collective⁷⁰ (IFK) started to publish reports on women who killed perpetrators who exposed women to violence. These reports began to be published under the name of "women claiming their lives" to show that women resist male violence and that, contrary to the general representation of femicide in the media, they are not 'victims.' Rather, women continue to find ways to deal with male violence, and they will do so until the male-dominated system collapses (IFK, 2015:17). In the same spirit, the same year, the organizing committee of the feminist night march determined the main slogan of the march as *Hayatlarımıza Sahip Çıkıyoruz* (We Claim Our Lives).

This concept of claiming lives, different than self-defense, began to be used by feminists emphasize that self-defense is insufficient to explain women's killing of perpetrators of violence in order to prevent male violence. Self-defense is criticized by feminists not only because it is a legal concept but also because it is limited to the physical defense of oneself (Eyüboğlu, 2021). However, women's action to kill

⁷⁰ Istanbul Feminist Collective is a collective of women engaged in feminist politics in Istanbul in 2017.

perpetrators is not limited to preventing, stopping, and fighting back against male physical violence. It is also a struggle for rejecting and resisting all the restrictions on women's lives. As it is stated in the IFK's declaration: "We continue to claim our lives by fighting against the male-dominated system, developing various strategies and increasing women's solidarity in every space of our lives!" (IFK, 2015:18).

Following these sentences of IFK, in this section, I deployed women claiming their lives as a concept to understand the resistance practices of refugee women. For doing this, I benefited from feminist standpoint theory and bring it into dialogue with autonomy of migration literature in which women's everyday experiences constitute the ground for knowledge production to highlight the agency and movements of people rather than the restrictions. Therefore, I follow the everyday practices developed by refugee women to claim their lives. I believe this political discussion is crucial in understanding refugee women's resistance experiences. Although women's reasons differ, they all seek asylum, first, literally not to die, and second, with a motivation to start a new life or to continue their lives. At this point, I define "women claiming their lives" not only as a concept to understand the experiences of women who killed the perpetrator of violence but also as women's struggle to survive despite and amidst all forms of gendered violence and oppression they face during and before their migration. Therefore, my understanding of women's resistance practices also goes beyond physical defense. I consider their practices of claiming their lives not only a response to violence and discrimination. By claiming their lives, I believe that refugee women follow their desire to live their own life as they want and radically deconstruct the victim refugee women narrative.

To return to Negar's story: while her reason for asylum is based on the gendered violence she experienced, I believe that what makes Negar's story important for this political discussion is not only the gendered violence she experienced but also what she has done afterward: the strength and courage she found in herself to build

a new life⁷¹. This becomes clearer when we pay attention to her sentences where she underlined how ‘strong she is’ several times and even ‘stronger than she expected.’ Her decision to divorce, her refusal of the ex-husband’s wish to reunite, her decision to migrate alone to Turkey, finding a house and job, and dealing with the complicated asylum regulations constitute the crucial parts of her story. In many ways, her story was similar to the stories of many other women I met. While the women I interviewed talked briefly about their experiences of violence and oppression in Iran, almost all of them talked at length about their struggles to eliminate them. Therefore, while the violence, oppression and danger of death are often the main reason for leaving Iran, the strongness in their stories occurs when they take action and reject the performing gender role expected of them. Therefore, women who claim their own lives undoubtedly engage in political action. They not only object to violence but also resist the roles imposed on them and struggle to build their lives again – and in the way they want. In this context, claiming their lives gives women confidence and pride in themselves and creates empowerment (Eyüboğlu, 2021). Even though claiming their own lives looks like an individual act of empowerment, but, as I discussed above that I consider it as a collective political action, which requires solidarity. As in Negar’s and others’ stories shared in the previous sections, shared knowledge and experiences as well as mutual care and support mechanisms play a very important role in shaping women’s migration experiences. Negar, for instance, explained that once she learned fluent Turkish, she has begun to help other refugees and interpret for them in the hospitals: “When I first came, I didn’t know anyone, and I didn’t know the language at all. Now, I’m helping others because I had difficulties myself. I know how hard it is to be alone”.

Although Negar and other women often mention the support they receive from other refugees, I have noticed that they also pay special attention to underline the difficulties they experience in Turkey and, more importantly, differentiate them

⁷¹ Meriç Eyüboğlu's self-defense and claiming their lives differentiation based on the IFK discussions is a good review and informative on the discussions of feminist groups in Turkey which I am also part of.

from other refugees' problems. For instance, I heard Negar and other women many times saying "none of them [refugees] suffered as much as I did". Or it was quite common among women to blame other refugees for being 'fake' cases, migrating for economic reasons, which prevents their resettlement since asylum resettlement is based on the quota of third countries. This emphasis brings individuality to the fore and makes it appear that women blame others, not the asylum regime, that they do not try hard enough and do not deserve refugeeness. This self-differentiation, of course, reflects on the solidarity practices and causes separation between refugees as the asylum regime targets all the quota systems it has. However, even though this creates separation among refugees, almost all women who explain the difficulties they face due to the asylum regulation or when they talk about racism use the word 'we' without clarifying who they are. I don't remember how many times I heard the sentence "They don't know what we live here" in the interviews. Individuality and collectivity intersect their narratives contingently. While talking about their own life, they distinguish themselves from other refugees. When referring to the structural problems and legal regulations, they do not stop emphasizing their common experiences with others. Therefore, it will not be an exaggeration to argue that this self-differentiation and emphasis on strongness are resistance mechanisms developed by women to feel stronger and find a motivation to continue. Moreover, this 'we' still indicates the importance of shared experiences with its potential for a coalition to collective struggle.

5.4.1 Different forms of Resistances

The act of "claiming their lives" takes many different forms in the refugee women's lives. Women constantly navigate, negotiate, and resist different forms of oppression and exploitation mechanisms. And they develop different strategies according to their positions in the "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2000). As I explained elsewhere in this dissertation, refugees who apply for asylum in Turkey spend many years for resettlement to the third countries. Among the women I met,

the minimum waiting period was two years, while there were women who had been waiting in Turkey to be resettled in a third country for six years. While the process of waiting is often perceived as a period of stuckness, governmentality and passivity (Hage, 2009; Crapanzano 1985), in recent years, scholars have challenged this type of understanding of waiting and shown how refugees actively engage with this waiting process (Bandak & Janeja, 2018; Khosravi, 2014). This engagement, however, is highly contingent on the degree of uncertainty and hope (or the lack of it) that refugees experience. As Bjertrup et.al. (2021) illustrate in their research in a refugee camp in Greece, refugees' engagement with the waiting process varies according to the degree of uncertainty they experience and the hope they have (or don't) for resettlement. The same can be observed between different cohorts of refugee women in Yalova. For instance, when the resettlement process was shorter compared to recent years (one to third years), the older cohorts of refugees with more hope for resettlement tended to learn less Turkish since they believed they could be resettled soon. However, the ones with less hope for the resettlement in a near future more actively engage with the life in Turkey as they wait. For instance, it was quite common among refugee women in Yalova to participate in training and courses in the *Halk Eğitimi Merkezi* (Public Education Center). Many women attend vocational courses such as language, sewing, and hairdressing. By going to these courses, women not only aim to start their lives as more 'qualified' workers when they eventually resettle in a third country, but more so, make their lives easier in Turkey. "What am I supposed to do, just sitting idle here? I want to improve my skills.... Maybe, I can find more job opportunities" (Nasrin, 2019).

As Nasrin underlines, women feel more confident and empowered when they actively engage with the time (years) they spend in Turkey. Of course, this active waiting is not solely limited to improving skills or gathering new ones. Women also actively follow their asylum cases and demand their rights. For example, refugee women follow up on their cases, such as going to UNHCR and DGMM, sending e-mails, and writing petitions against long waiting processes. While doing this, they also inform each other about the current changes in the asylum regime,

find connections with lawyers, and build awareness among each other about rights. Therefore, they are not only defending their own rights, following their cases, but also helping others to keep claiming their lives.

When we look at the labor practices, explained in the Chapter 4, women work under harsh conditions for long hours and even sometimes without a day off. Exploitation and gendered violence are quite common in the workplace. In these labor processes, where there is no work permit and where deportability is used to maintain these exploitative working conditions, it is unrealistic to expect women to develop union organization and/or strike⁷². But that does not mean that women follow the rules of the system that constructs them as docile and exploitative bodies. For example, Parisa works as a tailor for 12 hours a day. When she goes to the Yalova PDMM for compulsory signature days, she often turns that half-day into a full-day off, telling her employer that her work at the PDMM takes longer than expected. This small example shows us how, rather than confronting her employer, she develops other forms of resistance through indirect action and creates a necessary rest and leisure time for herself, even if it is only half a day. Or, to prevent themselves from the employers, co-workers, and customs sexual abuse, some women pretend to be married or tell ‘lies’ that they have a boyfriend who also lives in Yalova. Also, as I explained in the Chapter 4, some women turning their homes into workplaces to save themselves from labor exploitation, gendered violence and racism.

As I mentioned in the Chapter 3, almost all women do sports to protect themselves from possible gendered violence on the streets as well as to care for their physical and mental wellbeing. However, doing sport is not only aimed at physical and mental well-being or bodily improvement. Since most women do sports with their friends at the seaside and in the gym, this is also a way of socializing for women.

⁷² Of course, there are examples of strikes organized by refugee workers. However, these examples are limited. But for one striking example in Turkey, please check: <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/331724/saya-iscilerinin-direnisi-kazanimla-sonuclandi> date of access: 12.04.2022

They meet with new people in the gym or meet with their friends and share their knowledge(s) and experiences.

Among women's empowerment and self-care activities, doing various activities will make them feel good, such as taking nature walks and spending time on the beach in Yalova. On the other hand, to ensure the justice and receive an attention to their problems in the case of gendered violence they face, women also use social media. After the violent incident of Ayda, which I described in Chapter 3, especially LGBTI+ refugees in Yalova and other cities of Turkey made a social media action with the hashtag *mynameisAyda* to point out the violence they face and demand justice and mechanisms for protection.

Humor, sarcasm, and not taking things lightly (*ciddiye almama*) are among the methods that women often apply in their everyday resistance practices. Ana, for instance, who always had problems with her neighbors, said that her neighbor always did racist things such as calling the police or attacking her friends, but she laughed at them and said, "I don't even take it seriously anymore; I just laugh at what is said; that's how I deal with it".

Laughter is used as a method of resistance by many women. For instance, as emphasized elsewhere throughout in this dissertation, men's constant insistence on sexual partnership with refugee women is among the things women 'joke' about the most when they get together. However, reactions to racism, gendered violence, and sexual abuse may not always look or feel as joyful as using humor and laughter. For instance, Mina, who was raped by her boss, remained silent until I interviewed her and, more importantly, preferred to ignore the rape. She said it was because she feared being labeled as a woman who had been raped. In a heteropatriarchal society, rape works as a mechanism by which the raped is blamed and stigmatized as having loose morals. Thus, Mina's reservation about talking about the rape is quite understandable. But another reason why she did not tell anyone about the rape is the difficulty she had coping with this experience. Instead

of remembering and retelling, Mina tried to move on with her life by forgetting this bodily and emotionally violent experience. “I was thinking and crying at night. But then I said, ‘let it go, Mina.’ I stopped thinking about it, and I started doing other things”.

Among many things Mina does, she also draws, and I’ve noticed that some of her paintings draw attention to violence against women. Thus, although she does not verbally express the violence she experienced, she turns her silence into action with her art. These paintings can be considered as both a way of healing and a way of continuing to live, as well as an effort to make visible the experiences of gendered violence shared by many women⁷³. Although Mina does not voice her own experience in words, she has repeatedly told me that she paints to empower women and raise awareness against gendered violence. She even tried to open an exhibition with her paintings. Therefore, her paintings were “as an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken” (Lorde, 2012:44).

5.4.2 Dismantling Victim Refugee Woman Narrative

Refugee women are generally represented as suffering bodies who are the victims and need to be ‘saved’⁷⁴. Their representation as voiceless, helpless, and ahistorical subjects causes the constitution of refugee subjects without experiences, feelings, and demands (Polychroniou: 2021: 254). However, women who claim their lives deconstruct this victimhood narrative in many ways. As I discussed in the previous chapters, refugee women face many difficulties, gendered violence, and oppression in every aspect of their asylum experiences. Different actors restrict their lives,

⁷³ She even opened an exhibition in the past months.

⁷⁴ On the other hand, this representation has gendered differentiations. While male refugees are mostly represented as a threat to the destination countries.

mobilities, and freedoms, and they become open to gendered violence and exploitation. But women never give up claiming their lives. By claiming their lives women dismantle the narratives⁷⁵ of victim refugee women.

Therefore, any study, including this one, on the everyday experiences of refugee women requires to move beyond the simple dichotomy of victimhood/agency and focus on the everyday repertoire of refugees' practices. Women's experiences offer us a rich repertoire of practices and actions. So, what I am trying to emphasize in this section is not to determine objective criteria to illustrate that refugee women are not victims. I argue that by claiming their lives, refugee women deconstruct the narratives of victim refugee women and destabilize the framing of their practices with the victim/agency dichotomy.

First, almost all women I interviewed verbally opposed their representation as victims. As I explained in the Chapter 4, where I discuss the NGO workers' behaviors toward refugees, refugee women constantly underline that they are not refugees who fled from war. Instead, it was too common in their narratives that they had luxurious and good lives in Iran, were graduated from universities, and had middle/upper-class backgrounds. They constantly emphasized that they left their country to save their lives, not for economic reasons. By doing so, they attempt to resist the dominant perception of refugees as needy victims. However, this emphasis to differ themselves from economic migrants or war refugees runs the risk to re(produce) the division between 'bogus' and 'real', or 'deserving' and 'undeserving' asylum seekers. Being aware that such binaries can unintentionally

⁷⁵ Westers feminists' approach to "third world women" as subjects to be saved and defining themselves as liberated has been criticized by many post-colonial feminist scholars (Mohanty, 2003; Mahmood, 2005). However, this critique does not offer an in-depth explanation for the Turkish context, especially for Iranian women. Although this discussion is conducted in Turkey based on how Afghans and Syrians are "backward and underdeveloped than us," or perfectly fit with the orientalist representation of "oppressed Middle Eastern women", when it comes to Iranians, the discourse on the illiterate women of the underdeveloped country does not work very well. Approaches to the Iranian are mostly based on their refugeeness, being alone women, being deprived of male protection, or being subjected to violence by the men next to them. Therefore, victimization in the case of Iranian women in Yalova/Turkey is not based on being Iranian but more on refugeeness.

victimize other refugee groups and create hierarchies between them as the asylum regimes do, I consider women's emphasis on their 'good lives' in Iran or how 'strong' they as a verbal resistance that they have developed to resist against the image of a 'silent,' 'miserable,' 'victim' woman associated with being a refugee woman.

Second, women also dismantle this victimhood narrative by challenging the gender norms and patriarchal roles they are expected to follow. For example, a single mom, Mina is not a woman who sacrifices herself for her child and builds her life according to the needs of her child. Her mothering practices challenge the ideology of "intensive mothering"⁷⁶. Rather, she has a life where she prioritizes her own desires. For this reason, everyone who hears that she has a child is very surprised, and sometimes they accuse Mina of being an irresponsible mother. Mina does not perform the role of a self-sacrificing mother who pushes her desires and wishes to the background. For instance, during the time of my fieldwork, she regularly left his 14 years old son in Yalova alone and went to Istanbul to find a gallery to open an exhibition for her paintings. In doing so, she not only resists the heteropatriarchal understanding of motherhood, care work, and domestic labor and also deconstruct the victimize refugee narrative since victimized subjects are often considered as subjects without desires, aspirations for their own. Mina reminded us she is a subject with her desires and her subjectivity cannot be reduced to her motherhood.

These expected and normative gendered performances are not only limited to care relations but also extend into the display of bodies in the public spaces. Heteropatriarchy defines the certain form of femininities as more 'acceptable' and 'respectable.' For instance, butch lesbians and trans women mostly face gendered

⁷⁶ Intensive mothering is defined as the one who "is devoted to the care of others; she is self-sacrificing and "not a subject with her own needs and interests" (Bassin et al., 1994, p. 2 as cited in Arendell, 2000:1194). This ideology has become dominated in the North America. For more detail see: *Arendell, T. (2000). Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: The Decade's Scholarship. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62, 1192-1207.*

violence and discrimination since they do not meet the criterion of being 'acceptable' female bodies, and they are often considered as 'deviant' bodies. On the other hand, being heterosexual does not mean automatically fitting with the gender roles shaped by heteropatriarchy, either. Hyperfemininity is also not considered within the expected boundaries of 'acceptability' and 'respectability'. For example, being well-groomed and doing make-up seem to fit heteropatriarchal expectations of proper womanhood but being so 'well-groomed' as a refugee woman is always criticized. Women's refugeeness is questioned in these cases since they do not match the existing image of victim refugee women or instantly fall into the category of 'sexually available' women. Especially due to the strict rules about women's clothing in Iran, women see dressing as they want as their most important gain in the migration process. Therefore, despite the stigmatization and labeling I described in Chapter 3, they continue to wear the clothes they like and put on make-up as they wish. This shows us that women do not live in ways expected of them and rather follow their own wants and desires. In this sense, their bodies become "both a site of oppression and a site of a resistance" (Moss & Dyck, 1996:474 as cited in McDowell, 1999:61). By insisting on being who they are, women both claim their lives and also reclaim power over their bodies. Of course, this does not mean that women feel safe and comfortable when they dress, talk, behave or live as they want. As McDowell (1999: 61) reminds us, resistance does not have to have positive connotations; it sometimes occurs from fear. Feeling insecure and anxious is always embedded in refugee women's resistance practices, even when they challenge the victimizing discourses and attitudes.

However, the relationship between agency and victimization is much more complex. Refugee women use the victim narrative when navigating and negotiating structures such as institutions and laws. In some cases, refugee women even turn the victimized refugee woman narrative into a tool of resistance. For example, when her landlord wanted to evict them from their apartment, Mona said, "I am a single mom. Where should I go with my children"? By emphasizing her 'vulnerability' as a single mother with kids, she tried to revoke the 'victim'

narrative and appeal to the landlord's compassion to stop the eviction. Similarly, women constantly emphasize that they are in very situations when encountering the DGMM officials. Emphasizing this vulnerability, especially in their relations with the DGMM, is likely to provide room for maneuver for women in the transnational asylum regime, where the possibility of resettlement is based on vulnerability and victimization. Hence, women use the victim refugee women narrative to navigate different systems of power. Instead of seeing these practices as (re)producing the victim narrative, I interpret them as women's use of existing discourses for their own survival and everyday struggles, which also shows that refugee women occupy different subject positions in different encounters. Their use of existing discourses on refugee women's victimization is contingent. They resist this labeling in some encounters and accept and use it in others. Therefore, there is no monolithic/entire positions or tools for resistance. Tools and positions vary according to the social category and position women occupy and the context they encounter.

All practices women utilize for claiming their lives are political acts and forms of solidarity and resistance. In their encounters with their neighbors, DGMM officials, employers, landlords, doctors, other local people, or other refugees, women continue to resist and claim their lives where their everyday lives become both a field of oppression and resistance.

5.4. Thoughts on Framing Solidarity, Resistance and Agency

Although the asylum regime, the satellite city regulation, and the informal labor market increase women's insecurity and exacerbate the gendered violence, harassment, and exploitation they face, refugee women try to claim their lives in numerous creative and intimate ways. In other words, the lives of refugee women, which are in the nexus of gendered violence and exploitation, involve an active struggle. Women navigate different forms of gendered violence and exploitation in their everyday lives, workplaces, communities, homes, and so on. At this point, shared knowledge, common experiences, and mutual care and support practices

provide a ground for refugee women to claim their lives and continue their active struggle amidst all restrictive and exploitative structures.

Focusing on refugees' mutual care and support networks and the shared knowledges and experiences not only helps us better understand different aspects of refugee women's life and but also enables us to reconsider some of the concepts we use to analyze asylum regimes and refugees' experiences. First, these resistance and solidarity practices, once again, show us how crucial care work is in the lives of refugee women. Sharing their experiences, mutual childcare practices, and caring about friends constitute an essential place in women's lives and underline the revaluation of care work devalued by heteropatriarchy and capitalism.

Second, the asylum regime constructs refugee women as individualized subjects by depriving refugees of their rights with quota regulations and limited support mechanisms. Despite this, refugees often act in solidarity, even though their solidarity practices sometimes also include individuality. These practices show that women cultivate multiple forms of solidarity and conceive both individual and collective tools of resistance. They take an active role in producing shared knowledge(s) and circulate them to help other women resist the system of oppression by also attempting to claim their lives despite those oppressive regimes.

At this point, I believe that despite their oppression, the motto "women claim their lives" enable us to see important emancipatory practices. However, it is important to emphasize that I do not embrace women's migration decisions or solidarity practices as intrinsically emancipatory, but I still claim that there is a revolutionary potential. As De Genova (2018) puts it clearly:

But I do believe that what we see—regardless of what people may say or think when they migrate—what we see, objectively speaking, is an ever-increasing fact of migration on a global scale where people are putting their needs first and defying the constituted authority of the state and the sovereign power of the border regimes and the border police, and disregarding the law in favor of saying "human needs come first." That for me is a radical opening for the possibility of imagining a different world—in an objective sense.

This radical opening, as De Genova puts it, is an ongoing process (Weeks, 2004) that also has a feminist potential. Sharing experiences, finding commonalities in these shared experiences, and having a passionate desire to continue and claim their lives are significant feminist practices that refugee women cultivate and utilize. The feminist potential of refugee women's everyday practices comes from their will to build and live in a world, where no one controls their bodies, sexualities, and desires. They reject the roles imposed on them, and in doing so, their lives and bodies become not only spaces of oppression but also of resistance.

Third, the active role in claiming their lives also deconstructs the homogenizing narrative of victim refugee women. Refugee women are defined as 'refugees,' 'Iranians,' 'sexually available women', 'victims of violence', and/or 'docile bodies'. Their subject positions, subjectivities, and personalities are categorized under these labels, which erase the specificity of women's experiences and rather gather them under homogenizing categories. On the other hand, women resist these structures by claiming their lives, following their desires, and going back and forth between different strategies and categories. By finding maneuver spaces against different systems of power by utilizing their solidarity practices and claiming their lives, women destabilize the narratives of victim refugee women. As I explained in this chapter, their experiences move beyond the victim/agency dichotomy and show us a more nuanced picture where one can be oppressed by structural forms of power and resist those structures at the same time.

Lastly, while resisting the roles that are imposed on them, refugee women also change the meaning of satellite city, which has an important place in their migration experiences. Following Henri Lefebvre (1991) and his conceptualization of "production of space", production of space is not one-sidedly organized by the state; refugees reacted to these produced spaces by producing solidarity practices. Therefore, the distinction between representations of space (conceived) and spaces of representation (lived) provides a fertile ground for an understanding of satellite cities as the representation of power, control and surveillance, on the one hand, solidarity and resistance. While the city works a space of confinement and

surveillance mechanism for the state, a tool for controlling the refugees, it also becomes a space of resistance and solidarity for the refugees themselves. Even in the conditions of surveillance, confinement, and control, refugee women create solidarity within these spaces of confinement. The solidarity spaces maybe not be enough to dismantle the asylum regime's violence and surveillance; however, they provide the ground to resist this power of oppression and create an opportunity for refugee women to claim their lives. Therefore, refugee women dismantle not only the victim refugee woman narrative but also transform the meaning of satellite city from a space of surveillance, control, and confinement to a space of solidarity and resistance.

CHAPTER 6

IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION AND HOW TO MOVE ON?

My dissertation focuses on the experiences of Iranian refugee women in one of Turkey's satellite cities, Yalova. Refugee women have lived in this small-sized city until their resettlement to third countries, and their lives in Turkey are affected by ongoing changes in the asylum regime, which consists of a range of local, national, and transnational actors, regulations, and policies. These women find themselves situated in transnational asylum and border regimes that deeply reconfigure their waiting and everyday practices. I will briefly highlight just a few of these changes which happened in the previous years before and after my fieldwork and which have closely reshaped the lives of the interlocutors of this thesis.

In order to understand the key regulations related to borders, migration and exile of recent years, we need to start with the EU-Turkey deal of March 2016⁷⁷. This agreement aimed to stop so-called irregular migration and ostensibly to improve the conditions of refugees and their access to basic rights in Turkey. In taking a closer look at this agreement, it was evidently a major milestone in the externalization of the EU borders⁷⁸ and the “defense” of Fortress Europe⁷⁹. The

⁷⁷ For more detail please check: Öztürk, N. Ö. (2022). The Internal Effects of the EU-Turkey Deal on Turkey's Migration and Asylum System. In *The Informalisation of the EU's External Action in the Field of Migration and Asylum* (pp. 259-285). TMC Asser Press, The Hague.; Öztürk, N. Ö., & Soykan, C. (2019). Third Anniversary of EU-Turkey Statement: A Legal Analysis. *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*.

⁷⁸ For more detail please check: Heck, G., & Hess, S. (2017). Tracing the effects of the EU-Turkey Deal. *Movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, 3(2), 35-56.

⁷⁹ Although this is originally a military propaganda term dating back to World War II and the areas of Continental Europe under German occupation, today it refers to the strict border regime of the European Union and its increasing externalization.

deal stated that every irregular Syrian who came to Greece from the Aegean Sea after 20 March 2016 would be deported back to Turkey. For every Syrian deported from Greece to Turkey, the EU would accept a Syrian refugee who had waited in Turkey⁸⁰. However, in the following days, the deportation decision expanded to include other nationalities since the EU accepted Turkey as a “safe third country”. Immediately after the agreement, mass deportations began from Greece; just a few weeks later, 131 refugees from different African countries, but mostly from Pakistan were deported to Izmir in April 2016⁸¹.

The deal, as it aimed, initially caused a noticeable decrease in irregular crossings of people, but of course it pushed people on to more dangerous routes, with the Aegean Sea becoming a mass grave of refugees⁸². Additionally, the deal has also affected the refugee quotas of EU countries and the resettlement process of non-Syrian refugees. The waiting times, which were already lengthy — up to 10 years — got even longer.

Just a few months after the EU-Turkey deal, on July 15, there was a coup attempt in Turkey. The aftermath of this event was to bring about the criminalization of many civil society activities and an increased securitization of everyday life within the country, in ways that continue today. Within several days, the government declared a state of emergency, which also empowered it to issue emergency decrees. These included the issuance of Decree-Law No. 676, which expanded the scope of deportation and still applies today. As I discussed in Chapter 4, many

⁸⁰ The deal also included 3 million Euro support to Turkey, which later increased to 6 million and visa-free travel to Schengen area for Turkish citizens.

⁸¹ https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/04/160403_yunanistan_turkiye_gocmen date of access: 01.08.2022

⁸² For another example of readmission agreement and the human violation, violence and death in the Mediterranean Sea, please see: Stierl, M. (2019). Migrants Calling Us in Distress from the Mediterranean Returned to Libya by Deadly “Refoulement” Industry. *The Conversation*, 7.; Mezzadra, S., & Stierl, M. (2019). The Mediterranean battlefield of migration. *Open Democracy*, 12.

people in Turkey, even those granted refugee status, face the risk of deportation to their countries of persecution because of this Decree-Law.

This was a new period of intense securitization and militarization of the everyday lives of citizens and refugees. The streets were filled with ‘checkpoints,’ entailing constant ID checks and making daily life even more difficult, especially for refugees. These checkpoints not only brought about the securitization of general urban space, but also, they were set up at every city’s main exit and entrance points, further controlling freedom of movement and increasing surveillance. Police, or gendarmes, started to stop public transport and check every passenger’s ID card. These checkpoints and sudden inspections, which most citizens might have thought of as simply a nuisance and a waste of time and resources, were a source of constant fear and anxiety for refugees. Again, in the same period, receiving travel permits became far more difficult, and bus companies were not allowed to sell tickets to refugees who did not have travel permits.

Just like other refugees in Turkey, the women I interviewed were closely affected by the state of emergency. Most of the women I interviewed were in Turkey when the coup attempt took place. Almost all of them said that besides the material difficulties they experienced, they also started to feel deeply anxious and uncertain since they were in a country where they had applied for asylum with the hope of a safer and more secure life, but now it was becoming far more dangerous and unpredictable. At the same time, the irregular migration routes used by refugee groups had become the routes of many of Turkey's own citizens. While I was meeting Iranian women in exile, some of my friends from Turkey began to go into exile in other countries and I became the one who stayed in the country of persecution, anxious about my loved ones. The coup attempt and its reverberations across society meant that I came to experience my own friends becoming refugees in other countries, which deeply affected my perspective and understanding of refugees, exile, and borders.

If we continue with global political changes, the 2017 US presidential election occupies another significant place. After the victory of outlier Republican candidate Donald Trump, he issued an executive order titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry,” which came publicly to be known as the “Muslim ban.” This drastically affected the resettlement process of refugees, especially from those banned countries, including Iran. The USA — a hugely sought after third country resettlement destination — was suddenly off the list. The Iranian refugee friends waiting for many years for their resettlement to the USA were again stuck in Turkey, even though some of them had received confirmation of their acceptance and before Trump’s “Muslim ban.” Imagine that people who say goodbye to their friends, give away their furniture, and give their pets up for adoption are suddenly trapped in a new waiting without knowing how long it will last. This is what many refugees experienced in this time. Or, instead of going to the USA, which they somewhat knew and where they had networks, they had to choose new countries for their resettlement, countries they were in no such way familiar with, leading them to new uncertainties and insecurities.

Again, in February 2020, Turkey announced that it would no longer abide by the EU-Turkey deal and would no longer take on the role of preventing refugees’ movement to Europe. Turkey used refugees as political leverage to threaten EU countries so as to receive support for its military involvement in Syria, eventually deciding to open its Greek land border at Edirne in late February ⁸³. Thousands of people saw their chance and headed for the border, including some refugees who had become tired of the long waiting processes and left their satellite cities in the hope of crossing to Europe. At the border, they faced violence on the part of Greek soldiers using guns and tear gas. More refugees died at the borders of Europe, the “cradle of democracy,” which kept its eyes firmly shut. After almost a month,

⁸³ For more details for the event, please check No Border Pazarkule/Edirne Border Notes: No Border Pazarkule/ Edirne (2020) ‘Pazarkule/ Evros’tan notlar, birinci gün / Notes from Pazarkule/ Evros’, *Göçmen Dayanışması* [Migrant Solidarity] [<http://gocmendayanisma.com/2020/03/02/pazarkule-evrostan-notlar-birinci-gun-notes-from-pazarkule-evros-first-day/>] date of access: 05.08.2022

Turkey decided to again close its borders and evicted the remaining refugees that had been effectively contained there. Some of the refugees were sent to camps on the East side of Turkey. Two of my refugee friends were also among them, who stayed in the camps for a while and returned to their satellite cities many days later hit by hunger, coldness, and disappointment.

Meanwhile, in the early days of Turkey having opened its borders, the first COVID-19 case was officially announced by the Ministry of Health. The COVID-19 pandemic of course had an enormous impact on the entire transnational border regime and mobility generally, with refugees in Turkey being severely affected. Some countries closed their borders indefinitely within the scope of pandemic measures. For example, Australia, one of these countries, closed its borders for two years, thus suspending the resettlement of refugees waiting to move there for that entire time period. On the other hand, the closures that started with the COVID-19 pandemic caused many refugees in Turkey to lose their jobs for months, and their legal status prevented them from receiving any financial support from the state. They tried to cope with unemployment for months without any financial help. In Yalova, since refugee women were working mainly in the informal labor market, and particularly the service sector, the closure of cafes, *kahve* (coffee shops) and restaurants due to the COVID-19 restrictions deeply affected their income.

Elsewhere, with NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan after 40 years of occupation and the Taliban takeover of power in summer 2021, thousands of Afghan refugees began to migrate to Turkey. Consequently, a new wave of anti-refugee hatred emerged rapidly, which had already started with the mass migration of Syrians over the previous decade. This growing hatred did not remain limited to Syrians and Afghans and has generally made the daily lives of refugees from many different groups much harsher. All refugees have become open targets of anti-refugee hatred. They have started to face racist attacks in the streets and humiliation during their everyday lives. Their refugeeness has become more visible and a prime source of hostility. For instance, in my ongoing contact with women in

Yalova and other cities, they all state that it has become harder for them to find accommodation as a refugee.

In 2022, with the Russian occupation of Ukraine, Ukrainian refugees began migrating to many parts of Europe and Turkey. As of March 2022, 58,000 Ukrainians had arrived in Turkey (AIDA, 2021). And with this human mobility, border policies became the subject of everyday discussion again. There was once again a vulgar example of the how skin and eye color make such a difference in the eyes of the West, with asylum being no exception, as European countries raced to take in those who had fled Ukraine — with priority given to those fleeing that were “blond and blue-eyed”⁸⁴. Practicing double standards among the asylum seekers increased the sense injustice and anger felt by ‘non-Western’ refugees. I heard many times from my refugee friends ironically that would it be the best solution to simply dye their hair blond and get some blue contact lenses to try their chances as more deserving human beings in the eyes of the border regime. They felt worthless.

While I am writing these lines, Britain is trying to move refugee camps from Britain to Rwanda. Back in Turkey, the agenda is to send the Syrians “back home.” Hundreds of refugees are deported⁸⁵ every day by the Turkish state. Riots break out every day in detention centers⁸⁶. Due to the increasing police raids and high fines for taking on informal workers, employers have begun to choose not to employ refugee women at all. The alternative would be for them to obtain work permits for them and have them become registered workers in their satellite city, be it Yalova or elsewhere. Refugee women now find it difficult to get insecure,

⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/2022-03-02/ty-article-opinion/premium/western-media-likes-its-refugees-blond-and-blue-eyed/0000017f-db62-db22-a17f-fff3b6bb0000> date of access: 05.08.2022

⁸⁵ For some of the examples: <https://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/592-afgan-sinir-disi-edildi> date of access: 05.08.2022; <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/afganistan-uyruklu-221-gocmen-sinir-disi-edildi,-C9wcvF7d0CkhouYzeczRaw> date of access: 05.08.2022

⁸⁶ <https://t24.com.tr/video/izmir-de-harmandali-ggm-de-olay-ciktigi-gerekcesiyle-cok-sayida-siginmaci-avukatlariyla-gorusturulmeden-geri-gonderildi.48312> date of access: 05.08.2022

piecework jobs and if they can, they face deportability. Vida is one of those women, whose friend was just put in a detention center after being caught working informally.

These developments, along with many others, are not only news titles but rather the changes threatening refugee women's cases, their bodies, their lives. So, amid all this, I have written this thesis when things were becoming very claustrophobic, and it was not easy to find much of a sense of hope. Nevertheless, the experiences of refugee women, their lives, which they start every day in different ways despite all the difficulties, says something about hope. I wrote this thesis with much learning from them, their hopes, and their resistance.

I have witnessed some of the events I described above differently than my refugee friends and interlocutors — namely, not as a refugee but as an activist, friend, feminist, and researcher. In 2016, I visited a No Border Camp, the first transnational activist meeting after the EU-TR deal, in Thessaloniki. In 2020, I was there again on the Greek-Turkish border when my refugee friends, along with thousands of others, were hoping to cross into Europe. I saw how hard the waiting and uncertainty were for my refugee friends who were stuck in Turkey due to the Trump administration's Muslim ban or global COVID restrictions. In this vein, the stories I have told throughout the thesis were shaped by seeing and experiencing all these events with refugees. However, while writing this thesis, I have never claimed to represent refugee women's experiences. I was aware of the risk of discursive colonization of refugee women's experiences through claims of representation. Rather, by tracing the heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and racism through refugee women's experiences, I sought to find ways to oppose these systems of power and create spaces of solidarity that would enable us to cultivate a ground for common struggle with refugee women.

For this purpose, I used feminist methodology in my research and writing, where I took the women's experiences as a basis for knowledge production. I kept in mind that the knowledge I produce by centering women's experiences will always be

positional, situational, conditional, contingent, and contextual. Therefore, throughout the thesis, I have emphasized many times that ‘woman’ is not a homogenizing category and that all women do not share the same experiences, even if they are all refugees. It underlines the differences among women and how different women, based on their educational, marital, and economic backgrounds and their sexual and religious identities, have very divergent experiences of the experience the waiting process in Turkey. Considering how varied social positions shape women's experiences differently, I deployed intersectionality as a core concept of my thesis. I used this framework to exhibit the overlap and integration of various forms of oppression, which allowed me to focus not solely on women’s identities (such as, single mother, lesbian, and so on) or the asylum system’s legal categories (such as recognized refugee, conditional refugee, asylum seeker and so on) but on the interrelationship of power structures that constitute these identities in the first place. Thus, with ethnographic research conducted from an intersectional feminist approach, my thesis aimed to make refugee women’s experiences and the structures that reshape their experiences visible.

This emphasis on feminist intersectional approaches also shaped my personal and scholarly relationship with my interlocutors — in and outside of my research. Despite our different and unequal legal statuses and differential access to rights, resources, and privileges, I considered ways to establish a relationship that would minimize the hierarchy between my interlocutors and me. For instance, I constantly tried to be aware of my own positionality throughout the fieldwork and avoided positioning myself as a knowing subject. Instead, drawing on feminist methodology and its emphasis on the importance of collective decision processes, I organized the research process together with the interlocutors as much as possible.

I conducted my ethnographic fieldwork between April 2019 and January 2020 in Yalova and worked with twenty Iranian refugee women aged between 18 and 41 (see appendix 1). I also interviewed five Iranian refugee women whose assigned

city was Yalova but were living in Istanbul while I conducted my fieldwork⁸⁷. These women had different backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, and marital statuses. They all have migrated from Iran — and all migrated alone or with their female partners or kids. Thus, their migration stories refute the hegemonic narrative of migrating men accompanying women or men as migrants and women as their dependents. Refugee women not only challenge the established conceptualization of the refugee subject, but also their experiences create an alternative self-claimed narrative of what it means to be a woman refugee without the ‘shadow/protection’ of men.

The Iranian women I engaged with were seeking conditional refugee status in Turkey until their resettlement in a third country. To obtain conditional refugee status and thus a chance for resettlement to their permanent location, where they dream of getting residency and eventually citizenship rights, women have to deal with a discretionary, ambiguous, and uncertain asylum regime. As I explain in the Introduction, this asylum regime has undergone several transformations since 2014. The new asylum regime is not fully structured yet and is still largely uncertain, discretionary and ambiguous. My fieldwork affirms that, rather than protecting the rights of refugees, these changes in asylum management prioritize the asylum regime work and the state’s sovereignty.

Although there are different reasons for women to migrate, most of my interlocutors mentioned different forms of violence they faced in Iran as a reason to seek asylum in Turkey. However, my thesis shows that their experience of violence has continued in Turkey — sometimes in similar ways (such as sexual harassment) and sometimes in different forms (such as labor exploitation or the risk of deportability). Thus, inspired by the intersectional approach and black feminist

⁸⁷ To include different perspectives in my analysis and give a more holistic picture of the asylum system in Yalova, I also conducted interviews with migration expert in Yalova PDMM, five employees of three right-based NGOs in Yalova, and three asylum lawyers based in Yalova, Ankara and Istanbul respectively.

thought, I have applied the concept of gendered violence to illustrate the different levels and forms of violence refugee women experience and to examine how these multiple and multi-layered forms of violence intersect and work together in reshaping women's lives in Turkey. In doing so, I have explored how gendered violence is caused by the gender-blindness of the Geneva Convention and other legal regulations on the one hand, and by the heteropatriarchal and racist attitudes of asylum authorities on the other.

Throughout the dissertation, I portray the satellite city regulation of Turkey as a particular site of inquiry where one can find the most violent and exploitative manifestations of such gendered violence. The satellite city regulation, with its compulsory sign-ins and travel permits, restricts women's freedom of movement within the borders of Turkey. It (re)shapes women's legal and semi-legal encounters and everyday practices and creates multiple forms of violence in their everyday lives. That is, Iranian refugee women in the satellite city face multiple and multi-layered gendered violence ranging from everyday encounters with asylum authorities to citizens, from daily use of urban space to home-hunting, from healthcare access to the workplace. At this point, compared to other small-sized satellite cities, Yalova, with its proximity to Istanbul, allows them to create moments to free themselves from surveillance, at least becoming relatively anonymous for a short period of time. Some women prefer to live in Istanbul and come to Yalova only for sign-in days, or some travel to Istanbul for work or leisure time activities. Compared to other small-sized satellite cities, Yalova, with its proximity to Istanbul, offers them a space to escape surveillance.

Of course, being in or close to Istanbul is by no means a preventative to the spectrum of violence these refugee women face. As I mentioned in different parts of this dissertation, my interlocutors stated that they feel gendered violence down to the smallest parts of their bodies, affecting their everyday decisions, such as choosing a hairstyle or deciding whether to grow their nails or not. My fieldwork

has reveals that refugee women experience a near-total colonization of their everyday lives and bodies from the fear of gendered violence.

Even worse, when women apply legal mechanisms to report gendered violence as well as to protect themselves and render perpetrators accountable, the very legal mechanisms themselves can turn violent. As I have shown throughout this dissertation, they face the racist and heteropatriarchal nature of the criminal justice system in Turkey. The Turkish police either blame them for the violence they experience or treat them as criminals because they are refugees. As I mentioned in Marjan's story of such an encounter with the police in Chapter 3, the police often choose to protect the perpetrators, accusing women of misunderstanding and not taking their complaints seriously with the claim of lack of evidence.

Furthermore, women also avoid applying to legal mechanisms due to the fear of a possible delay in receiving exit permits, which would prolong or jeopardize their resettlement processes. In other words, exit permit regulation works to silence women and prevent them from existing legal protection mechanisms. In this vein, the asylum regime and the vulnerable legal status of refugee women make it difficult for women to break out of the cycle of gendered violence. However, my fieldwork also highlights that women keep claiming their space in the legal system. They follow their asylum processes, try to access legal support, write petitions to UNHCR and DGMM/PGMM, and continue using legal mechanisms despite every obstacle they face.

The informal labor market constitutes another site where one can see different facets of the gendered violence that refugee women face. Women do not receive any financial support from the Turkish state, nor are they given a work permit. They must build their own lives and make ends meet on their own during long waiting times in their satellite cities. The inadequacy of NGO support systems, the mistreatment by NGO employees, and the practical impossibility of obtaining work permits push women to work in the informal sector. Considering the work experiences of refugee women, the most important finding of my fieldwork is a

dilemma: on the one hand, the state aims to control every aspect of refugees' lives, trying to keep them as controllable subjects within the legal space through the satellite city regulation, mandatory sign-ins, and travel permits; on the other hand, however, by making work permits a practical impossibility for refugees, the state deliberately throws refugees into informality and — because they are not allowed to work without permits — illegality.

In the informal sector in Yalova, women mostly work in the service sector, such as cafes, *kahve* (coffee shops), and restaurants, as well as in hotels, hairdressers, clothing shops, or in tailoring, and greenhouse/gardening. My fieldwork shows that there are hierarchies between the jobs women occupy — a hierarchy that is mostly shaped by the time the woman has spent in Turkey and the level of their Turkish, which closely affect the job they can do and the amount of money they can earn. On the other hand, the differences among women also closely affect their work experiences, their possibility of finding work, and their preferences for working conditions. For instance, while women with children do not prefer to work night shift jobs because there is no one to take care of their children, trans women have difficulties finding any job, even for night shifts. When they do, they are usually hired in the jobs such as dishwashing, where they are less visible to ‘the public.’ On the other hand, since all the married interlocutors’ husbands worked, it allowed them to be more selective regarding the job market and even venture into unemployment if they wish to. On the other hand, this is not only the case for heterosexual couples. My fieldwork also reveals that lesbians living with their partners also have a relative privilege regarding being unemployed while their partners work.

In these jobs, refugee women experience long working hours without job security and often receive little or no money; if they do get paid, generally it's quite irregularly. Whether or not women are fired in these insecure jobs and how long they will continue to work is entirely up to the employer. Therefore, while the state and the asylum regime are primarily responsible for producing informal

employment and (potential) illegality, employers also benefit from this informality by using the legal vulnerability of refugees.

In addition to labor exploitation, refugee women can also face gendered violence, abuse, and rape in their workplaces from their employers and co-workers. None of the women I spoke to could say they had not been sexually harassed or abused in their workplace. Three of the interlocutors stated that their boss and/or co-worker had raped them. At this point, some women have turned their homes into workplaces, where they aim to save themselves from exploitation and gendered violence, offering services such as hairdressing or massage. Trans/homophobia are other forms of gendered violence that lesbian and trans women face in their workplaces. For instance, Zahra would conceal her sexual identity in the workplace to prevent homophobic questions and humiliation about her sexual life.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, there are stories of many women who quit their jobs due to the violence they face. To explain why women quit their jobs and have to remain silent instead of complaining, I used the concept of deportability. Inspired by Nicholas De Genova and other critical migration scholars, I argued that deportability makes refugee women's labor exploitative, insecure, and disposable, but also makes women open to gendered violence in their workplaces. Furthermore, while deportability makes refugee women vulnerable to exploitation and gendered violence, it also ensures the system's continuity by silencing women. Thus, the threat of deportability silences women in the face of the gendered violence and exploitation they experience. This analysis is important because it allows us to underline how categories of illegality and informality are produced by the states and asylum regimes. To emphasize this, I used the term "legal illegality" in outlining how these categories create conditions of exploitation and gendered violence.

As this brief review illustrates, most of the dissertation focuses on unpacking gendered violence and labor exploitation in their different forms. Particularly in Chapters 3 and 4, I underline the structural conditions that make refugee women

open to gendered violence and exploitation and learn about how women experience them in every aspect their asylum processes and everyday lives. However, my research findings are also not limited to this. This dissertation also explores resistance and solidarity practices among refugee women. To understand refugee women's solidarity practices, I benefited from the work of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and, following her, I approached the concept of solidarity rooted in shared experiences rather than having the same or similar identities.

My findings demonstrate that refugee women create spaces of solidarity, together with shared knowledge(s), experiences and mutual care amidst conditions of exploitation and gendered violence. First, shared experiences function like feminist awareness-raising groups, provide relaxation and therapy spaces for women, and create grounds for feminist questioning. As in the gathering at Roya's place in Chapter 5, in these meetings, women create the necessary intimacy and rapport for discussing many issues such as womanhood and identify their common experiences with other women.

Sharing knowledge(s) appears as an important practice of solidarity in the lives of refugee women, and can ease their experiences of everything from dealing with the asylum regime to finding a house, a job, and furniture. Besides sharing material and practical information, women also circulate knowledge(s) through gossip and rumor. Although gossip and rumor sometimes cause women to feel some element of surveillance, these practices also become mechanisms of protection and recognition. For example, women warn each other about possible abusive, non-paying employers and workplaces or noisy landlords to avoid. Shared knowledge(s), which is organized at different scales — local, national and transnational — makes it visible how women benefit from transnational, national, and local networks while struggling against the current asylum regime.

Mutual care also has a vital place within women's solidarity practices. In addition to taking care of each other in emergencies and crises, mutual care among women is multilayered and dispersed into their daily lives. For instance, they provide

translation for the ones who do not speak Turkish, share their flats with newly arrived refugees, and share childcare responsibilities with each other. However, I have also emphasized that women's mutual care practices are not always organized according to conscious choices. Oftentimes, emotions such as frustration, insecurity, and hopelessness create the basis for these mutual care practices.

While circulation of knowledge(s), sharing experiences, and mutual caring practices produce knowledge of refugeeness, they also show the importance of collectivity to providing the grounds for refugee women to claim their lives and continue their active struggle. To underline the different forms of resistance, I employed the political concept of "women claiming lives" coined by the feminist movement in Turkey. I grounded this concept in feminist standpoint theory and brought it into dialogue with the literature on autonomy of migration, which enabled me to underline women's agency and their "power to act". Instead of using this concept to point to a momentary reaction to violence in moments of emergency, I define it as women's constant struggle to survive despite and amidst all forms of gendered violence and oppression they face during and before their migration. I have shown how the act of "claiming their lives" takes many different forms in the refugee women's lives, ranging from actively engaging with waiting, to doing sports to protecting themselves from violence and improving their mental and physical well-being, to using humor and sarcasm to cope with the violence. I argue that women's claiming their lives is a political action since they have transformative effects on both their own and other women's lives. Furthermore, since the solidarity practices create ground for women to claim their lives, the new social relations established among women through solidarity also illustrate emotional and embodied forms of resistance and expand the understanding of the resistance as not limited to "revolutionary" collectively organized political actions. My fieldwork reveals that refugee women's lives include active struggle where they constantly navigate, negotiate, and resist different forms of oppression and exploitation and never give up claiming their lives. And by claiming their lives, women reject and resist all the restrictions on their lives.

Another important argument of my dissertation is that the resistance practices of refugee women deconstruct the narrative of victimhood. Refugee women are generally represented as voiceless and helpless subjects. However, the daily practices of these women show us that they are far more than any assigned victim narrative. I argue that depicting refugee women as constantly oppressed and suffering subjects ignores their resistance practices or renders them invisible. Thus, it disregards their subject positions, which can potentially reproduce a victim refugee woman narrative. Yet, by claiming their lives, women deconstruct this victim refugee narrative in many ways. First, when they talk about their stories, they mostly underline the challenges they face and emphasize their ‘strongness.’ In addition to this verbal resistance, they also resist gender norms and patriarchal roles and remind us they have desires and aspirations for themselves. For instance, despite the stigmatization and labeling, they generally continue to wear the clothes they like and put on make-up as they wish.

However, the relation between resistance and victimhood is more complex than deconstructing the victim refugee women narrative. As I have shown through women’s stories, refugee women also shuttle between different subject positions according to their encounters with different actors and structures and sometimes even strategically deploy a victim narrative as resistance. For instance, during the interviews and daily conversations, they oppose the image of a victim by emphasizing how strong they are. On the other hand, they described strategically using this narrative when encountering DGMM officials or when landlords want to increase the rent or evict them. Refugee women’s experiences illustrate that their experiences cannot be reduced to a victim narrative; in fact, they dismantle the victim/agency duality by occupying multiple subject positions. To sum up, by locating women’s experiences at the center of the analysis, my thesis demonstrates that the asylum regime in Turkey, with all its components, makes women open to gendered violence and exploitation, but that refugee women — in the nexus of this gendered violence and exploitation — never give up claiming their lives and create solidarity and resistance practices. Thus, through ethnographic research conducted

from an intersectional feminist approach, my thesis aims to make refugee women's experiences and the structures that reshape their experiences visible. By doing so, I aim to contribute to refugee, gender, and feminist studies in numerous ways during these days when racism, sexism, and border fortifications are increasing tremendously.

Although there is a growing field of research on gender, there is rarely feminist studies, especially with a focus on intersectionality. My hope is that my research, carried out with an explicitly intersectional feminist approach, can help to fill this gap. Rather than including gender in the research as a new demographic dimension, I used gender as an analytical tool and approached the main concepts of this thesis — labor, violence, solidarity, resistance — from a feminist perspective. In doing so, I underlined the importance of gender in apprehending social reality. Since different systems of power shape refugee women's experiences, intersectionality was one of the essential approaches that enabled me to explore and understand refugee women's experiences without creating a hierarchy between different systems of power.

Second, I conducted this research with an ethnographic method, which is also crucial to getting up close to the nuanced particularities and specificities of refugee women's experiences. Rather than only conducting interviews or doing participant observation, I experienced most of the events and situations with the women who are the subject of this research. I accompanied them to DGMM, the state hospital, and the Ministry of Education and had a chance to understand their encounters with state officials and public institutions. Similarly, I visited their workplaces and met with their bosses, where I also had a chance to take in some of their work experiences. Therefore, beyond the generic answers that refugees might give to researchers they meet for the first time, I encountered many intimate moments and shared multiple spaces with these women. For instance, I went to the home of one of the interlocutors twice a week to help with her children's school duties. Or, with some of the interlocutors, we regularly met in their houses and drank and ate

together. Ethnographic research enabled me to link structural factors with individuals' everyday practices and capture how asylum regimes deeply shape women's everyday practices. By combining structural mechanisms with the everyday practices of agents within these structures, I aim to contribute to refugee studies since there are not many studies⁸⁸ conducted with an ethnographic method that focuses on asylum in Turkey.

Third, I aim to contribute to refugee settlement literature by focusing on the satellite city as an analytical category. When people apply for asylum, the Turkish state assigns them to selected cities, called satellite cities. In refugee studies, scholars mostly discuss refugee settlements in terms of the camp, or urban and local settlements. At the same time, an expanded literature on confinement spaces has emerged in recent years. However, the satellite city differs from these settlement forms and has different features compared to confinement spaces. The boundaries between the camp and the urban are blurred and intertwined in the satellite city regulation, where the confinement disperses to the urban. In other words, the satellite city locates carcerality in the urban context. Thus, I argue that this thesis makes an empirical contribution to refugee settlement literature by focusing on the satellite city regulation, which provides a ground to reconsider concepts and terms such as the camp, the urban, and confinement. My thesis underlines that we need to deploy a new analysis framework to understand the experiences of refugees.

Furthermore, although studies focusing on refugees in Turkey have increased tremendously in recent years, there are still very few studies focusing on the experiences of those living in satellite cities. Yalova, at this point, creates an interesting case due to its proximity to Istanbul and the fact that it has been home to

⁸⁸ For some of them, see: Sari, E. (2021). *Waiting In Transit: Iranian Lgbtq Refugees in Turkey And The Sexuality Of (Im) Mobility.*; Biner, Ö. (2016). *Türkiye'de mültecilik iltica, geçicilik ve yasallık: 'Van uydu şehir örneği'*. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları; Dagtas, S. (2014). *Whose Misafirs? Hospitality, Recognition and Reciprocity pp. 222-262 in Heterogenous Encounters: Tolerance, Secularism and Religious Difference at Turkey's Border with Syria* (Doctoral dissertation, PhD Thesis, University of Toronto).

large number of especially Iranian LGBTI+ and women refugees for more than a decade. The Iranian population in the city also makes it possible for new Iranian refugees to choose this city and benefit from social networks, which highlights once again the importance of social and personal networks for refugees. At this point, by focusing on the experiences of Iranian refugee women living in a satellite city, this research fills a significant gap in both refugee and gender and feminist studies in Turkey.

Fourth, the labor practices of refugees are a research topic that many studies focus on in international refugee studies. Especially in recent years, critical migration and border scholars have examined refugee labor through the deportation regime and the concept of deportability. Deportability is also one of the key concepts of this thesis since it differentiates the experiences of refugee women who work informally and insecurely from those who are citizens — revealing multiple specificities of refugee labor practices. By underlining the importance of deportability for understanding refugee labor practices, I argued that deportability makes refugees an exploitable labor force and disposable commodity. As Iranian refugee women's experiences clearly illustrate, deportability also constitutes women as subjects who are open to gendered violence and works as a mechanism to silence them. As I underlined in the case of Narges in Chapter 4, even though the women stand up against violence and exploitation, their employers threaten them with a possible police complaint — in other words, with deportability. Employers use the women's deportability to discipline their bodies and sexualities as well. Therefore, by focusing on deportability, I aimed to draw attention to another under-researched point, the gendered reflection of deportability. I demonstrated that deportability not only makes refugee women a more exploitable part of the labor force but also works to further discipline their bodies and sexualities in ways outside the frame of their exploitation for the purpose of working their job.

Studies focusing on deportability also underline the intertwined relations with different mechanisms of informality, illegality, and exploitation. Contemporary scholarship in this area (Andrijasevic, 2010; Freedman, 2009; Gambino, 2017)

mainly tends to focus on the produced “illegality” in cases of asylum seekers when their cases are rejected or when people enter and work in their destination countries without papers. However, all these produced categories — illegalities, informalities, irregularities, legalities — are intersected in refugee women’s experiences in the satellite cities in Turkey. Refugee women’s constant move between different statuses during their everyday lives is what makes their experiences unique and important to analyze. Their legality and illegality are in a high state of flux over the course of their day, according to the spaces they occupy. If they work, they become illegal; if they leave the workplace, they again return to legality. Therefore, their experiences undergird how the division between legal statuses is not fixed and constantly changes. By focusing on the fluidity and changeability of these statuses through refugee women’s labor practices, I contribute to critical refugee studies to underline legal statuses produced by state and highlight the proliferation of statuses and multiplication of their temporality.

It is also important to mention that research that focuses on labor migration, especially on refugee labor is especially limited in the context of Turkey. Although the number of studies focusing specifically on Syrian refugees has increased in recent years, there is still limited scholarship focusing on other refugee groups, particularly the work experiences of refugees in satellite cities. By focusing on the experiences of Iranian refugee women in satellite cities, I aim to fill this gap.

Lastly, refugee women’s experiences offer us the opportunity to think differently about the refugee subject differently. This thesis explores numerous means of doing this. First, by focusing on their different forms of resistance and solidarity practices, I deconstruct the victim refugee narrative and victim/agency duality, which is commonly taken for granted in mainstream refugee studies. Second, throughout the thesis, in my approach to the refugee subject, I do not sideline their emotions and affects, and aim to deconstruct the understanding of their subjectivities and actions that is based on exclusively on rational thinking and to underline the importance of emotions. Fears, excitements, frustrations, anxiety, joy, sadness, and anger were embodied in these women’s narratives about their past.

Likewise, they hold an important place in their imaginations and their imagined futures, and create a basis for their mutual care practices in their present time. Third, in refugee studies, refugees are often represented as rootless, always forward-moving subjects focusing on “destination and transit countries”. But the refugee women’s experiences and stories here show us that that they never completely detach from Iran for many reasons. That is, refugee women are not economically detached from Iran, as many still receive financial support from their families and relatives or are engaged in some kind of business there. The women also continue their emotional relations and attachments with Iran. Almost all refugee women were in contact with at least one person/friend from Iran and/or were following every political and societal change in their homeland. Even if these women are physically cut off from Iran and unable to return, their connections with the country continue through social media. Taking into consideration such complicated attachments, my dissertation hopefully also enables a rethinking of the concepts of home, belonging, and refugeeness.

As I write these words, Iranian refugees from their satellite cities are protesting the extended resettlement periods by coming to UNHCR in Ankara⁸⁹, just a few km far away from the library where I wrote my thesis in July 2022. Waiting times in Turkey can now take up to 10 years. For many refugee women, resettlement does not appear to be something that will occur any time soon. For instance, only two of the women I met in Yalova have resettled to Canada. I also noted in the Chapter 4 that they were resettled through the sponsorship system a few months ago, a totally different path than UNHCR. The sponsorship system illustrates that neoliberalism also closely affects the right to asylum with its privatized and monetarized entry system to asylum management. Becoming a refugee and re-establishing a life in another country becomes possible only through personal connections and economic capital. In the future, it seems that asylum regimes will be reconfigured radically

⁸⁹ <https://twitter.com/ilerihaber/status/1552033265271410694?t=HDHmkFpbflc-Ye1VnpqCQg&s=08> date of access: 05.08.2022

where rights will leave their place to capital. Therefore, to understand the transformation of the asylum regime, the sponsorship system needs to be studied by researchers so as to understand what will happen to refugees; the number of asylum applications is increasing rapidly nowadays, but resettlement quotas are not.

One of the main frameworks of analysis for this thesis was the satellite city regulation. I focus on the role of satellite city regulation in creating the gendered violence refugee women experience in their legal, semi-legal, and everyday encounters. I also examine the satellite city as a space of gendered violence and labor exploitation. However, further studies could focus more on its unique role in the 'production' of violence.

Besides this, while my fieldwork mainly focuses on the period of 2019, many changes to the satellite city regulation system have occurred since that time. The questions of how the recent changes in the satellite city regulation and the newly implemented quota system that determines the number of foreigners settling in the neighborhoods will affect the refugees' urban use, solidarity practices, their community relations and the role of local authorities into this were all beyond the scope of what was possible with this thesis. Therefore, it would be of vital importance for current research that studies are conducted into these latest changes and their effects on women's waiting experiences in Turkey.

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APPENDICES

A. PROFILE OF INTERLOCUTORS

NAME	AGE	Education	Marital Status	The numbers of Children in Turkey	Year of Migration	City
Elya	38	High School	Single	2	2015	Yalova
Niaz	30	University	Single	-	2015	Yalova
Yasna	26	University	Single	-	2015	Yalova
Sharaen	31	University	Married	-	2016	Yalova
Negar	27	University	Single	-	2015	Yalova
Zahra	27	University	Single	-	2014	Yalova
Marjan	29	Master's degree	Single	-	2016	Yalova
Sina	40	University	Married	-	2016	Yalova
Aida	27	University	Single	-	2016	Yalova
Malihe	34	University	Married	-	2017	Yalova
Samira	37	High school	Single	2	2014	Yalova
Sara	18	Highschool	Single	-	2017	Yalova
Roya	32	University	Single	2	2015	Yalova
Narges	37	Master's degree	Single	-	2016	Yalova
Parisa	28	University	Single	-	2016	Yalova
Ana	25	High school	Single	-	2017	Yalova
Nasrin	20	High school	Single	-	2016	Yalova
Mina	38	University	Single	1	2017	Yalova
Mona	35	University	Single	2	2015	Yalova
Leili	39	University	Married	1	-	Yalova

Table 1. Profile of Interlocutors

Vida	41	University	Single	-	2014	Istanbul
Artin	25	University	Single	-	2016	Istanbul
Pana	33	University	Single	-	2017	Istanbul
Farah	29	Master's degree	Single	-	2015	Istanbul
Zeinab	30	Master's degree	Single	-	2014	Istanbul

Table 1. Profile of Interlocutors (continued)

B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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21 AĞUSTOS 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Helga Rittersberger TILIÇ

Danışmanlığını yaptığımız Cemile Gizem DİNÇER'in "Türkiye'de İltica Rejiminin Mekansal ve Toplumsal Cinsiyetlendirilmiş İnşası: Türkiye'de Mülteci Kadın Deneyimleri" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 330 ODTÜ 2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.



Prof. Dr. Hülin GENÇOZ

Başkan



Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN

Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT

Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ

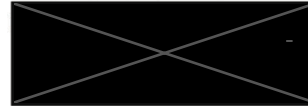
Üye

İZİNLİ

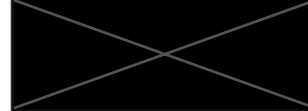
Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL



C. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Dinçer, Cemile Gizem

Date and Place of Birth: 24.11.1988, Ankara

Nationality: TC

E-mail: cemilegizemdincer@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Gender and Women's Studies	2014
BS	Anadolu University, Economics	2011
High School	Ankara Atatürk Anadolu High School, Ankara	2006

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Fluent German

PUBLICATIONS

1. Coşkun, E., Sarıalioğlu, Ö. & Dinçer, C.G. (2020) "Discourse, Method and Ethics in Migration Studies: Is a Feminist Methodology Possible?" *Fe Dergi*
2. Dinçer, C.G. (2018), "Türkiye'de Mülteci Olmak" (Being Refugee in Turkey) In *Ayrımcılığın Yüzleri* Ü. Doğanay (ed.), Ankara: Kapasite Geliştirme Derneği, pp. 136- 145.
3. Sarı, E. & Dinçer, C.G. (2017) "Standardized and Civilianized: Toward a New Asylum Regime in Turkey?" *Movements: Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*.
4. Dinçer, C.G. (2015) "Türkiye-Gürcistan Bağlamında Göçmen Kadın Emeği: Güvencesizliğin ve Belgesizliğin Mekanı Olarak Ev İçi Alan" in *Göçler Ülkesi* İ. Südaş & L. Körükmez (eds.), İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, pp. 95-115.

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Asylum, gender, borders, woman labor, domestic labor

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Primary Researcher

- Nov 2021-
Dec 2021** “Forced Migration and Organized Violence: A Comparative Study in Europe and the Americas” by Ruhr-Universität Bochum and Freie Universität Berlin
- Sept 2021-
Dec 2021** “Kadına yönelik şiddete dair bilginin çerçevesi ve sınırları (Frames and Limits of Knowledge regarding the violence against women) by Dissensus Research
- Nov 2020-
March 2021** “International Institutional Consultancy on Turkey Country Report on Out-of-School Children” by UNICEF and Cambridge Education
- Jan 2019-
Jan 2020** “Experiences of Refugee Women in the Satellite Cities: Constitution of Subjectivities and Creation of Alternative Spaces,” dissertation research
- Apr 2018-
March 2019** “Women’s Empowerment Policies of Civil Society Organisations in Turkey: Experiences of Syrian Female Migrants” project by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), Middle East Technical University (METU)
- Dec 2016-
March 2017** “Perception of ‘Smuggling Business’ and on Decision Making Processes of Migrants” by International Migration Organization (IOM).

Research Team Member

- Dec 2014-
June 2015** “Disabled Care and Women's Labour in Turkey” by Hacettepe University, Muğla University and Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Sweden Development Agency.

- June 2013–
Apr 2014** “Transnationalism and Inequality” Project on the Migration between Germany and Turkey, by Bielefeld University and Middle East Technical University
- June 2013–
Aug 2013** “Rapid Assessment Project regarding the Unaccompanied Minors in Turkey,” by METU, Hacettepe University, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Norwegian Embassy, Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services, Ministry of Interior.
- Jan 2014–
May 2014** “Women Entrepreneurs in Turkey” by Middle East Technical University

EVALUATOR

- March 2019** Evaluator/Researcher of “Opportunities for Syrian and Turkish Adolescents and Youth Towards Social Cohesion and Access to Psychosocial Support Services in GAP Facilities” Impact Assessment Project by UNICEF and TKV
- March 2019** Evaluation Assistant of “Field Level Piloting of Labour Migration Management Framework: Sustainable Labour Market Inclusion of Syrians Under Temporary Protection (SuTPs)” Project by Bahçeşehir University and British Embassy.

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKGÇE ÖZET

Bu çalıřma, Yalova'da yařayan ve Kanada, ABD, Avrupa ÷lkelerine yerleřtirilmeyi bekleyen İrani m÷ltesi kadınların deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Türkiye Cenevre S÷zleřmesine koyduęu coęrafi çekince sebebiyle Avrupa Konseyi dıřındaki ÷lkelerden sığınma başvurusunda bulunanlara m÷ltesi statusü vermemekte, Afganistan, İrani, Irak ve Somali gibi ÷lkelerden gelen sığınmacılar, üçüncü ÷lke yerleřtirilmeleri gerçeğeşene kadar Türkiye'de řartlı m÷ltesi statusü gereęi devlet tarafından belirlenen uydu kentlere yerleřtirmektedirler. Bu noktada, Türkiye'de sayıları 62'ye ulařan uydu kentlerde herhangi bir maddi ve sosyal destek yoksun y÷zbinlerce m÷ltesi yařamlarına devam etmektedir. Bu durum, Türkiye'deki m÷ltesi deneyimlerini anlayabilmek için bize uydu kentin önemini hatırlatmakta, uydu kent m÷ltesi yerleřim biçimleri arasında özgün bir analiz kategorisi olarak belirlemektedir. Bu doęrultuda bu çalıřma, bu uydu kentlerden biri olan Yalova'da yařayan İrani m÷ltesi kadınların Türkiye'deki bekleme deneyimlerini feminist yöntem bilimle gerçeğeştirilmiş etnografik bir arařtırmayla anlamayı hedeflemektedir.

2011'den bu yana uydu kent olan Yalova, uydu kent uygulamasını ve etkilerini anlamak için iyi bir bařlangıç noktası oluřturmaktadır. Öte yandan, Yalova'nın Türkiye'deki İrani m÷ltesi kadın ve LGBTİ+ nüfuslarına ev sahiplięi yapan řehirlerden biri olması da yine bu kenti m÷ltesi kadın deneyimlerini anlamak için ilgi çekici hale getirmektedir. Ayrıca, Yalova sosyal hayatı ve enformel iş imkânlarıyla m÷lteciler için bir cazibe merkezi olan İstanbul'a coęrafi yakınlığıyla, dięer uydu kentlerden ayrılmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, Yalova sadece bir uydu kent deęil, aynı zamanda farklı hukuki statülerden çok sayıda yabancının yařadığı bir kenttir. Dolayısıyla kentte farklı ÷lkelerden ve farklı yasal statülerde bulunan göçmen nüfusu, bu kenti, Türkiye'deki mevcut göç/sığınma rejimini anlamak için önemli bir vaka haline getirmektedir.

Çalıřmanın Yalova'daki saha çalıřması Nisan 2019- Ocak 2020 arasında yürüt÷len 10 ay süren etnografik arařtırmaya dayanmaktadır. Her ne kadar kentte İraklı,

Afganistanlı mülteci kadınlarda bulunuyor olsalar da, Yalova özellikle İranlı kadınların ve LGBTİ+lerin yoğun olarak bulunduğu bir kenttir. Yine İran, 1979 İslam Devrimi'nden bu yana dünyanın farklı ülkelerine göç veren ülkelerin arasında ilk sıralarda yer almaktadır. Türkiye, İranlı mülteciler için nadiren hedef ülke olmuş olsa da, uzun yıllardır mültecilerin Batı'ya ulaşmaları için bir geçiş ülkesi olmuştur. Ayrıca 1980-1988 yılları arasında yaşanan İran-İrak Savaşı da İran'dan göç akımlarına katkıda bulunmuştur. 2008 yılında Birleşmiş Milletler'in LGBTİ+'lara mülteci statüsü verdiğini açıklaması ve 2009 yılında yapılan cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimlerinin ardından İran rejimi karşıtlarının ülkeyi terk etmesiyle birlikte (Kalfa-Topateş vd., 2018) yeni göç dalgaları, mülteciler de dâhil olmak üzere Türkiye'deki İranlıların sayısını artırmıştır. BMMYK 2020 istatistiklerine göre, Türkiye'de uluslararası koruma (sığınmacı ve mülteci) başvurusunda bulunan İranlıların sayısı 27.000'dir (BMMYK, 2020). Ayrıca, Türkiye'de ikamet izni için başvuran İranlılar da son yıllarda artış göstermiş ve Türkiye'de ikamet izni ile kalan İranlıların sayısı 2022 yılında 101.204'e ulaşmıştır (GİGM, 2022).

İran'dan yıllardır binlerce insan göç etmesine rağmen, İranlı mültecilere, özellikle de mülteci kadınlara ve onların Türkiye'deki gündelik pratiklerine odaklanan çok fazla çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu tez nadiren odaklanılan bu gruba yoğunlaşarak İranlı mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini anlamayı hedeflemektedir. Bu nedenle bu tezin örnekleme, Türkiye'ye sığınma başvurusunda bulunmuş ve başka bir ülkeye yerleştirilmeyi bekleyen İranlı mülteci kadınlardan oluşmaktadır. Görüşme muhataplarının çoğu yaşları 18 ile 41 arasında değişen bekar anneler, bekar heteroseksüel kadınlar ve lezbiyen kadınlardan oluşmaktadır. Geleneksel göç teorilerinin aksine, araştırma muhataplarının çoğu ailelerinin erkek üyelerine bağımlı olarak göç etmemiş, daha ziyade kendi başlarına, çocuklarıyla veya diğer kadınlarla birlikte hayatlarına sahip çıkmak için göç etmiş kişilerdir. Görüşme muhatapları, farklı cinsel yönelimlere, cinsel kimliklere, farklı medeni durumlara ve dini geçmişlere sahip kadınlardan oluşmaktadır. Heteroseksüel, lezbiyen, cis ve trans kadınlar, bekar anneler ve Hristiyan kadınlar, evli kadınlar bu

grubun içerisinde yer alsa da, görüşme muhataplarının çoğu bekar ve/veya bekar anne kadınlardır. Bu çeşitlilik, sığınma süreçlerine ve gündelik hayata dair kadınların deneyimlerdeki farklılaşmayı görmeyi de mümkün kılmıştır. Görüşme gerçekleştirilen kadınların on altısı üniversite mezunu, beşi lise mezunu, diğer dördü ise yüksek lisans mezunudur.

Araştırma, etnografik yöntemin yanı sıra mülteci kadınlarla gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine mülakatları da kapsamaktadır. Nisan 2019 ile Ocak 2020 tarihleri arasında Yalova'da yaşayan yirmi İranlı mülteci kadınla derinlemesine görüşmelerin yanında, uydu kenti Yalova olan ancak İstanbul'da yaşamayı tercih eden 5 İranlı kadınla da derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, görüşme gerçekleştirilen kadınların 10 tanesiyle Yalova'da farklı zaman aralıklarında yeni derinlemesine mülakatlar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Belirli aralıklarla gerçekleştirilen bu görüşmeler, kadınların hayatlarındaki değişimleri kendi ifadeleriyle aktarmalarını mümkün kılmıştır. Görüşmelerin sadece altısı tercüman aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilmiş, geri kalan görüşmeler Türkçe ve/veya İngilizce olarak araştırmacının kendisi tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler genellikle bir buçuk ila iki saat arasında sürmektedir.

Öte yandan, ev toplantılarına katılmak, haftanın belirli günlerinde bekâr annelerin çocuklarına okul ödevlerinde yardımcı olmak, muhatapların ihtiyaçlarına göre çeşitli kamu kurumlarına gitmek (İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, devlet hastanesi, göç idaresi vb.) gibi pek çok gündelik aktivitede araştırmacının muhataplarına eşlik edilmiş, gündelik yaşam pratikleri paylaşılmıştır. Gündelik hayatı paylaşmak, katılımcı gözlemi "gözlem" den ziyade katılımcı bir haline getirmeyi mümkün kılmıştır.

Bunun yanında, iltica rejiminin nasıl işlediğini daha iyi anlamak ve bütüncül bir resim ortaya koymak için Ankara, Yalova ve İstanbul'da bulunan, iltica alanında çalışan üç avukatla da görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yine Yalova Göç İdaresinde çalışan bir göç uzmanıyla farklı zamanlarda iki kez, yine bu kurumda çalışan iki güvenlik görevlisi ile kısa ve yapılandırılmamış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Buna ek

olarak, Yalova'daki sığınma rejimine dair bütünlüklü bir resim ortaya koyabilmek için, şehirde mültecilerle aktif olarak çalışan üç STK'dan (MUDEM, ASAM ve Kilit Mültecileri Destekleme Projesi) 5 STK çalışanı ile de görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülteci kadınların anlatılarında ve gündelik sohbetlerinde çoğu kez bu kurumlara atıfta bulunmaları, bu kurumların araştırmaya dahil edilmesinin bir başka sebebini olmuştur. Yine, STK'lar ve mülteci kadınlar arasında ilişkiyi daha anlaşılır kılabilmek için, bu STK'lar tarafından mülteciler ve yerel kadınlar için düzenlenen bazı etkinliklere de katılım sağlanmıştır. Bu etkinliklere katılmak, mültecilerin STK'lar hakkında anlattıkları hikayeleri gözlemlemeyi de olanaklı hale getirmiştir. BMMYK'a yapılan görüşme talebi ise 2019 yılından beri cevaplanmamıştır.

Her ne kadar saha araştırmasına başlamadan önce tezin esas sorgu alanı uydu kentlerin hapsedme, kapatma mekanizmaları ve bunların mülteci kadınların yaşamları ve öznellikleri üzerindeki etkileri olsa da, saha çalışması ve mülteci kadınlarla gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler, hem mülteci kadınların deneyimlerinde hem de iltica rejiminin işleyişinde toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddetin kurucu rolünün de altını çizmiştir. Her ne kadar araştırmanın muhatapları olan kadınlar farklı nedenlerle iltica başvurusunda bulunmuş olsalar da, hepsi İran'da yaşadıkları şiddet ve zulüm nedeniyle sevdiklerini geride bırakıp Türkiye'ye sığındıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Yapılan ön saha çalışması, kadınların İran'da yaşadıkları şiddetin Türkiye'de de devam ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Mülteci kadınların, göç öncesi, sırası ve Türkiye'de kaldıkları süre boyunca toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddetin çoklu ve çok katmanlı biçimlerini deneyimledikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, neredeyse tüm kadınlar emek sömürüsüne maruz kaldıklarından ve uydu kent uygulamasının idari prosedürlerinden -imza zorunluluğu, seyahat izni- olumsuz etkilendiklerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Bunun yanında, saha çalışmasının ilerleyen aşamaları emek sömürüsü ve toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddetin ağır koşullarında bile mülteci kadınların dayanışma pratikleri, karşılıklı bakım ve direniş stratejileri geliştirdiklerini, kadınların hayatlarına sahip çıkma yolculuklarının Türkiye'de devam etmekte olduğunu göstermiştir.

Türkiye'deki kadınların bekleme deneyimlerini anlamaya yönelik bu tezin araştırma soruları bu ön bulgularla etrafında şekillenmiş, “mülteci kadınlar Türkiye'deki bekleme süreleri boyunca uydu kent kısıtlamalarını, emek sömürsünü ve toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddeti nasıl deneyimliyorlar ve bu baskıcı koşullara direnmek için ne tür stratejiler geliştiriyorlar?” tezin ve saha araştırmasını iki temel sorusu olmuştur. Ancak, tarihsel süreçleri, toplumsal ilişkileri ve maddi koşulları analize dahil etmeden mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini anlamaya yönelik her türlü akademik ve aktivist çabanın, bu deneyimleri köksüz, tarihsiz ve apolitik kılma riski göz önüne alındığında (Malkki, 1996) tıpkı kesişimselliğin de vurguladığı hatırlattığı gibi, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini anlamak için toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddet, emek sömürsü, dayanışma ve direniş pratikleri iltica rejimi ve diğer baskı sistemleriyle birlikte incelenmiştir.

Bu kesişimsel odakla birlikte, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerinin mevcut iltica rejimi ve yapısal mekanizmalar etrafında nasıl aktif olarak (yeniden) şekillendiğini anlamak için, iltica rejiminin kendisini sorgulamayı da içererek şekilde araştırma soruları genişletilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, sığınma rejimi, mülteci kadınları emek sömürsüne ve toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddete açık özneler olarak nasıl oluşturuyor? Toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddet ve emek sömürsünün üretiminde uydu kentlerin özgün bir rolü var mı? Sığınma rejimi kadınların çalışma iznine erişiminde engeller yaratarak onları kayıt dışılığa mı itiyor? Mülteci kadınların emek pratiklerinin şekillenmesinde sınır dışı edilebilirliğin rolü nedir? Karşılıklı bakım, deneyim ve bilgi paylaşımı kadınların direniş pratiklerinde nasıl bir rol oynamaktadır? Dayanışma ve direniş pratiklerinde sosyal ağların rolü nedir? Gibi yeni araştırma soruları da araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Bu soruların cevaplanması ve kadınların deneyimlerinin özgüllüklerini kavrayabilmek için, araştırma boyunca kesişimsel feminist bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir.

Kesişimsel feminist yaklaşımla yürütülen bu çalışma, feminist duruş kuramına dayanmaktadır. Her ne kadar feminist duruş kuramı kendi içerisinde ayrışan politik, teorik bir yaklaşım olsa da, bu araştırmada, kuramın politika ve bilimsel bilgi üretiminin ayrılmazlığı, marjinal grupların bilgisine verilen epistemolojik

üstünlük vermek, deneyimi bilgi üretiminin temeli olarak almak ve kesişimsellik vurgusu, bu kuramın araştırma boyunca yararlanılan temel noktalarını oluşturmaktadır. Yine, feminist duruş kuramının bilginin konumsallığı, bağlamsallığı, kısmi ve durumsallığı vurgusu bilgi üretim sürecinde temel alınmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, araştırmacının kendi pozisyonunu sorunsallaştırmasına olanak sağlayarak, ve araştırma süreci boyunca araştırmacı ve araştırmanın muhatapları arasındaki ilişkide hiyerarşinin minimize edilmesinin yollarını tartışmaya açar. Kesişimsellik vurgusu ise, farklı tahakküm biçimlerinin birbiriyle iç içe geçmiş ilişkisini görünür kılarak, bir tahakküm biçimini incelemeyen ve bu yapılar içerisinde hiyerarşi yaratmadan kadınların deneyimlerini anlamayı mümkün kılar.

Öte yandan, yapısal koşullara odaklanmanın ve bunları mülteci kadınların deneyimleriyle kesişimsel bir perspektiften ilişkilendirmenin bir diğer avantajı ise, mülteci deneyimlerini 'istisnai' olarak görülmenin ötesinde kavramayı mümkün kılmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bunu yaparak sömürü, toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddet ve ırkçılığın sadece belirli sosyal grupları etkilemediğini, heteropatriyarka, ırkçılık ve kapitalizm gibi iktidar sistemlerinin farklı sosyal grupları farklı şekillerde etkilemeler de, mevcut sistem içerisinde 'düşmanın ortak olduğunu' görünür kılınması hedeflenmektedir. Böylece, sadece başkalarını kurtarmak için değil, kişilerin kendilerini baskıdan kurtarmak adına farklı öznelerin toplumsal değişim için ittifaklar kurabileceğini vurgulayarak, tez, cisgender ya da trans, heteroseksüel ya da kuir, mülteci ya da vatandaş olsun, farklı kadın grupları arasındaki ortak noktaları yakalamak adına içgörüler sağlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Her binlerce kadın şiddetten ve zulümden kaçarak Türkiye’de sığınma talebinde bulunmaktadır. Her ne kadar kadınların göç etme sebepleri değişse de, görüşmecilerin büyük bir kısmı İran’da deneyimledikleri farklı şiddet biçimlerinden kaçarak Türkiye’ye gelmiş ve iltica talebinde bulunmuşlardır. Fakat maalesef ki kadınların İran’da yaşadıkları farklı şiddet biçimleri Türkiye’de de devam etmektedir. Cenevre Sözleşmesinin toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddeti bir zulüm olarak görmemesiyle başlayan legal şiddet, Türkiye’deki iltica rejimi ve

Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu'nda kadınlara yönelik herhangi bir düzenleme yer almamasıyla devam etmektedir. Kadınların deneyimleri bu legal şiddet iltica rejimi aktörlerinin sistemin kendilerine verdikleri gücü istismar etmeleriyle devam etmekte ve kısmi-resmi şiddet alanlarını oluşturmaktadır. Tez boyunca, bu legal, kısmi-resmi şiddet alanlarının gündeliğe nasıl nüfuz ettiğini anlamak içinse uydu kent uygulamasını bir sorgu alanı olarak ele alıp, kadınların bekleme sürelerini nasıl şekillendirdiği tartışmaya açılmıştır.

Zorunlu imza uygulaması ve seyahat izniyle uydu kent, kadınların ülke içerisindeki hareket özgürlüğünü kısıtlamakta, onları atandıkları şehirlerde uzun yıllar beklemeye zorlamaktadır. Uydu kent uygulaması kadınların sadece legal ve kısmi-resmi karşılaşmalarını şekillendirmekle kalmamakta, gündeliklerinin her alanını biçimlendirerek, onları çok katmanlı bir şiddete açık hale getirmektedir. Kadınlar Türkiye'de kaldıkları süre boyunca, ev bulmadan, sağlığa erişime, kentsel mekan kullanımlarından, ev sahipleriyle karşılaşmalarına kadar farklı ve çok katmanlı şiddet biçimlerine maruz kalmaktadırlar. Bu şiddet dahil oldukları mülteci gruplarında da devam etmekte, kendi toplulukları içerisindeki erkeklerden gördükleri şiddet de bu hikayelerinin bir parçası haline gelmektedir. Gündeliklerinin her alanına sirayet eden bu toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddet, kadınların bedenlerini de hedef haline getirmekte, kadınlar bedenlerinde de bu şiddeti hissetmektedirler. Saçlarını nasıl şekillendireceklerinden, tırnaklarını kesip kesmeyeceklerine kadar en ufak kararları bile bu şiddet ihtimali üzerinden veren kadınlar, bedenlerinin en ufak parçasında dahi şiddete ve bedenlerinin sömürgeleştirilmesine maruz kalmaktadırlar. Tez boyunca kesişimsel feminist yaklaşım ve siyah feminist düşünceden esinlenen "toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddet" kavramı, mülteci kadınların maruz kaldığı farklı şiddet düzeylerini ve biçimlerini göstermek ve bu çoklu ve çok katmanlı şiddet biçimlerinin Türkiye'deki mülteci kadınların yaşamlarını şekillendirirken nasıl iç içe geçtiğini ve birlikte çalıştıklarını görünür kılmak için kullanılmıştır.

Kadınlar karşılaştıkları bu şiddet karşısında yasal mekanizmalara başvurmak istediklerinde ise ırkçı ve heteropatriyarkal ceza sistemi uygulamalarıyla

karşılaşmakta, şiddetten korunmak için başvurdukları yasal mekanizmalar şiddetin kendisi haline gelmektedir. Tıpkı görüşmecilerden Marjan'ın hikayesinde olduğu gibi, karşılaştıkları şiddet sonucu polise başvuran kadınlar, ya polis tarafından suçlanmakta, başvuruları ciddiye alınmamakta ya da kadınların taciz/şiddeti yanlış anladığı ima edilerek, gerekli yasal prosedürler takip edilmemektedir.

Cezasızlık kadınların yaşadıkları şiddet karşısında sessiz kalmalarının bir sebebiyken, diğer önemli bir sebebi ise Türkiye'den almaları gereken çıkış iznidir. Üçüncü ülke yerleştirmesi gelen mülteciler, yerleştirildikleri ülkelere gidebilmek için Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devletinden çıkış izni almak zorundadırlar. Bu iznin tam olarak hangi kriterlere göre verildiği ya da ertelendiği belli olmasa da, hali hazırda süren bir davaları olması durumunda mülteciler dava sonuçlanana kadar çıkış izni alamamakta, bu da iznin verilmesini geciktiren bir sebep olarak belirmektedir. Bu noktada, üçüncü ülke yerleştirmelerinin çıkış iznine tabi olması ve hali hazırda süren bir davanın bu izni alma süresini uzatma ihtimali kadınların şiddet karşısında yasal mekanizmalara başvurmalarını engelleyen önemli bir etken olarak belirmektedir. Böylece çıkış izni uygulaması kadınların mevcut mekanizmalara başvurmaktan alıkoymakta ve onları sessizleştirmekte işlevi görmektedir. Tüm bunlar, iltica rejiminin ve mülteci kadınların sahip oldukları kırılğan yasal statülerinin, karşılaştıkları şiddet döngüsünden çıkmalarını daha da zorlaştırdığını göstermektedir. Öte yandan, çalışmanın saha çalışması, tüm bunlara rağmen kadınların iltica dosyalarını takip ederek, farklı kurumlardan hukuki destek alarak, Göç İdaresi ve BMMYK'ya dilekçeler yazarak yasal süreçleri takip ettiklerini ve hala yasal mekanizmalardan faydalanmaya çalıştıklarını göstermektedir.

Kayıt dışı emek piyasası kadınların toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddete maruz kaldıkları başka bir alanı oluşturmaktadır. Kadınlar yerleştirildikleri uydu kentlerde, devletten herhangi bir finansal destek almazken, çalışma izni almaları da pratikte neredeyse imkansızdır. Dolayısıyla, Türkiye'deki uzun -neredeyse 10 yılı bulan- bekleme sürelerinde mülteci kadınlar geçimlerini sağlayabilmek için çalışmak zorundadırlar. STK desteklerinin yetersizliği, STK çalışanlarının mültecileri aşağılayan tavırları kadınları bu kurumların sunduğu desteklere

başvurmaktan ve/veya erişmekten de alıkoymakta, STK destekleri kadınların hayatlarını kolaylaştıracak, sürdürülebilir bir etki yaratmamaktadır. STK desteklerinin yetersizliği, çalışma izni almanın imkansızlığıyla birleşerek kadınları Türkiye'deki bekleme sürelerinde geçimlerini sağlayabilmek için kayıt dışı emek piyasasında çalışmaya zorlamaktadır. Kadınların çalışma deneyimleri incelendiğinde ise bu tezin önemli bulgularından biri ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bir yandan, devlet uydu kent uygulaması ve beraberinde getirdiği zorunlu imza ve seyahat izni uygulamalarıyla kadınların hayatlarının her alanını kontrol etmeye ve onları gözetim altında, yasal alanın içinde tutmaya çalışırken, öte yandan, pratikte çalışma izni almayı imkansız hale getirerek onları kayıt dışı istihdama ve kayıt dışı istihdamın beraberinde getirdiği yasadışılığa itmektedir.

Yalova kentinde kayıt dışı emek piyasasında kadınların yoğunlaştıkları alanlar incelendiğinde, kadınların genellikle hizmet sektöründe kafe, kahve, restoranlar, otel, kuaför, mağaza ve terzilerde çalıştığı ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yine, Yalova ekonomisi içinde önemli bir yer tutan seracılık da kadınların çalıştığı bir başka istihdam alanı olarak belirlemektedir. Saha bulguları, bu işler arasında kadınların Türkiye'de geçirdikleri zamana ve Türkçe bilme seviyelerine göre alacakları ücreti ve yapacakları işleri belirleyen farklı hiyerarşiler bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Bunun yanında, kadınlar arasındaki farklılıklar da yine kadınların hangi işlerde çalışmayı tercih edeceği, iş deneyimlerini ve çalışma koşullarını etkilemektedir. Örneğin, çocuklarının bakımını tek başına üstlenen çocuklu kadınlar genellikle gece vardiyasını tercih etmemekte, trans kadınlar ise gece vardiyasında dahi iş bulmakta zorlanmaktadırlar. İş bulabildiklerinde ise çoğunlukla bulaşıkçılık gibi kamusal alanda daha az görünür oldukları işlerde istihdam edilmektedirler. Öte yandan, hali hazırda eşi çalışan evli kadınların, iş bulma, iş değiştirme gibi konularda diğer gruplara göre esnek davranabilmektedirler.

İşler arası hiyerarşiler bulunsa da, bu işlerin tamamında, kadınlar uzun çalışma saatleri boyunca, güvencesiz ve düşük ücrete çalışmaktadırlar. Maaşlarını almaya dair de pek çok zorluk yaşayan kadınlar, çoğunlukla maaşlarını düzensiz aralıklarla alabilmekte, bazen patronların keyfi kesintileriyle eksik ya da hiç

alamamaktadırlar. Yine kadınların bu işlerde ne kadar süre çalışacakları, işe alınıp alınmayacakları işverenlerin inisiyatife bağlıdır. Dolayısıyla, her ne kadar kadınların içerisinde bulunduğu kayıt dışılıktan iltica rejimi sorumlu olsa da, bu kayıt dışı istihdamı ve beraberinde getirdiği yasadışıktan, mültecilerin yasal kırılganlığından yararlanan işverenler de faydalanmaktadırlar.

Emek sömürsünün yanı sıra, mülteci kadınlar, işverenleri, çalışma arkadaşları tarafından şiddet, taciz ve tecavüze de maruz kalmaktadırlar. Saha boyunca, işvereni veya çalışma arkadaşı tarafından tacize, istismara uğramamış tek bir kadınla bile tanışmadığımı söylemeliyim. Hatta, görüşmecilerden 3 tanesi işyerlerinde tecavüze uğradıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu noktada, yine kadınların bazıları evlerini işyerine çevirerek bu şiddet ve sömürü sarmalından çıkmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Evde çalışan kadınlar genellikle terzi, masör ve kuaför olarak çalışmakta, böylece kendilerine güvenli alanlar yaratmayı hedeflemektedirler. Yine trans/homofobi lezbiyen ve trans kadınların karşılaştıkları şiddet biçimleri arasında yer almaktadır. Örneğin, Zahra isimli görüşmeci, işyerinde kendisine yöneltilen homofobik sorulardan ve aşağılanmadan korunmak için cinsel kimliğini sakladığını belirtmiştir.

Tezin 4. bölümünde de tartışıldığı gibi, pek çok kadın karşılaştıkları toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddet karşısında işlerini bırakmayı çözüm olarak görmekteyiz. Kadınların şikayetçi olmak yerine neden işlerini bıraktıkları ve neden sessiz kaldıklarına cevap, sınır dışı edilebilirlik (*deportability*) kavramı kullanılarak açıklanmıştır. Nicholas De Genova ve diğer eleştirel göç çalışmacılarının da iddia ettiği gibi, bu tez de sınır dışı edilebilirliğin mülteci kadınların emeğini sömürülebilir ve güvencesiz kıldığını öne sürmektedir. Bu noktada, sınır dışı edilebilirlik kavramını sadece kadınların nasıl sömürülebilir özneler haline geldiğini değil, bunun yanında kadınların nasıl şiddete açık özneler olarak konumlandırıldığını da anlamamızı sağlıyor. Böylece, sınır dışı edilebilirlik kadınları bir yandan sömürülebilir ve şiddete açık özneler haline getirirken, diğer yandan kadınları sessizleştirerek sistemin devamlılığını da mümkün kılmaktadır. Kadınlar sınır dışı edilme korkusuyla, işyerlerinde yaşadıkları şiddet, taciz ve

tecavüzü dillendirmekten çekinerek, bu şiddet biçimleri karşısında ya işlerini bırakmayı ya da sessiz kalmayı tercih etmektedirler. Kavram öte yandan, yasal/yasadışı/kayıt dışı gibi ayrımların doğal olmadığını ve iltica rejimleri tarafından üretildiklerini bir kez daha görünür kılmaktadır.

Her ne kadar bu araştırma, şiddet ve emek sömürsünün farklı biçimlerini görünür kılsa da, aynı zamanda direniş ve dayanışma pratiklerine dair de bir tartışma yürütmektedir. Özellikle tezin 3. ve 4. bölümlerinde mülteci kadınları şiddete ve sömürüye açık hale getiren yapısal mekanizmalar üzerine ve kadınların bu yapıları nasıl iltica süreçlerinin ve gündelik hayatlarının her alanında deneyimlediğine odaklanılmaktadır. Fakat, araştırmanın sorgulamaları bunlarla sınırlı değildir. Tez boyunca aynı zamanda kadınlar arasındaki direniş ve dayanışma pratiklerini de incelenmiştir. Kadınların dayanışma pratiklerini anlayabilmek için, Chandra Talpade Mohanty ve onun dayanışma kavramına yaklaşımından faydalanılmış, dayanışma, aynı kimliğe sahip olanlar arasında kurulan bir ilişki biçiminden ziyade müşterek deneyimler üzerinden kurulan bir pratik olarak ele alınmıştır. Araştırma bulguları sömürü ve toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddete rağmen kadınların bilgi, deneyim paylaşımı ve karşılıklı bakım gibi dayanışma pratikleri geliştirdiklerini göstermektedir.

Deneyim paylaşımı feminist bilinç yükseltme grupları gibi farkındalık yaratma işlev görmektedir, bunun yanı sıra kadınlara rahatlama alanları sunmaktadır. Bu rahatlama alanları aynı zamanda kadınların birbiriyle deneyim paylaşımı yaptıkları alanlar olup, kadınlar arası feminist bir sorgulamanın da zeminini yaratmaktadır. 5. Bölümde Roya'nın evindeki buluşmada görüldüğü gibi, bu buluşmalar kadınlar arası yakınlık ve güven ilişkisinin kurulmasına, kadınlıktan, farklı pek çok konuya kadar geniş bir yelpazede konuşma ve tartışma imkanı yaratmaktadır.

Kadınlar arasında deneyim paylaşımının yanı sıra, bilgi paylaşımı da yine önemli bir dayanışma pratiği olarak belirlemektedir. Kadınlar paylaşılan bu bilgilerden ev, eşya, iş bulmaya, iltica rejiminin yasal süreçleriyle baş etmeye kadar farklı pek çok konuda faydalanmaktadırlar. Pratik ve materyal pek çok bilgi paylaşımı yanında,

kadınlar dedikodu ve söylentiler üzerinden de bu bilgilerin dolaşımını sağlamaktadırlar. Her ne kadar dedikodu ve söylentiler kadınların hayatlarında kontrol mekanizmasına dönüşme potansiyeli taşısa da, bu mekanizmalar aynı zamanda koruma ve tanınma/tanıma işlevi de görmektedir. Örneğin, kadınlar, ücretleri ödemeyen, kendilerini taciz eden işverenler ya da sorun çıkartan komşular hakkında birbirlerini uarmakta, böylece birbiriyle dayanışarak, şiddet ihtimalini azaltmanın yollarını bulmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Bilgi paylaşımı farklı ölçeklerde - yerel, ulusal, ulusötesi- gerçekleşmekte, böylece kadınlar mevcut iltica rejiminin zorluk ve kısıtlamalarına karşı farklı ölçeklerde dayanışma pratikleri geliştirmektedirler.

Karşılıklı bakım yine kadınların dayanışma pratikleri arasında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Kriz ve acil durumlarda birbirilerini gözeten ve bakım sunan kadınların bakım pratikleri sadece bu olağan dışı zamanlarla sınırlı değildir. Türkçe bilmeyenlere tercüme desteği sunma, yeni gelen mültecilerle evlerini paylaşma, çocuk bakımında birbirlerine destek sunma yine bu bakım pratiklerinden bazılarıdır. Burada, altının çizilmesi gereken nokta, bu karşılıklı bakım emeğinin bilinçli tercihler etrafında örgütlendiği, genellikle, güvencesizlik, umutsuzluk, bıkkınlık gibi duygular etrafında, ihtiyaçlar doğrultusunda, sosyal desteklerinde yokluğu sebebiyle şekillendiğidir.

Bilgi ve deneyim paylaşımı, karşılıklı bakım gibi dayanışma pratikleri bir yandan mültecilik bilgisini oluştururken, öte yandan, kadınların hayatlarına sahip çıkma mücadelesinde kolektivitinin öneminin bir kez daha altını çizer. Kadınların bitmeyen mücadelesi ve geliştirdikleri direniş pratikleri ancak bu dayanışma pratikleriyle mümkün olmaktadır. Bu noktada, kadınların geliştirdikleri direniş pratiklerini anlamak için Türkiye’de feminist hareket tarafından kullanılan “kadınlar hayatlarına sahip çıkıyor” kavramını feminist duruş kuramı zemininde göç otonomisi literatürüyle diyaloga sokarak, kavramı tartışmaya açtım. Bu ortaklaştırılan tartışma, kadınların eyleyciliğinin altını çizmeyi ve onların eyleme kudretini görünür kılmayı mümkün hale getirmiştir. Bu kavramı kullanarak,

kadınların nasıl göç öncesi ve sırasında farklı baskı, tahakküm biçimlerine, şiddet ve sömürüye maruz kaldıklarını yine de tüm bunlara rağmen hayatlarına sahip çıkabilmek için bitmeyen bir mücadele içinde oldukları iddia edilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, tezin 5.bölümünde kadınların geliştirdikleri farklı direniş pratiklerinin aldığı farklı biçimleri görünür kılınmıştır. "Hayatlarına sahip çıkma" eylemi, mülteci kadınların hayatlarında, beklemekle aktif olarak ilişkilenden, kendilerini şiddetten korumak ve zihinsel ve fiziksel sağlıklarını iyileştirmek için spor yapmaya ve şiddetle başa çıkmak için mizah ve ciddiye almama gibi birçok farklı biçim almaktadır.

Bu noktada, her ne kadar bu pratikler bireysel stratejiler gibi görünse de, tüm bu eylemlerin hem kadınların kendi hayatları hem de başka kadınların hayatları üzerinde dönüştürücü etkisi olduğu ve bu eylemlerin ancak dayanışmayla mümkün olduğu vurgusu yapılarak kadınların hayatlarına sahip çıkma pratiklerini politik eylemler olduğu savunulmaktadır. Bunun yanında, kadınların hayatlarına sahip çıkmalarının zeminini kuran dayanışma pratikleri ise yeni sosyal ilişkilerin kurulmasına sebep olmakta, bu da direnişin duygusal, sembolik biçimlerini ortaya çıkararak, direniş kavramını yeniden düşünmemizi mümkün kılmaktadır. Kadınların deneyimleri, direnişin sadece kolektif olarak örgütlenmiş büyük politik eylemlerle sınırlı olamayacağını bir kez daha görünür kılmaktadır.

Bu noktada tezin bir diğer önemli iddiası ise, mülteci kadınların direniş pratiklerinin mağdur mülteci kadın anlatısını yapı bozuma uğrattığıdır. Mülteci kadınlar literatürde genellikle sessizleştirilmiş, yardıma muhtaç özneler olarak temsil edilirler. Oysa, kadınların gündelik deneyimlerine odaklandığımızda kadınların mağdur olmanın çok ötesinde bir anlatılarının olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Mülteci kadınları sürekli ezilen ve acı çeken özneler olarak göstermek, kadınların politik eyleciliğini ve direniş pratiklerini görünmez kılmaktadır. Bu noktada kadınlar, hayatlarına sahip çıkarak bu kurban, mağdur mülteci kadın anlatısını pek çok şekilde yapı bozuma uğratmaktadır. İlk olarak kadınlar, sürekli karşılaştıkları zorlukları ve bu zorluklara rağmen ne kadar güçlü

olduklarını vurgulayarak sözlü olarak bu mağdur anlatısını reddetmektedirler. Bu sözlü direnişin yanında, toplumsal cinsiyet normlarına karşı çıkarak, kendileri için arzu ve istekleri olan özneler olduklarının altını çizmektedirler. Örneğin, bütün damgalama ve etiketlemelere rağmen, istedikleri gibi giyinmeye, arzu ettikleri şekilde makyaj yapmaya devam eden kadınlar, bu mağdur özne anlatısına karşı çıkmaktadırlar. Öte yandan, direniş ve mağduriyet arasındaki ilişki sadece mağdur mülteci kadın anlatısının yapı bozuma uğratılmasıyla sınırlı kalmamakta, hatta bunun daha ötesinde karmaşık bir ilişkiyi içinde barındırmaktadır. Tezde de tartışıldığı gibi kadınların hikayeleri, onların karşılaştıkları aktör ve yapılara göre nasıl farklı özne pozisyonları arasında sürekli gidip geldiğine işaret etmekte ve nasıl bazen stratejik olarak bu mağdur kavramını bir direniş aracına dönüştürdüklerini görünür kılmaktadır. Örneğin, mülteci kadınlar gündelik sohbetlerde ve görüşmelerde mağdur mülteci kadın temsilini ne kadar güçlü olduklarını vurgulayarak reddetmektedirler. Öte yandan, ev sahipleri, kadınları evden çıkarmak istediğinde ya da Göç İdaresi çalışanlarıyla karşılaşmalarında bu mağdur anlatısını stratejik olarak sahiplenmektedirler. Böylece, kadınların deneyimleri bir yandan mağdur özneler indirgenemeyeceklerini gösterirken, öte yandan, kadınların çoklu özne pozisyonları işgal ederek nasıl mağdur/eyleyici ikiliğini istikrarsızlaştırdıklarını da göstermektedir.

Tüm bu deneyimler ışığında, bu tez, kadınların deneyimlerini analizin temeline alarak, iltica rejiminin, tüm bileşenleriyle kadınları nasıl şiddete ve sömürüye açık hale getirdiğini göstermektedir. Mülteci kadınlar ise bu şiddet ve sömürü sarmalının ortasında hayatlarına sahip çıkmaktan asla vazgeçmeyerek, aralarında geliştirdikleri dayanışma pratikleriyle direnmektedirler. Feminist yöntemle yürütülmüş etnografik bir araştırmaya dayanan bu tezde, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini ve onların deneyimlerini etkileyen yapıları görünür kılmayı hedefleyerek mülteci ve toplumsal cinsiyet çalışmalarına pek çok açıdan katkı sunulması amaçlanmaktadır.

Her ne kadar özellikle de son yıllarda artan sayıda araştırma toplumsal cinsiyet ve kadınların deneyimlerine odaklanmaya başlasa da, bu çalışmalar arasında feminist bakış açısıyla -özellikle de kesişimsellik vurgusuyla- yürütülen çalışma sayısı yok denecek kadar azdır. Bu noktada, bu boşluğu doldurmak için bu çalışma kesişimsel feminist yaklaşımla yürütülmüş olup, kadınların deneyimlerini bütünlüklü bir şekilde ele almayı hedeflemiş, toplumsal cinsiyeti görüşmecilerin farklı bir demografik özelliği olarak ele almanın ötesinde, bu kavramı analitik bir araç olarak kullanmıştır. Yine bu doğrultuda, çalışmanın bütün kavramlarına -emek, şiddet, dayanışma, direniş- feminist bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşmıştır. Bunu yaparken, toplumsal cinsiyetin toplumsal gerçekliği anlamadaki öneminin altı çizilmiş, farklı tahakküm biçimlerinin kadınların deneyimini yakından şekillendirdiği göz önünde bulundurulmuş ve bu doğrultuda kesişimsellik bu tahakküm biçimleri arasında hiyerarşi kurmadan, kadınların deneyimlerini anlamayı olanaklı kılmıştır.

İkinci olarak, bu çalışma etnografik yöntemle dayalı olarak yürütülmüştür. Bu da mülteci kadınların deneyimlerinin öznelliklerini ve özgünlüklerini kavramayı mümkün kılmıştır. Sadece mülakat yürütmek ya da katılımcı gözlem yapmak yerine, kadınların yaşadıkları pek çok olay ve durumu onlarla birlikte yaşama şansı bularak, kadınlar gündelik hayattaki pek çok aktivite ve kurum ziyaretlerine eşlik edilmiştir. Bu kimi zaman kadınlara Türkçe konusunda yardımcı olmak kimi zamansa işverenlerine vatandaş bir arkadaşları olduğunu göstermek için tercih edilmiştir. Tüm bunlar, araştırma muhatapları ve araştırmacı arasında güven ilişkisinin gelişmesine, ilk kez karşılaştıkları araştırmacılara verdikleri jenerik cevaplara kıyasla daha araştırmacıyla daha derinlikli deneyim paylaşımı yapmalarını mümkün kılmıştır. Etnografik yöntem araştırmacıya yapısal faktörlerle, bireylerin gündelik deneyimleri arasında ilişki kurma imkanı tanıyarak, iltica rejiminin kadınların gündelik deneyimlerini nasıl şekillendirdiğini tüm özgünlükleriyle kavrama imkanı sunmuştur. Yapısal faktörlerle gündelik eylemleri birleştirerek, bu tezle, Türkiye’de iltica alanında yok denecek kadar⁹⁰ az olan

⁹⁰ Bu çalışmalardan bazıları için, bkz: Sari, E. (2021). *Waiting In Transit: Iranian Lgbtq Refugees In Turkey And The Sexuality Of (Im) Mobility.*; Biner, Ö. (2016). *Türkiye’de mültecilik iltica,*

etnografik arařtırmalara etnografik bir saha alıřması yrterek katkı sunulması amalanmaktadır.

Yine, uydu kenti bir analiz kategorisi olarak ele alarak bu tezin, mlteci alıřmalarına ve mlteci yerleřim literatrne katkı sunulması hedeflenmektedir. Mlteci yerleřtirme literatrne baktığımızda yerleřtirme Őekillerinin genellikle kamp, kent mltecileri ve yerel yerleřim zerinden tartıřıldıđı grlmektedir. te yandan, yine son yıllarda kapatma mekanları zerine de hızla geniřleyen bir literatr bulunmaktadır. Oysa, uydu kent bu yerleřim biimlerinden ve kapatma mekanlarından farklı zelliklere sahip bir yerleřim modeli olarak belirlemektedir. Mlteciler ne kamp yerleřiminde olduđu gibi duvarları olan, dikenli tellerle evirili kapalı alanlara ne de kent mltecileri literatrnde tartıřıldıđı gibi istedikleri Őehirlerde yařayabildikleri bir yerleřim rejimine tabidirler. Trkiye’de sığınma bařvurusunda bulunan kiřiler, devlet tarafından belirlenen uydu kentlere yerleřtirilmektedirler. Bu yerleřim modelinde imza zorunluluđu ve seyahat izni gibi idari uygulamalar, kamp, kent arasındaki sınırları bulanıklařtırmakta, uydu kenti, kapatılmanın kentsel alana nfuz ettiđi bir model haline getirmektedir. Bu noktada bu alıřma, kamp, kent, kapatılma gibi kavramları yeniden dřnmenin neminin altını izerken, mlteci deneyimlerini anlayabilmek iin yeni bir analiz erevesine ihtiya olduđunu da vurgulamaktadır. Bylece, Yalova uydu kentinde, uydu kent uygulamasını temel bir sorgu alanı olarak odađına alan bu tez alıřması, mlteci yerleřim literatrne ampirik bir katkı yapmayı hedeflemektedir.

te yandan, Trkiye’de mltecilere ve onların deneyimlerine odaklanan ok sayıda alıřma bulunsa da, bu alıřmalar arasında uydu kent uygulamasına odaklanan alıřma yok denecek kadar az sayıdadır. Bu noktada, hem İstanbul gibi enformal iř olanaklarının ve sosyal imkanların ok olduđu byk bir kente yakın olması hem

geicilik ve yasallık: Van uydu Őehir rneđi. İstanbul Bilgi niversitesi Yayınları; Dagtas, S. (2014). *Whose Misafirs? Hospitality, Recognition and Reciprocity pp. 222-262 in Heterogenous Encounters: Tolerance, Secularism and Religious Difference at Turkey's Border with Syria* (Doctoral dissertation, PhD Thesis, University of Toronto).

de uzun yıllardır mültecilerin yerleştirildiği bir uydu kent olması Yalova'yı uydu kent olarak da ilginç bir vaka haline getirmektedir. Bu noktada, Yalova uydu kentinde yaşayan İranlı mülteci kadınların yaşam deneyimlerine odaklanan bu çalışma, mülteci ve feminist çalışmaları alanında olan bir boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir.

Araştırmanın bir başka önemli katkısı ise emek alanıdır. Mültecilerin emek pratikleri uluslararası mülteci çalışmalarında çokça odaklanılan bir konudur. Özellikle son yıllarda, eleştirel göç ve sınır çalışan akademisyenler, mülteci emeğini sınır dışı rejimleri ve sınır dışı edilebilirlik kavramı üzerinde çalışmaya başlamışlardır. Bu çalışmanın da önemli bir kavramsal tartışmasını oluşturan sınır dışı edilebilirlik, kayıt dışı ve güvencesiz koşullarda çalışan mülteci kadınların, emek pratiklerinin aynı koşullarda çalışan vatandaşlardan nasıl ayrıştığını görünür kılarken, mülteci emeğinin özgünlüğünü de ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda tez boyunca, mültecilerin emek pratiklerini anlamak için sınır dışı edilebilirlik kavramını kullanarak, sınır dışı tehdidinin mültecileri nasıl sömürülebilir özneler haline getirdiğini gösterilmiştir. İranlı mülteci kadınların emek pratiklerinin de gösterdiği gibi bu mekanizma sadece kadınları sömürülebilir özneler haline getirmemekte aynı zamanda onları toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş şiddete de açık hale getirmekte, kadınların şikayet mekanizmalarına erişimlerini engelleyerek, onları sessizleştirmektedir. Dördüncü bölümde Narges'in hikayesinde de vurguladığı gibi, kadınlar şiddet ve sömürüye karşı çıkmak istediklerinde ise işverenleri kadınları polise şikayet etmekle tehdit etmekte, bir diğer ifadeyle sınır dışı tehdidiyle yasal mekanizmalardan yararlanmalarını engelleyerek, kadınları şiddet ve sömürü karşısında sessizleştirmektedir. Dolayısıyla işverenler sınır dışı edilebilirliği kadınların bedenlerini ve cinselliklerini disipline etmek için de kullanmaktadırlar. Çalışma boyunca, bu tehdidin kadınların bedenleri ve cinselliklerini disipline etmekteki rolüne odaklanarak, kavramın toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş yansımalarına vurgu yaparak az çalışılmış bir yönüne dikkatleri çekilmesi hedeflenmiştir.

Öte yandan, bu kavramsal tartışmayı merkezine alan araştırmalar kayıt dışı, yasadışı ve sömürü arasındaki ilişkilere de odaklanmaktadır. Bu noktada araştırmacılar, yasadışılığın üretilmiş bir kategori olduğu vurgusunu yaparak, özellikle iltica dosyaları reddedilen sığınmacıların, kağıtsız başka ülkede yaşayan ya da izinsiz çalışanlar üzerinden yasadışı kavramına ve onun yasal üretimine odaklanmışlardır (Andrijasevic, 2010; Freedman, 2009; Gambino, 2017). Bu noktada, uydu kentlerde yaşayan mülteci kadınların deneyimleri tüm bu farklı statülerin -yasadışılık, kayıt dışılık, yasallık- nasıl iç içe geçtiğini bize göstermektedir. Mülteci kadınlar gündelik hayatlarında sürekli farklı yasal statüler arasında gidip gelmekte, bu da onların deneyimlerini analiz etmenin gerekliliğini bir kez daha gözler önüne sermektedir. Çünkü literatürdeki tartışmalardan farklı olarak uydu kentlerdeki mülteci kadınlar, buldukları mekana göre bir gün içerisinde sürekli farklı statüler arasında geçiş yapmaktadırlar. Çalışmaya başladıkları anda yasadışı alanda kendilerini bulan kadınlar, işyerlerini terk ettikleri anda yeniden yasal alanın içerisine geçmektedirler. Bu farklı statüler arasında geçişler ise, yasal statüler arasındaki ayrımların sabit olmadığını ve sürekli değiştiğini görünür kılmaktadır. Mülteci kadınların emek pratikleri üzerinden yasal statülerin akışkanlığı ve değişkenliğine odaklanarak, bu çalışma eleştirel mülteci çalışmalarına katkı sunmaktadır. Öte yandan, Türkiye’de mülteci ve göç alanındaki çalışmalar incelendiğinde, bu çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğunun emek göçüne odaklandığı, mültecilerin emek pratiklerine odaklanan çok az çalışma bulunduğu görülmektedir. Bu noktada, Yalova uydu kentindeki İranlı mülteci kadınların emek pratiklerine odaklanarak, bu çalışma, literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir.

Son olarak, mülteci kadınların deneyimleri bize mülteci özneyi farklı şekillerde düşünme imkanı sağlamaktadır. İlk olarak, mülteci kadınların farklı direniş ve dayanışma pratiklerine odaklanan bu çalışma, anaakım göç çalışmalarındaki yerleşik mağdur mülteci anlatısını ve mağdur/eyleyici ikiliğini istikrarsızlaştırmaktadır. İkinci olarak, tez boyunca mülteci özne duygu ve duygulanımlar üzerinden ele alınarak mülteci öznelliklerini rasyonel zeminde

anlayan yaklaşım eleştirilmiş, mülteci kadınların duyguları da analize dahil etmiştir. Saha çalışması, korku, heyecan, hayal kırıklığı, kaygı, sevinç, üzüntü ve öfke gibi duyguların kadınların geçmişlerine dair anlatılarında somutlaştığını, gelecek tahayyüllerinde önemli bir yer tutarak, şimdiki zamanlarındaki karşılıklı bakım pratikleri için de temel oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Üçüncü olarak, mülteci çalışmalarında mülteciler genellikle hedef ve transit ülkelerde, ileriye doğru hareket eden, köksüz öznelere olarak ele alınmaktadırlar. Oysa, bu araştırmadaki mülteci kadınların deneyimleri ve hikayeleri, farklı gerekçelerle de olsa, İran'dan tamamıyla kopmadıklarını, aksine hala İran'la ve İran'daki yakınlarıyla ilişkilerinin devam ettiğini göstermektedir. Örneğin, kadınlar ekonomik olarak İran'dan kopmuş değiller; birçoğu hâlâ ailelerinden ve akrabalarından maddi destek almakta ya da İran'daki bağlantıları üzerinden iş/ticaret yapmaktadırlar. Öte yandan, İran'la kurdukları bağ sadece ekonomik alanla sınırlı kalmamakta, mülteci kadınlar İran ile duygusal ilişkilerini ve bağlılıklarını da sürdürmektedirler. Neredeyse tüm mülteci kadınlar İran'dan en az bir yakını ve/veya arkadaşıyla temas halinde olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bununla birlikte, kadınlar yine İran'da yaşanan siyasi ve toplumsal değişimleri yakından takip etmektedirler. Kadınlar İran'dan fiziksel olarak kopmuş ve geri dönemiyor olsalar bile, İran'la bağlantıları sosyal medya aracılığıyla devam etmektedir. Bu noktada bu tez, bu tür karmaşık bağlılıkları göz önünde bulundurarak ev, aidiyet ve mültecilik kavramlarını yeniden düşünmemize olanak sağlamaktadır.

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