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LIVES HIDDEN UNDER THE LIGHTS

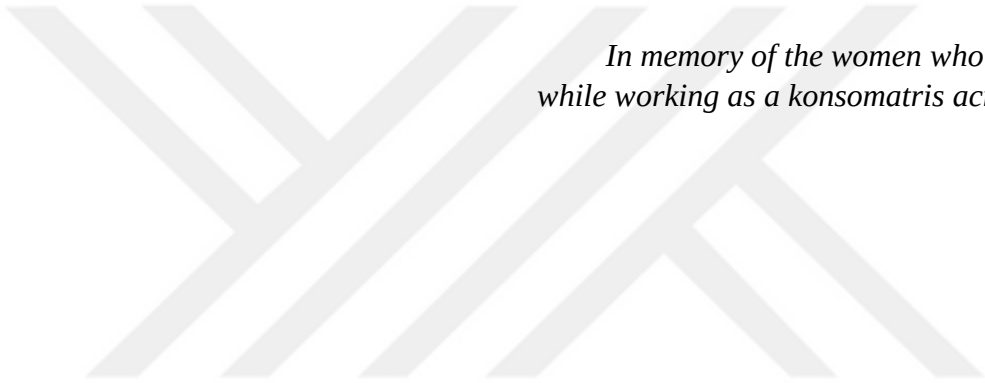
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LIVES HIDDEN UNDER THE LIGHTS:
UNRAVELING KONSOMATRIS WORK IN
ANKARA PAVYONS FROM A FEMINIST
PERSPECTIVE

A Master's Thesis

by
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August 2023



*In memory of the women who were killed
while working as a konsomatris across Turkey*

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WORK IN ANKARA PAVYONS FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
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August 2023

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ABSTRACT

LIVES HIDDEN UNDER THE LIGHTS: THE KONSOMATRIS WORK IN ANKARA PAVYONS FROM FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

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In Turkish society, *Pavyons*, a type of nightclub, are closely associated with the local culture of Ankara. The main figures in the Ankara *Pavyons* are the *konsomatris* women, who are stigmatized by society and whose job description consists of sitting at tables with customers, drinking and dancing with them. This study primarily delves into the significance and evolution of *Pavyons* within Ankara's culture. It asserts that Ankara's *Pavyons*, along with the sexual labor performed by *konsomatris* women, hold key roles in this context. Research data is collected through in-depth interviews with subjects of the *Pavyon*, especially the *konsomatris* women, and by attending the *Pavyons* as participant observer. The sexual labor and the experiences of the *konsomatris* women, who constitute the central part of the collected data, are evaluated as a whole by considering their experiences related to their works in Ankara *Pavyons*. This research intentionally avoids the binary definition of women prevalent in existing discourse, which typically considers women as either "victims" or "agents," as evidenced in the anti-pornography movement and ongoing arguments around "sex work." Moreover, rather than categorizing *konsomatris* women as sex workers or forcing them into one of these predetermined categories, this study considers the unique dynamics that exist in Ankara *Pavyons* and *konsomatris* women's narratives. Therefore, the study aims to consider the stigma and the possibility of

prostitution associated with konsomatris work, all within the context of the peculiar circumstances surrounding Ankara Pavyons.

Keywords: *Konsomatris*, *Pavyon*, Nightclub Culture, Hostess Work, Sex work



ÖZET

İŞIKLAR ALTINDA GİZLENEN HAYATLAR: FEMİNİST BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA ANKARA PAVYONLARINDAKİ KONSOMATRİSLİĞİ ANLAMAK

Kaban, Tuğçe

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Türk toplumunda, Pavyonlar bir tür gece kulübü olarak bilinir ve Ankara'nın yerel kültürüyle yakından ilişkilendirilir. Pavyonlardaki ana figürler, konsomatris kadınlar olarak adlandırılan, iş tanımları müşteriler ile masalarda oturarak birlikte içki tüketmek ve dans etmekten oluşan; toplum tarafından damgalanan kadınlardır. Bu çalışma, Pavyonların Ankara kültüründeki önemini ve gelişimini de göz önünde bulundurarak, bu mekanlarda çalışan konsomatris kadınların cinsel emeğini sürdürürken deneyimledikleri Ankara Pavyonlarının temel dinamiklerini aktarmaktadır. Araştırma verileri, özellikle konsomatris kadınlarla olmak üzere Ankara Pavyonları özneleri ile derinlemesine görüşmeler yaparak ve Pavyonlarda katılımcı gözlemci olarak bulunarak elde edilmiştir. Toplanan veriler arasında merkezi bir yere sahip olan konsomatris kadınların yaptıkları işe yönelik anlatılarının, Ankara Pavyonlarındaki çalışma koşulları bağlamında bütünsel bir şekilde değerlendirilmesi hedeflenmiştir. Bu araştırma, anti-pornografi ve cinsel devrim hareketlerinden kökenini alarak başlayan ve devam eden "seks işçiliği" tartışmalarında yaygın olarak kadınları "mağdur" veya "fail" olarak tanımlayan ikililiği reddetmektedir. Bunun da ötesinde, konsomatris kadınları seks işçisi şemsiye terimi altında tanımlamak yerine, konsomatris kadınların anlatılarını dikkate alarak konsomatrislik işini Ankara Pavyonlarındaki kendi bağlamında ele almaktadır. Böylelikle bu çalışma, konsomatris kadınların işlerine ilişkin damgalanmayı ve fuhuş

olasılığını, Ankara Pavyonlarındaki konsomatrislik işinin özgöl koşulları içerisinde değerlendirmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Konsomatris, Pavyon, Gece Hayatı Kültürü, *Hostesslik* işi, seks işçiliği



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

I grew up in a former village in Muğla, Turkey, now legally recognized as a metropolitan neighborhood following government policies aimed at legally urbanizing the countryside. Tobacco growing, a significant source of income in the area where I grew up, was beginning to disappear, so families began to search for alternative means of sustaining themselves. Due to the same concerns, my family decided to open a grocery store that would supplement my father's civil servant salary. During those years, while my younger sister was still a baby and I was part of the "reserve labor force" as the only child in the family, I worked at this store throughout all of my free time after school to assist my parents. Our house was located right across the street from our grocery store. During the day, I assisted my mother with domestic duties, such as caring for my baby sister while listening in on conversations of the neighboring women who came to the store for gossip. My father would come home from work in the evenings and take over the store. At a specific hour in the evening, my father's acquaintances would gather at the store; politics would be discussed first, accompanied by alcohol. After a few booze-filled hours where they exhausted all the political talk, they would watch videos of women dressed very sexily performing erotic dances in a dimly lit environment. One might wonder how a girl in a small town could be permitted to be in such an environment by her father. However, my father, disappointed that both of his children were girls, decided to raise me "like a boy." Therefore, I had the right to be in male environments as a privilege that separated me from other girls, and it was my responsibility to know and discuss various issues differently than a regular woman in a small town. However, this privilege had its limits, and when the store closed at night, my father and his friends would go to an entertainment place called the "Pavyon," and I would be sent home to bed. In the morning, I would wake up in the

world of women. For several years, I lived in this binary social life in the village, created by gender roles. Over time, I realized what kind of places *Pavyons* are. The content of the videos opened on the computer had been made up of the dances of Ankara's most famous *konsomatris* women, and men in our store had satisfied their curiosity and desire by going to *Pavyons* in their smaller cities.

When I came to Ankara, a city famous for its *Pavyons*, for university, I was naturally more curious about the *Pavyons* than other people who were also new in the city and did not know much about the local culture. In my second year in Ankara, I went to the *Pavyon* for the first time, thanks to my friends who were shooting a documentary film about the *Pavyon*. The first thing I noticed on my first night at the *Pavyon*, which I imagined during my childhood as a place where men came to have fun and families were not allowed, was the relationship between the customer men and *konsomatris* women who worked there. Contrary to what I had believed for years, the men were not the main subjects of the *Pavyon*; I realized that the main subjects were *konsomatris* women. At first glance, these women did not seem to me like victims who were forced to work there, contrary to the conventional view. However, afterward, I had a chance to meet these women and overhear the documentary crew's interviews conducted with women. As they told life stories that were full of poverty, violence, harassment, and other struggles, my earlier observations were strongly challenged. In fact, at that moment, I had been exposed to the duality of agency and victimization, which is much discussed in the sex work literature.

1.2. Research Question

These experiences and observations have constituted the ground on which I build this thesis, asking how is *konsomatris* work practiced as a form of sexual labor in Ankara *Pavyons*.

In this regard, I intend to study how the *konsomatris* identity is formed by the work they engage in, namely, how these women establish their identities based on their experiences in Ankara *Pavyons*. I begin my discussion by concentrating on the term "sex work," which is commonly used by liberal feminists to cover all forms of sexual labor, from prostitution to dancing, webcam showing, and pornography, under one

general term in an effort to eliminate the “whore stigma” of the word prostitution and to emphasize the working conditions of those who engage in this work. Then, with a particular focus on the debate between radical and liberal feminists, I touch on the attitudes of different feminisms towards sex work. Finally, I introduce four different public policy models for the regulation of sex work, about which intense discussions continue both inside and outside academic circles.

Next, I discuss hostess work in East Asia, which is also examined under the general category of sex work and strikingly resembles *konsomatris* work in Turkey, and how the various dynamics of this work can be analyzed under the framework of sex work debates. Similar to the ongoing discussions within the subfield of hostess work, it becomes evident that the term sex work is insufficient to understand the practices in Ankara *Pavyons*. This is due to the fact that discussions around regulating prostitution take center stage in conversations about sex work, while other types of sexual labor are disregarded despite the initial attempt to encompass and destigmatize them. Consequently, the whore stigma attached to these various forms of labor, with their intricate dynamics, tends to be overlooked. In this context, I abstain from labeling the *konsomatris* work within the broad scope of sex work, and I conceptualize these women as “*konsomatris*,” just as they define themselves. Similarly, I avoid exclusively categorizing it as “hostess work,” a translation adopted from the studies in English for *konsomatris* work due to the similarities between the two practices. In this context, I formulate a conceptual framework to understand the *konsomatris* work within the distinctive environment of Ankara *Pavyons*. This role entails a dual function of dancing and hostessing. To deepen the comprehension of the term *konsomatris*, I delve into its etymological roots, tracing them back to its French and Latin origins, rooted in the idea of consumption. Moreover, I shed light on the potential legal definitions of *konsomatris* work and elaborate on the unique economic circumstances shaping this occupation.

After highlighting the absence of a solid legal foundation for *konsomatris* work in Turkey and the economics of Ankara *Pavyons* characterized by the continuous debt burden experienced by *konsomatris* women, I proceed to explore the two distinct roles these women embrace in their work. I categorize them into two identities based on the nature of the work they do in Ankara *Pavyons*: open *konsomatris* and regular

konsomatris. Regular *konsomatris* women primarily engage in conversations with male customers and consume alcohol with them, adhering to the conventional definition of the *konsomatris* role. Conversely, open *konsomatris* women are open to engaging in sexual activities with customers both inside or outside of *Pavyon*. The background for analyzing these two *konsomatris* identities will draw from various feminist perspectives on sex work and prostitution. Through my interviews with regular *konsomatris* women, I observed that they negotiate with the *konsomatris* work by defining open *konsomatris* women as their “other,” thus placing the “whore stigma” associated with the *konsomatris* occupation onto these women in an attempt to escape it themselves. Subsequently, I identified a practice within the *Pavyon* culture known as the *Yemek Dönüşü* (After Dinner) that involves *konsomatris* women meeting with customers outside the *Pavyon* where, after their meal, the woman and the customer return to the *Pavyon* to finish the night there. While customers can engage in the practice of spending time with *konsomatris* women outside the *Pavyon*, they can only do so on the condition that they return to the *Pavyon* and continue consuming alcohol within the confines of the *Pavyon* establishment. I observed that the *Pavyon* management essentially utilizes this practice as a profit-making tool by sustaining alcohol consumption. Furthermore, I realized that this practice, which has become a tradition, presents a potential gateway for the realization of prostitution within the *konsomatris* work. Engaging in the practice of *yemek dönüşü*, which usually means going to hotels for sexual encounters and then returning to the *Pavyon* instead of simply having a meal, vividly exposes that prostitution is a significant aspect of the hostess occupation in Ankara *Pavyons*.

1.3. Significance and Contribution

This study will contribute to the literature on two levels. The first level is concerned with the *Pavyon* research conducted in Turkey, which is becoming an increasingly popular subject. These studies focus on issues such as the construction and reproduction of masculinity in the *Pavyon*, the relationship between *Pavyon* culture and Ankara musi, *konsomatris* women’s parenting roles, and the effect of *Pavyon* culture on the family institution. As demonstrated, no study currently examines the experiences of women working as *konsomatris* in Ankara *Pavyons*, specifically. Secondly, when conducting a literature review on nightclub culture and women’s

experiences in this context, I realized a substantial amount of scholarly work is available on women working as “hostesses” in establishments called “Hostess Clubs,” primarily in East Asia, focusing on Japan. While *konsomatris* women in Ankara *Pavyons* have job descriptions similar to these hostess women, they are rarely studied in international academia. Therefore, at the second level, my study will fill another gap by revealing the experiences of women with similar job descriptions in Turkey, a country with a different culture and dynamics. Therefore, drawing attention to the experiences of women working in Ankara *Pavyons* would make a significant contribution to the literature. However, beyond this, delving into the unique position and distinctive culture of Ankara *Pavyons* within the broader context of the Turkish *Pavyon* industry reveals why it is important to focus on the women employed in this setting. As my data indicate, *konsomatris* women commonly begin working in Ankara *Pavyons* only after working in *Pavyons* located in other cities across Turkey for a time, signifying a well-established awareness of Ankara *Pavyons*’ role within Turkey’s *Pavyon* sector. These women view Ankara *Pavyons* as the “culmination of their careers,” bringing along with them narratives of violence and poverty from their diverse backgrounds. Upon entering Ankara *Pavyons*, these women, having “survived” until this stage, begin to encounter novel challenges, weaving together new stories within the Ankara *Pavyon* context. Throughout this thesis, these narratives are often subjected to scrutiny from various perspectives, which perceive these women either as victims or agents in existing research. However, my contention is that, while having these perspectives in mind, we gain a deeper understanding of how the women’s experiences of victimization and agency are intricately intertwined by examining their past and present struggles through their own narratives. This approach offers a more enriching contribution to the study of the *Pavyon* environment and gender and class inequality in Turkey at large.

1.4. Methodology

As it will be explained, my research question and problematization based on *konsomatris* identity and its defining practices in relation to sex work initially started off to address the twofold aspects of subjective experience and practical dynamics by utilizing corresponding methods of interview and participant observation. Without doubt, the real starting point was a ‘feminist curiosity,’ which can be defined as posing questions about the gendering of sociocultural, political, economic dynamics

and their consequences that “deserve public attention and public resolution” (Enloe 2007, p. 9). This is why my subjective experience, explained in the introduction, and spread through all stages of answering my research question, always accompanied the aim of providing an insight from a feminist perspective, as well as by the inclusion of a public policy dimension, i.e., concrete delving into and the potential of touching the lives of *konsomatrís* women.

While I was well aware of the potential obstacles and difficulties of conducting such research, I shouldered a feminist methodological perspective that embraced not only emotions such as shame, fear, and guilt but also the idea that “researchers must document, investigate and analyze their emotions along with their data, using reflexivity as a method for combining subjectivity and analytic rigor” (Reger, 2001). These emotions stemming from entering an unknown field, my privileged researcher role, and overidentification with the research subjects have been inseparable from the lens through which I participated in *Pavyon* and interviewed the *konsomatrís* women. Similarly, based on the idea that “feminist inquiry entails reflection directed at all stages of the scholarly process” (Ackerly, 2008, p. 29), emotions and ideas internally experienced by the researcher are not detached from the observation and analysis. While the discussions regarding entering the field and positionality will be presented in this chapter, reflexivity will be an aspect of this research and its presentation even under the full scope of the analysis and conclusion chapters.

In this connection, the changes in the way my research question was addressed are part of the same dynamic. That is why I stick to the fundamental idea of the feminist interview which is based on “telling about the experience” (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 176-79). In the same vein that I avoided an objectivization of my research subjects without centering on their experiences, I refrained from postulating my position as rigid and fully stable. I embraced the perspective that, particularly in field observation from a feminist perspective, the researcher’s problematization of research focus and emphasis change according to “relational needs of those in the research setting” with “a concerted focus upon methodology -the hows and whys of the research”. (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 1960). As dynamic as they are, these are all reflected upon as essential aspects of this study.

After a brief presentation of the objective facts regarding method, I will explain in detail how participant observation and interview were not merely mediums of data collection; they were a part of the subjective experience of the researcher's positionality that can be incorporated into the methodological boundaries of the dialogue between problematization and productive response.

1.4.1. Method

This research is based on fieldwork in *Ankara Pavyons* between December 2021 and July 2023. The data source is twofold: First, I collected participant observation data in *Pavyons* in Ankara's Ulus and Maltepe districts, the two districts of Ankara where the *Pavyons* are mainly concentrated. Second, I conducted interviews with the women whom I contacted and selected through convenience sampling. Although my focus is on *konsomatris* women, I also interviewed men, including customers and a manager, in order to cover the other subjects of *Pavyon* that were mentioned by women in interviews and to understand the *Pavyon* environment a little bit more thoroughly. These additional interviews with customers and managers abled me to delve into the dynamics regarding the practices of *konsomatris* work. In other words, as with the approach of combining participant observation data and interviews, the addition of interviews with men in addition to the *konsomatris* interviews was to get an elaborate picture especially regarding the practices and main dynamics of *konsomatris* work. As a result, I visited sex six different *Pavyons* a total of ten times as part of my participant observation, and conducted 11 in-depth interviews with six *konsomatris* women who define themselves as *regular konsomatris*, four active customer men, as well as a manager who worked as a manager in seven different *Ankara Pavyons* in the last 25 years, three of which were during the time of my field research. At this point, one of the most important limitations of my work was that I could not interview women who defined themselves as open *konsomatris*.

While analyzing my findings, I employ the method known as feminist narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is the most suitable method for my research as it allows for the analysis of identities and experiences when stories are narratively told by the individuals under investigation (Esin, 2011, p. 94). Furthermore, feminist narrative analysis is a sub-method within narrative analysis that focuses on narratives containing issues of gender inequality and power relationships. It utilizes feminist

theories and aims to uncover how gender inequality shapes narratives and their forms of expression. As described by Fraser and Macdougall (2015), the key distinction between feminist narrative analysis and other methods lies in the process of understanding and interpreting the data that emerges during interviews. Narrative feminist researchers view storytelling as a process of co-construction. In this collaborative narrative, stories are woven within the interaction of telling, listening, and speaking rather than representing a single truth through the recounting of a specific time or event. The researcher takes into consideration different places and times within the story that are not explicitly conveyed in words, such as where the participant paused, became emotional, or expressed anger during the interview. While doing so, the researcher fills in these gaps in the narrative. (p.244) At this point, as a feminist researcher, I paid attention to the women I interviewed taking an active role in the creation of research findings and co-constructing their narratives with them, rather than seeing them as objects of research. (Ackerly&True, 2010)

1.4.2. Methodological Discussions on Positionality

Especially in sensitive or hard-to-reach fields like mine, "the process that researchers undertake in order to gain entry into communities is a central element of the entire project, yet surprisingly, the topic of entry is rarely addressed in the relevant literature." (Ochocka et al., 2010, p. 2). Therefore, I will start my "Methodology" section with how I got into my field of study, *Pavyon* environment.

After the documentary process in the summer of 2016, which coincided with the summer when I had just finished my first year of undergraduate studies, I went to *Pavyon* for the first time about five years later, this time in the winter of 2021 as a student who had just started her master's degree. The person who used to own a *Pavyon* during the documentary process was a *Pavyon* manager and a gatekeeper for me. However, at the time, *Pavyon* owners did not want to attract attention due to COVID restrictions. Hence, my gatekeeper had to reject my request to do research along with other offers, and it was not in his hands but "the bosses' decision". I cannot forget my disappointment when I left the *Pavyon* that day. I had been writing papers in every course I took for a year on a question that had been on my mind for years, and I was looking forward to this field research with great excitement. But I overcame this disappointment with the idea that came to my mind one day: "Well,

what can anyone say if I go to *Pavyon* as a customer?" I went to the *Pavyon* manager the same evening, and I asked him if it would be possible to make observations by being here as a customer. He told me that *Pavyons* are public places and so, of course, I could be there as a customer, while also warning me not to attract attention. This was how I was able to re-enter the field. At this point, I learned that it is not enough to enter the field; entry is an ongoing process that requires developing strategies to keep it continuous throughout the research. (Ochocka et al, 2010)

Ethically, it was essential for me that the manager of the *Pavyon* I was visiting to collect data through participant observation knew that I came to conduct research, even though I was there as a customer. Because I agree that being in the field as a participant observer with an open identity as a researcher is the first step to dealing with ethical problems that may arise between the researcher and the "researched" (Watts, 2011). My presence there as a client freed him from having to answer to the *Pavyon* owner for letting a researcher in and allowed me to be there and continue my research within ethical boundaries. This time, however, a new set of problems arose: I could not sit in the *Pavyon* as a woman alone and order a soft drink such as soda, etc. I had to be there as a customer. For this reason, I started going to the *Pavyon* with one or two friends, fully sober. Then, I would drink beer when I was there as slowly as possible to not to collect data while intoxicated, and then leave the *Pavyon* after a while with a safe exit. However, this habit ended up in a night when I had to go to a *Pavyon* unplanned with one of the *konsomatris* women I met, a night that turned out to be both my biggest challenge during the fieldwork and also a resource to reflect upon my positionality. I will now describe that night as an example and description of positionality.

That night, I met with a *konsomatris* woman in a bar in *Tunali* (a neighborhood in Ankara in which mostly upper-middle class people, students, and artists inhabit bars and cafes) and had a nice chat. She first met my partner. After my partner left, we met another friend of mine by chance, which turned into a pleasant conversation between the three women. Later, the *konsomatris* woman suddenly asked me to go to the *Pavyon* with her. At that moment, I realized that she was feeling insecure in this social environment, and she wanted to take me to her safe place. I had to make a quick decision, and my ethical concerns increased considerably. Initially, when she

requested to meet me and asked me where I was, I could not foresee the possibility of her feeling this way, and now I had to go to the *Pavyon* for her to feel safe. On the other hand, it meant going to my research field under the influence of alcohol. Moreover, when I was going to *Pavyon* in a planned way, I would pay attention to my clothes to minimize the harassment, especially on the street after leaving *Pavyon*, and to be able to identify myself as a customer. That day, however, the fact that I happened to wear a mini skirt scared me. Similarly, I had to go to *Pavyon* with a severe alcohol level, which meant I would violate my research ethics. I had to decide quickly, and it took me about 10 seconds to make a decision. I chose to violate research ethics by going to my research field drunk and with mini skirt instead of violating it by making the *konsomatris* woman feel insecure. This 10-seconds experience taught me how we sometimes have to make choices in social research, that safe exit is as important as "safe entry," and, of course, that as researchers, we are between multi-layered relationships and different parameters of ethical values (Ribbens& Edwards, 1998; Koehn, 1998). As a result of my decision, we went to *Pavyon*. The *Pavyon* manager was very interested in our table. Two more *konsomatris* friends of the woman I went with sat at our table as they were working there. Unlike usual, the *Pavyon* manager served us himself, not the waiters, filling my beer with his hand. We were served a variety of appetizers that I had never seen in a *Pavyon* before, and we were receiving impeccable service. While the women were drinking whiskey, I was drinking beer to try to minimize my drunkenness. In the following hours, these three women and me had much fun; chatted and danced together at our table, with the manager frequently visiting us.

Before that night, I had visited *Pavyon* many times in different contexts, which made me afraid and nervous: when I was talking alone in a room with the manager, when I was sitting outside with the customers, or when I left the *Pavyon* and looked for a taxi, etc. However, that night was the first time I got drunk and had fun in a *Pavyon*. In the following days, I could not come to myself for days, and getting drunk in the *Pavyon* or having fun there became an issue that I questioned a lot. At first, I thought I had spent time with women in the *Pavyon*, which could be why I had fun. In addition to the realization that my researcher's eye was closed that night, I kept thinking that my *Pavyon* research was on the border of transforming into ethnography, not only because I directly experienced being in the *Pavyon*

environment but also because of how the *Pavyon* makes people transgress what they are in real life.

During the same night, when I was sitting with *konsomatris* woman I friended and her *konsomatris* friends, another woman working there came to us. She cried and told the woman near me that she wanted to talk to her. As she spoke, she turned to me and asked for permission, asking if she could take her to the toilet. I told her that, of course, she could do that and offered my support in case there was anything I could do. She told me to join, and so we went to the toilet together. In the toilet, the other woman started to tell us what was wrong with her: that her boyfriend had paid the money she owed to the *Pavyon*, and then he had asked her for the money and left her in a difficult situation. She was very agitated; she was crying her eyes out. We hugged her, and had a heart-to-heart talk.

The reason why the manager was so interested in our table that night was because he saw me as a young woman who came to the *Pavyon* with a *konsomatris*, as a *konsomatris* working in another *Pavyon*, or as a woman who wants to start working. He wanted to dazzle me by entertaining me well. So much so that even though I drank two beers that night, with the whiskey and the treats that came to our table, our bill amounted to the minimum wage, which was on the house. Later on, when he asked my *konsomatris* friend if I was going to start working, she told him that I was a university student doing research. Actually, I learned a couple of days later that she had scolded the manager for asking such a question and warned him not to bring this issue up again. In the following periods, I became “the only friend from outside of the *Pavyon*” of this woman, in her own words. I was her friend who she wanted to protect from her own job. We started to exchange daily messages and came to the point where we could tell each other about our relationship lives. I learned a lot during the period when we were friends with her. I spent my days with this woman who grew up in the dormitory, who worked in Manisa *Pavyons* from the age of 18 to 20, and who has been working in Ankara *Pavyons* since the age of 20. I cannot fit her story here and do not want to fit it here.

In any case, these were the days when I thought about my positionality the most. In front of me, there was a 22-year-old young woman who takes care of five people, including the family she just rejoined with after years, supporting two different

households at the same time. And then there was me: a 26-year-old graduate student at a private university, albeit with a full scholarship, who has never been able to support herself, let alone her family, whose rent is even being paid by her family. I confronted my privileges for days with my identities as a "researcher, graduate student, assistant at one of the major universities in Turkey, and daughter given support by her family for years of her education." It was different from all the confrontations I had experienced before I started on this research, and it has always stayed with me afterward. As I continued to meet these women and listen to their stories, I better understood that our privileges were at the root of the formation of our different identities. Our identity as women was the same, but our economic, cultural, and social capitals differed significantly. Moreover, these capitals, no matter how similar the positions we women occupied in social life were, caused a gap between us over time. I have been thinking about this a lot these days. The way to a common feminist struggle was through being aware of ourselves and each other; nothing else was possible. When I decided to continue my research after recovering myself with this motivation, I concluded that my first task was to find the woman who told me her problem and hugged me that night. The interview I conducted with this woman thus became my first and only interview that I found through snowball sampling, as well as my second konsomatris friend at the time. I wanted to learn about the debt practice in the *Pavyon* that caused her to cry that night, along with her story, and the part of the thesis on the debt practice was born in this way on the night I experienced my biggest challenge. It would take me a lot of time to realize that, that night, I was neither Tuğçe who turned fear into fun, nor my researcher's eye was closed that day.

1.5. Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, the study begins by delving into the intriguing domain of Ankara *Pavyons*, investigating their historical roots and the contemporary studies on *Pavyons* within Turkish Literature. Chapter 3, the sex work debates commence by defining "sex work" as a comprehensive term encompassing various forms of sexual labor and introducing feminist perspectives, including the contrasting views of liberal and radical feminists. The discourse on legal regulations of sex work is explored, presenting four distinct policy models: criminalization, decriminalization, regulation, and the Nordic Model. The concept of "hostess work" is introduced in parallel, scrutinizing its relevance and concerns about its inclusion within the umbrella term

"sex work." In order to justify preferred use of the term "*konsomatris* work," in Chapter 4, I trace the term's etymological origins and examining legal representations. The economic aspect of *konsomatris* work is also discussed, highlighting its economic underpinnings and extravagant spending. Chapter 5, explores the dynamics of *konsomatris* work, introducing roles of dancing in Ankara's unique dance music and hostessing. The dichotomy between regular and open *konsomatris* is examining by revealing women's different engagement approaches. The sexual dimension of *konsomatris* work is examinaning through "After Dinner" practice. The study's findings in the subsequent sections provide further insights into sex work debate. Lastly, Chapter 6 is reserved for conclusion and discussion.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Literature Outline

The *Pavyon* studies in the Turkish academy can be classified as follows: the construction and reproduction of masculinity in the *Pavyon*; the relationship between *Pavyon* culture and Ankara music; hostess women's parenting roles; and the effect of *Pavyon* culture on the family institution. As realized, no study focuses specifically on the experiences of women working as *konsomatris* in the *Pavyons*.

2.2. The Origins of Pavyon Culture in Ankara

The *Pavyon* culture, which is associated with Ankara, is gaining popularity and, therefore, is becoming the focus of attention day by day. At this point, it would be beneficial to begin the literature review by investigating what the *Pavyon* meant in the past and its significance in Ankara's history and urban culture in general. While discussing the *Pavyon* in Ankara, I will refer to Özarslan's (2016) book titled "Hovarda Alemleri: Taşrada Eğlence ve Erkeklik," which is adapted from the thesis titled "Masculinities at Night in the Provinces" written in the Department of Sociology at Boğaziçi University and the most comprehensive research on *Pavyons* in Turkish academia. This study investigates the *Pavyon* culture in one of Turkey's provinces, Çavdır/Burdur, where is the "other" of the urban spaces by focusing on reproducing of *Pavyon* culture in the province through the performances of several male subjects who face provincial difficulties. In light of this research, I'd like to provide a brief history of Ankara *Pavyons* as follows:

"The Republic, while constituting itself as a modern institution, has discharged sufistic institutions such as seclusion and traditional provincial entertainment forms, leading to the deepening of provincial boredom. This has rendered provincial existence as more melancholic/depressed and has opened the room for boredom as the chronic illness of the modern man." (Özarslan, 2015)

How did the process of eliminating non-modern remedial practices for boredom in the province manifest itself in Ankara, the first modern city of the Republic, in line with the goal of modernization? How did the different notions and pursuits of entertainment of the local and immigrant “peasants,” Kemalist elites, and urban migrants from Istanbul manifest themselves in the first modern city of the new republic? Frankly, it takes about 60 years after the proclamation of the republic for the “peasants” to show themselves in the “city” and for the *Pavyons* to become the entertainment venues for the “peasant” men. As a result of that, let us first examine the entertainment of Ankara’s Kemalist elite and immigrant men from Istanbul.

Kaynar (2017) addresses “creator foreigners” in his study that examines the social life practices of Ankara between 1920 and 1950 through literary works of the time. These creator immigrants are intellectuals who moved from Istanbul to Ankara for the Republic’s promised modern life. They made their way to Ankara to contribute to establishing the Republic’s modern existence, leaving behind the burdens of the late Ottoman era and bringing Istanbul practices with them. These creative foreigners initially face the issue of accommodation in Ankara, and once they settle that, the focus shifts to entertainment. The shortage of entertainment options in Ankara after Istanbul becomes their main concern. When we look at the entertainment culture of the period in Ankara, in the book titled *Kokain*, which includes Aka Gündüz’s memoirs in Ankara, the narrative of the history of Ankara bars begins in 1922. Until that year, places, where men drink and were entertained in Ankara, were portable and called “*alem*” that could be organized in different houses. When Fresko Efendi saw the demand for these bars, he opened the first fixed bar. With its appealing and elegant establishment for urban males, this bar becomes the first in Ankara to hire *konsomatris* women. “Ankara bachelors, competing to have a glass of whiskey from this woman’s hand, showered money into Fresko’s cash register,” and with this awareness, the number of fixed bars in Ankara began to expand (Gündüz, 1931, as cited in Kaynar, 2017, p. 273).

Furthermore, as Kaynar (2017) states, “Ankara is a city where women are scarce.” And going to bars for *konsomatris* women has become a common practice in Ankara. Cezmi, the protagonist of Nahid Sırrı Örik’s novel “*Tersine Giden Yol*,” likewise has a chance to get closer to a woman for the first time in these Ankara bars. According

to Cezmi's bar experiences, the women working during those years, while not physically attractive, are in high demand due to their scarcity. They select the men with whom they will communicate, resulting in competition among men. And what is more, these *konsomatris* women are of foreign nationality. The *konsomatris* mentioned in this novel is Hungarian and performs regional dances in the bar (Örik, 2010). Following the proliferation of bars in Ankara to entertain creative foreign residents from Istanbul during the 1925-1930 period, by the 1930s, it is necessary to mention Ankara Palas, which was established to accommodate and entertain Kemalist elites and foreign bureaucrats visiting the new republic. Ankara Palas contains not just ballrooms for "Republican balls," but also a *Pavyon* accessible by stairs from the entryway. Selma Hanım, one of the characters of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanlı's novel *Ankara*, describes her Ankara Palas experience as follows: "I felt a strange dizziness just walking up the stairs of the hotel. Every step I took seemed to widen the chasm between me and the others a little more." (Karaosmanlı, 1934, s.96) Moreover, in Esat Mahmut Karakurt's literary work "Ankara Ekspresi," the Ankara Palas *Pavyon*'s depicted as a place where the "sounds of music blend with the clinking of glasses, and the vapors of champagne mix with cigarette smoke, forming a layer of noise and mist that rises towards the ceiling." Moreover, clients are described as people whom eighty percent are foreigners and "crazily and frantically devote themselves to having fun." (Karakurt, 1946, pp. 121-122). Thus, the 1930s witnessed an increase in the number of *Pavyons* along with the opening of Ankara Palas-style hotels. (Tanrıku, 1985; Bayraktar, 2016)

On the other hand, there were some criticisms of these *Pavyons* throughout this time period. One of these critiques can be found in Memduh Şevket Esendal's literary work "Ayaşlı ve Kiracları." In the novel, the cities created by Kemalist elites are defined as places that can maintain their independence from general morality, decent sexuality, and anything considered private or criminal, with their nightlife, outskirts, marginal channels and areas, and particular time intervals (Esendal, 1943, as cited in Kaynar, 2017, p. 108). Places involving entertainment and/or sexuality, such as *Pavyons* and brothels, are portrayed as settings where everyone abandons their own norms and joins another *racon*(code), which is regarded immoral but legitimate (Esendal, 1934, as cited in Cantek, 2017, p. 298).

To gain an understanding of the role of *Pavyons* in 1940s Ankara, the narrative of İnce (2017), who examines the Soysal Apartment, one of the first houses in Ankara chosen by the founding Kemalist elites as a “space of spectacle” for modern cities of the new republic, using citations from Ayşe Kulin’s literary work “Hayat Dürbününde Kırk Sene,” in which she recounts her childhood spent there. The Soysal Apartment is located in the heart of Kızılay, where was the city center at the time and is inhabited by high-ranking officials. It is equipped with central heating, which provides hot water to the apartments once a week in contrast to the other houses, and is considered the “most popular, beautiful, and modern” apartment building of the time. There is a dance school within this apartment to provide competence in ballet and rhythmic dance for the republic’s young girls, a terrace where families can mix and mingle in the evenings, Ulus Cinema located at the entrance of Kazım Özalp Avenue, which constitutes one of the four different entrances to the apartment, and finally, the Süreyya *Pavyon* where apartment residents can entertain themselves. It can be said that after the Kemalist elites, foreign bureaucrats, and creator foreigners from Istanbul, the culture of *Pavyon* began to spread into the lives of civil servants. (Bayraktar, 2016) However, those who were excluded from these circles, namely the local and immigrant “villagers,” not only observed the entertainment in these places but also reproduced their own forms of entertainment in their own places, namely their homes, through “*oturak alemi*.” (Yazıcı Yakın, 2015; Çelik, 2022)

Following the 1940s, *Pavyons* had their golden age in the 1950s and 1960s, and then in the 1970s, with the emergence of the Civil Movements of May 68, followed by liberation and the shaping of young people’s expectations, new nightclubs such as Discos began to emerge, becoming pioneering venues for entertainment in today’s Ankara. As the city center moved from Ulus to Kızılay, and then from Kızılay to Kavaklıdere, the entertainment began to shift from Ulus, Kızılay, and Yenışehir to Kavaklıdere and Bahçeli 7th Avenue. In a word, these were not only the golden years of Ankara Entertainment and Ulus *Pavyons*, but also the foundations of the dynamics that led to the Ulus *Pavyons* being old and stigmatized places today. The entertainment life, which was in its heyday, was interrupted by the country’s political climate in the 1980s. Following the re-establishment of social life following the 1980 coup d’etat, the development of foundation institutions such as Bilkent University,

which drew the children of wealthy families in the 1990s, entertainment venues for young people began to arise in the Oran and Çayyolu regions. (Gültekin&Onsekiz, 2005; Bayraktar, 2013) So, what happened to the *Pavyons* during all of this?

2.3. Contemporary Studies on Pavyon in Turkish Academia

Yazıcı Yakın (2015), Yiğit and Kutluk (2018), and Öztürk Aykaç (2021) investigate the traces of a music genre known as “New Ankara Music” that arose in Ankara’s *Pavyons* in the early 1990s. The entertainment culture specific to the bars built in the previously described houses, called “*köy odaları*,” was tried out in the Ankara *Pavyons* between the soloists’ stages, along with “*Oyun havaları*” which means “traditional dance music” in English and embedded the Anatolian culture. This culture has begun to be preferred more and more in Ankara *Pavyons* because, at the same time, the city’s “elite” customers are turning to the nightlife options that have begun to emerge in other parts of the city, leaving the city’s old districts and *Pavyons* to the “peasant” customers. As a result, soloists who entered the stage in *Pavyons* eventually faded away, and Ankara *Pavyons* acquired its current format. From this point on, Ankara *Pavyons* were changed into places where women’s bodies were objectified from then on by mixing the traditional Ankara folk music with obscene words alluding to sexuality. Furthermore, ladies with village room experience as dancers introduced foreign women working in the Ankara *Pavyons* to how to dance to traditional dance music.

One of the early 2000s critiques directed at the emerging *Pavyon* culture was referred to as “rural pornography.” (Dündar, 2006, as cited in Yazıcı Yakın, 2015, p. 45) The sexuality of the villagers, who consumed this culture, was ignored in the early Republican official narrative, which depicted them as “wise, self-sacrificing, poor but happy” (p.46).). At this point, we can say that in the early 2000s, the *Pavyon* culture began to be stigmatized as peasant entertainment.

To sum up, In the Lefebvrian sense, employing the concept of the production of space as well as the spatial triad, it can be claimed that Ulus, Ankara, as an abstract space constructed from the top down, was conceived by Kemalist elites as Turkey’s first modern city. Given power dynamics and class divisions, isolated people from the city’s entertainment scene, mainly rural Ankarans, remade the space and combined it with “*köy odaları*” as a social space created from the bottom up by those

who live and utilize the space. Therefore, their spatial practices by how they perceive and use the *Pavyons* cross the borders of primitive *Pavyons*. As a result, the newly emergent *Pavyon* culture and its consumers, who remade the *Pavyons* in order to create a place where they could experience their peasant identities and sexuality, became the “others” of the republic’s Ankara, which was a “space of spectacle.” However, with the clips of New Ankara Music performers, these undesirable places have become more visible and have claimed their position as an intriguing sites in popular culture. This is seen in the recent surge in academic studies.

The study conducted by Sağlık and Çetin (2021) on the influence of Ankara’s *Pavyons* on the institution of the family, for me, is a sexist study in the literature. When discussing the practices of *Pavyon* regular men that hurt their families, there is always an emphasis on “there are all kinds of problems, including bringing *konsomatris* women to the family as second wife,” which generally points to *konsomatris* women as perpetrators that harm the institution of the family. It, on the other hand, victimizes these regular men’s wives by portraying them as helpless submissive women. In the patriarchal framework, labeling these women, who have different dynamics with the same male, as perpetrators and victims reflects a profoundly sexist worldview. Moreover, their sexist and conservative point of view does not stop there; accompanied by music and alcohol, they imply that men are exploited as the most suffered in the *Pavyon* industry and that the children of the *konsomatrris* women are deprived of the family institution because the *konsomatris* women cannot be part of any family. It is worth juxtaposing this study, which is based on the institution of the family and stigmatizes the *konsomatris* women as perpetrators within that institution, with an article by Yalçın and Erkoç (2019) discussing the parenting attitudes of women working in Konya’s *Pavyons* from the field of Child Development. According to the findings of this article:

most of the women come from broken families, and most of them join the entertainment industry as *konsomatris* during adolescence. The most significant point revealed by these data is that these women did not experience emotional satisfaction and a sense of belonging during childhood (p.197).

At this point, we need to ask: Are these women the perpetrators of the institution of the family as agents or its victims? Or can we assign them as one of these two categories?

Both Erdoğan (2018), who focused on masculinity in the remaining Ankara Pavyons, and Yiğit and Kutluk (2018), who explored the relationship between music and women in Ankara Pavyons, primarily based their findings on the theoretical framework established by Özarslan (2015, 2016), attempted to understand konsomatris women within the dichotomy of victimhood and agency.

These "victim" women, who found themselves working in these establishments due to poverty and indebtedness, fostered strategies to cope with the various masculinities exhibited by managers, co-workers, and customers upon entering the industry thanks to their "agency." While unquestionably valid, these analyses nevertheless overlook the fact that these women have already struggled with patriarchy long before entering the Pavyons, and have continued to struggle against gendered and neoliberal structures of konsomatris work in their so-called agency. The analysis which separates these women's life before and after the Pavyon is also made more difficult by having an understanding of how the dynamics of the pavyon environment and the capitalist patriarchy interact when people are doing konsomatris work.

While conducting discussions revolves around topics such as the transformation of pavyon music or the construction of masculinity within pavyon settings, I believe that these studies, which tend to categorize women as either victims or agents, undertake a much larger project—understanding the konsomatris work and konsomatris identities. However, they fall short of accomplishing this entirely. I firmly believe that comprehending konsomatris work and konsomatris women through their own narratives is the key and the first step of concluding these kinds of projects that aim to examine the victimization and/or agency of konsomatris women.

The description of the separation between women's erotic and sexual bodies, on the other hand, is another interpretation put forth by Özarslan (2015, 2016) and followed by Erdoğan (2018), assuming that konsomatris work excludes¹ prostitution. In doing so, they both, in contrast to popular opinion, define sex work narrowly as prostitution

¹ After making a clear distinction between prostitution and hostess work, Özarslan(2015) introduces, as an exception, the men hrefers to as "yakışıklı" and who "that " 'touch' nightlife but that do not have organic links with it." *Konsomatris* women engage in sexual activity not as a part of their work but because they desire it. These men are rare individuals who can access women's sexual bodies alongside their erotic bodies. (p.85)

and *konsomatrix* work as hostess work and, as they briefly note in their pieces. I will argue in my study that prostitution is a component of the practice of sexual labor known as *konsomatrix* work, but I won't do it by discussing about how women's bodies separate; instead, I'll suggest how can the dynamics of the pavyon environment encourage prostitution as a practice and how *konsomatrix* women interact with it.

In order to better understand the *konsomatrix* work in Ankara Pavyons, I will draw from discussions on sex work and prostitution in general, including hostess work, and attempt to shed light on it through the work's internal dynamics and the narratives of *konsomatrix* women.



CHAPTER 3

DEBATES ON SEX WORK

3.1. Introduction to Sex Work Debates

Studying *konsomatrīs* women with respect to a problematization of sex work requires a feminist imagination that takes ideas at the sociocultural, political, and economic level together with the subjective experience of these women. In other words, the first step towards the problematization of sex work within the *konsomatrīs* identity and practice is to present different political imaginations that problematize their position. Therefore, this chapter starts with an outline of the sex work debate which mounted especially by the increasing interest of feminist studies in marginalized women and the gendered structures around them. The term “sex work”, which is actually an umbrella term, establishes a framework for the theoretical discussion around dilemmas such as agency and victimization, legalization/work and criminalization/prostitution. In connection, radical and liberal feminisms are the main positions taken at the center of the problematization of this study. In fact, the main theoretical puzzle of the study is sexual labor “under the sex work umbrella term but outside of prostitution” with the potential of including selling sex. In other words, how and to what degree *konsomatrīs* work in its unique context constitutes sex work and/or contain prostitution within its dynamics is a question that is theoretically best illustrated under the edges of liberal feminists who are mostly pro-sex work and radical feminists who reject it altogether and use the term prostitution instead. In connection to theoretical discussion of these conceptualizations under these two different political imaginations, policy aspect is also a part of this chapter which is fundamental to position ideas of the feminist politics in the real-world context and to be able to think of the implications regarding subjective experience. After the review of the feminist political views on sex the work debate, I then continue with “hostess work” which constitutes a transitional ground of conceptualization for the principal center of the analysis on the *konsomatrīs* women and their work. Hostess work

functions as both a theoretical and empirical middle ground to challenge the idea of “sex work without sex,” which is fundamental to the dynamics of *konsomatrix* work.

3.2. Implications of the Sex Work Debate within Feminist Political Imaginations

Nowadays, sex work is one of the topics of heated debate among feminist scholars and actors in the feminist movement worldwide. Although the terms prostitution and sex work are frequently used interchangeably, they have distinct meanings and implications. Prostitution is the practice of participating in sexual activities by only selling sex for material gain, and it is frequently associated with stigma, criminalization, and moral judgment. Sex work involves a wide range of sexual labor, including escorting, pornography, sugar daddy, webcam performances, stripping, etc., with discursive emphasis on the agency, labor rights, and autonomy of people participating. The distinction is more than merely semantic; it reflects differing opinions on the nature of the activity and the individuals involved. Prostitution is frequently regarded as a societal problem, highlighting the vulnerability and exploitation of individuals involved, but sex work recognizes that people may choose to engage in sexual labor for personal or financial empowerment and pleasure. Understanding these distinctions is critical for creating effective policies, interventions, and support systems for individuals involved in the sex industry. (Orchard, 2019)

The term’s originator, sex worker and activist Leigh (1997), provides the following justification for using the term sex work:

Created in the context of the feminist movement, at a junction of opposing views of prostitution, the term “sex worker” is a feminist contribution to the language. The concept of sex work unites women in the industry – prostitutes, porn actresses. And dancers- who are enjoined by both legal and social needs to disavow common ground with women in other facets of the business.(p.230)

As Leigh stressed, this was an important juncture in the feminist movement and in academia; hereupon, the term sex work became widely used and became the focal point of debates on prostitution, porn, and other types of sexual labor. Let’s look at the theoretical debates surrounding this phrase in the paragraphs that follow.

The origin of sex work debates is based on the conflict between radical feminists (Dworkin 1987; Barry, 1996; Jeffreys 1997; Farley 2005; Sullivan, 2007; MacKinnon 2011; Coy 2017) who built their arguments in the Anti-porn Movement. They argue that women who engage in sex work are victims facing oppression, violence, and stigmatization due to patriarchal social settings and advocate for action to “save” them. Liberal feminists (Bell 1987, McClintock, 1994, French 1997), on the other hand, build their argument on Sexual Liberation Movement and argue that sex workers are agents who can choose their professions while engaging in sex work. Thus, instead of questioning their agency by evaluating them as victims, liberal feminists struggle to improve these women’s work conditions, which, according to them, might be the real cause of their harm. After this point, especially within the last decade, but not excluding the sex wars of the 70s throughout the 2000s, the route of the discussion changed with the slogan “Sex Work is Work” and this discourse gained a strong position. (Vijayakumar et al., 2015; Armstrong, 2022) Along with the liberal feminists bringing the discussion to the field of public policy with the support of international experience organizations and NGOs through decriminalization, the counter-argument began to come from other camps of feminists who advocated other models. Therefore, over the years, feminists have begun to take different positions between these two arguments, placing them under different problematizations of the public policy dimension of the sex work issue. (Overall, 1992; Chapkis 1997; Perkins, 2008; Vanwesenbeeck, 2020; Mason, 2021) I will first introduce these fundamental debates on the sex work issue. Secondly, I will introduce these different approaches to the public policy dimension of sex work.

3.2.1 Feminist Standpoints on Sex Work: Liberal vs. Radical Approaches

This section explores the differing perspectives within feminist circles on sex work, initially divided into liberal and radical feminists. The debate between those who view sex work as a form of labor and those who question its classification as a typical occupation is presented. The text then delves into the particularities of the core dispute between radical and liberal feminists, which are at the core of the theoretical problematization of this study, and presents their approaches to sex work and its regulation.

Before delving into the discussion between radical and liberal feminism, let us briefly introduce different views on the issue based on the spectrum of different feminist perspectives. Sex work, according to radical feminists, is an innate expression of patriarchal oppression and a mirror of greater societal inequity between men and women. They contend that the practice of sex labor reinforces the objectification and exploitation of women's bodies, hence reinforcing male domination and negative gender norms. Radical feminists are consistently calling for the banning of sex work, claiming that full gender equality can only be attained by removing practices that perpetuate women's subordination. According to essentialist feminists, sex is an intimate and personal experience that cannot be commodified without harm. They feel that the practice of sex labor, regardless of the conditions, objectifies and hurts women, and that commodifying sex devalues its intrinsic essence. Marxist feminists see sex work as a manifestation of economic inequalities, in which women are disproportionately pushed into low-paying, stigmatized employment as a result of capitalist institutions. They push for social and economic changes to address the underlying causes of the practice of sex labor. Socialist feminists approach sex work through the lens of both gender and class inequality. They recognize the role that poverty, a lack of education, and discrimination play in forcing people into the practice of sex labor. They aim to achieve gender and economic equality by addressing both economic and gender-related issues and organizing for societal change. Liberal feminists advocate for women's agency in their bodies by viewing sex work as a personal choice. They emphasize the importance of legal protections and assistance for sex workers, covering labor rights, safety, and healthcare access. To protect their rights, they frequently support the decriminalization or legalization of sex work. (Bromberg, 1998; Kesler 2002; Gerassi, 2015)

3.2.1.1 Radical Feminists

First of all, the origins of radical feminist ideology trace back to the anti-pornography movement that emerged in the United States. Radical feminists' thoughts on the topic of pornography can be summarized with the following excerpt:

Beginning in the late 1970s, Catharine MacKinnon demanded that we abandon the Freudian view of sexual desire as 'an innate primary natural prepolitical unconditioned drive divided along the biological gender line' and recognise

that sex under patriarchy is inherently violent; that ‘hostility and contempt, or arousal of master to slave, together with awe and vulnerability, or arousal of slave to master’ are its constitutive emotions. For the radical feminists who shared MacKinnon’s view, the terms and texture of sex were set by patriarchal domination – and embodied in, and sustained by, pornography. (In Robin Morgan’s words, ‘Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice.’) That there were women who seemed capable of achieving pleasure under these conditions was a sign of how bad things were. (Srinivasan, 2018, p.3)

Clearly evident in their perspectives is the view that even contemplating the potential enjoyment of pornography by women was deemed “a sign of how bad things were.” Therefore, their notions surrounding sex work are profoundly shaped against an environment that accepted and celebrated pornography as both an industry and a precursor to prevailing attitudes within the realm of the sex industry. Equally significant is the phrase “capable of achieving pleasure under these conditions,” as it brings the concept of consent into light. Within this context, radical feminists assert that the patriarchal framework renders true sexual reciprocity between women and men unattainable; thus, in societies permeated by sexist norms, all sexual encounters amount to rape. According to them, the patriarchal structure essentially robs us of “pure, complete decisional autonomy and a perfect ability to communicate our choices.” Therefore, “if we insist that real consent requires full autonomy, then virtually no sex will turn out to be consensual.” (Kukla, 2021, p.271) Kukla’s (2021) exploration delves into the question of consent’s viability within a patriarchal context. After introducing the radical feminists’ point on consent, their work then pivots to a fundamental inquiry: Can consent truly thrive under the dominion of patriarchy, and if not, can we forge a path toward good sex for women? While Kukla and their contemporaries acknowledge the absence of complete autonomy for women in the shadow of patriarchal conditions, they propel the discourse towards a more profound contemplation. In lieu of painting all female sexual encounters as instances of rape, they strive to devise a framework for consent that flourishes within the constraints of limited autonomy. Thus, Kukla extends an invitation to engage in a discourse about the prospect of women attaining fulfilling sexual experiences even within the parameters of consent.

Setting aside the critical analysis presented by Kukla in the current article, the fundamental arguments put forth by radical feminists aligned with the anti-pornography stance can be summarized as follows: These feminists reject the

possibility of women experiencing genuinely positive sexual encounters within the existing social structure. Their viewpoint, rooted in labeling all sexual interactions as coercive, prompts them to explore the realm of sex work. In this connection, it is not surprising that they contend women cannot genuinely choose sex work autonomously. Instead, they assert that women are rendered vulnerable by the conditions of patriarchal societies, compelling them to engage in such occupations. Moreover, the sexist norms pervasive in these societies expose these women to violence while performing such labor. The focal point of these feminists' stance lies in highlighting "sexual danger and degradation that sees women exclusively as victims" and advocating for the abolition of sex work, with the aim of rescuing these women from the exploitative structures they find themselves in (Overall, 1992, p. 707).

3.2.1.2. Liberal Feminists

Liberal feminists, on the other hand, basically argue that women who wish to do sex work have the right to do so. They argue that the main issue we should be thinking about is how to deal with the stigma and abuse these women suffer while doing their occupations rather than challenging these women's agency to be sex workers, unlike old-fashioned moralistic arguments. As a result, sex work, according to them, is a profession similar to other vocations in society but with more severe conditions than others. Furthermore, they feel that sex can be the subject of economic partnerships, yet sex work has grown problematic due to historical and sociological factors in society that exacerbate women's working conditions. We find the sexual liberation movement at the root of these feminists' arguments. This movement refers to the demand for equal rights to engage in sexual activities for men and women while opposing attempts to limit women's rights. (Overall, 1992, p.706; Muson, 2021, p.92)

This movement coincided with second-wave feminism, which refers to broader debates such as women's sexuality, position in the family, and social life than first-wave feminism, which is limited to advocating women's fundamental rights. Although the debates on feminism's wave are complex, a common argument is that the sexual liberation debates damped off with the anti-sexual statements at that time; however, this sexual liberation's effect both on feminism and the sex work issue

strongly turned back with the discourse of “sex work is work” of third and fourth waves of feminism. (Martin, 2007; Hamilton, 2009; Snyder-Hall, 2010) Although this is the subject of another discussion, it should be noted that these debates popularizing liberal feminists are not independent of the return of liberal ideology with neoliberalism in the 1980s and 2010s, following the crises of capitalism in the 1970s and 2000s. In other words, the rise and popularization of liberal feminist ideas were embedded in historical context and related to material conditions, just as radical feminist perspectives were.

In connection with the historical roots of liberal feminists, their arguments on sex work also paralleled the ideals and efforts of forming a social structure under liberalism’s fundamental tenets. As they construct their rationales, they draw upon Mill’s harm principle, which “implies that so long as the sexual activity does not harm the participants or others, it should be allowed by law.” (Muson, 2021, p.90) It can be inferred that they consider sex work an ordinary sexual activity as long as it does not do a disservice; therefore, liberal feminists emphasize “sexual freedom and pleasure that views women exclusively as agents.” (Overall, 1992, p. 707)

In contrast to anti-sex feminists, liberal feminists believe that women are not condemned to unequal sexual relationships and are exploited as victims under patriarchy; rather, these women are agents who can make their own choices. In this regard, presenting their ideas is easier than presenting radical feminists’ arguments. The basic argument of liberal feminists is that, while sex and sex work are not inherently harmful for women, sex workers face some challenges owing to societal norms that must be addressed.

3.2.2. Different Public Policy Models on Sex Work

Having outlined the various debates stemming from diverse feminist perspectives concerning sex work, the subsequent focus is on examining how these very feminist approaches manifest their viewpoints when it comes to the regulation of societal dynamics. This exploration encompasses four distinct policies: criminalization, legalization, decriminalization, and the Nordic Model. The forthcoming paragraphs will provide a comprehensive elucidation of these regulatory frameworks.

To begin, the concept of criminalization entails the classification of sex work as a criminal activity, including both its sale and the act of purchasing it, in addition to all ancillary roles connected to sex work, including pimping and managing brothels. The enforcement of such a regime introduces variability in the definition of offenses and the corresponding punitive measures across distinct jurisdictions. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, p. 4) For example, in the United States, where the criminalization of sex work is determined as a regime everywhere except Nevada, all sex work-related jobs along with all associated activities are criminalized and punished to some degree. The UK also set the criminalization regime. However, in the UK, while selling and buying sex are illegal, sex-related jobs are not criminalized at all. Thus, we can say that the criminalization regime in the UK is more tolerant than in the USA. (Mason, 2021, p. 87) The criminalization policy is perhaps the least problematic for feminist debates. One of the most popular arguments among feminists with varying perspectives on sex work is that criminalization is harmful to women in all situations. As a result, women who advocate criminalization are extremely rare among feminists.

Second, when it comes to regulation, countries with specific laws that govern sex work and related activities exist even in states where sex work is legal. These countries do not, however, have criminal laws that identify and punish sex work, associated activities, and consumers. Countries that implement this policy on sex work include Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, p.5) As can be seen, many Western countries implement this policy.

Thirdly, in contrast to criminalization, decriminalization refers to getting rid of all regulations that include articles labeling and punishing people engaging in sex work and sex work-related jobs. They defend treating sex work as work. (Mason, 2021, p. 87). Liberal feminists and unions that advocate for the rights of sex workers strongly oppose the type of practice that regulates sex work. At first glance, it seems like they do not support any regulation by defending decriminalization; however, this is not the case in practice. In practice, even if the decriminalization regimes do not involve criminal acts related to sex work, they have acts that regulate sex work by considering sex work another kind of work that needs to be regulated. For example, Australia and New Zealand prefer to decriminalize sex work. However, they also

have sex work-specific laws to regulate issues such as determining the zones in which sex workers engage in their work or improving their health conditions, etc. In this sense, the line between regulation and decriminalization seems very thin in practice. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, pp. 5-6) In addition to being very common among liberal feminists, decriminalization advocacy has also become an officially accepted policy in the last decade by supranational, western-based organizations that have significant effects on other parts of the world, such as Amnesty International and the World Health Organization. Besides, non-governmental organizations that defend the rights of sex workers, such as *Kırmızı Şemsiye* in Turkey, strongly recommend this policy and carry out their work in light of it. In this context, it would not be wrong to say that it is the most potent policy in practice and advocacy.

Last but not least, the Nordic Model criminalizes consumers of sex work-related jobs while evaluating sex workers' activities that cannot be punished in order to protect women from more harm. The level of permissiveness of this model may vary depending on the content of the laws in practice. (Mason, 2021, p. 87) If we introduce the basis of the arguments of the Nordic Model, first of all, the model considers the sex equality between sex workers and men who are consumers or engage in sex work-related jobs like pimping. According to them, women may have had to engage in sex work because of the fact that the social structures cause race, gender, and class inequalities. However, sex work is harmful to women, and attempts to regulate and decriminalize sex work are human rights abuses. These arguments are the basis for not punishing sex worker women but punishing clients. Men and women cannot be treated the same by the law because they do not live on equal terms. While women have to work in this job due to social structures, men benefit from this vulnerable state of women. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, pp. 6-7)

We see that essentialist feminists strongly defend the Nordic Model along with regulation. (Mason, 2021, p. 96) Although this model seems to be a good fit for radical feminists as it is against the celebration and legalization of sex work, it differs from radical thought with its liberal aspects, such as demanding state intervention and talking about rights violations.

3.2.2.1. The Debate between Defenders of the Nordic Model and Decriminalization

When we look at the decade we live in, radical feminists are mainly positioned outside the regulation discussions within the public policy debate, although we sometimes encounter some of them who advocate criminalization. This is because they directly aim at the destruction of patriarchy and believe that only in this way can all women, including sex workers, be fully liberated. Thus, nation-states and the regulations to be made by them through laws are far from forming the basis of their discussion. Therefore, in practice, the debate over regulation is mostly between liberals and essentialists on the Nordic model and the decriminalization model.

The book “Debating Sex Work,” published in 2019, is based on the arguments and discussions of feminist philosophers Lori Watson, who defends the Nordic Model, and Jessica Flannigan, who supports decriminalization based on existing laws and their results in practice. At this point, I find it helpful to benefit from the main arguments in the discussions of these two feminist philosophers.

Firstly, while defending the Nordic Model and building her argument, Watson benefits from two different methodological approaches to public policy, as follows:

Some theorists approach the questions concerning prostitution from the perspective of ideal theory. Crudely put, the ideal theory involves making idealizing assumptions that abstract away from the actual practice under consideration. In contrast, non-ideal theory draws on the wealth of information concerning the ways in which prostitution functions here and now and frames the policy questions at stake in terms of what is achievable (or best) in light of those facts. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, p.7)

Using this methodological approach, Watson takes a position on the non-ideal theory of the distinction by suggesting that we should be aware of the facts and discuss the regulations on sex work in light of them. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, p.7) A radical feminist would undoubtedly criticize this approach by saying that being aware of the facts will not solve the problem; the real solution is the destruction of the structures that produce the facts. However, the solution seems to be aware of the structures that create inequality where Watson and essentialist feminists are positioned and believe that these structures can be transformed with reformist moves. If we turn back to

Watson's argument, Watson engages in a very judicial way with the "sex work is work" rhetoric that is so common among liberal feminists these days. According to Watson, in countries where there is no regulation on sex work, none of the regulations for other types of work meet the special conditions of sex work. So she argues that sex work cannot be like any job. In addition, she states that these regulations are incomplete and insufficient in countries where regulations on sex work are made. Furthermore, she states that since sex work is inherently based on inequalities, there can be no employment contract. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, p.8) These arguments form Watson's critique of the decriminalization and regulation policies advocated by liberal feminists. Watson demonstrates well that in liberal economies, sex-based jobs cannot be perceived in the same way as other commercial types of jobs in the free market due to their sexist nature.

Secondly, while supporting decriminalization, Flanigan first argues that sex work must be treated as work like other types of work in society. Therefore, regulations like criminalization and the Nordic Model cause the harm to both sex workers and their customers. While arguing this, she built her argument on the distinction between sex work and sex trafficking, just like other liberal feminists. According to her, while trafficking refers to forcefully selling sex, sex work includes workers' consensual sex. In addition, she argues that because of social inequalities, people doing sex work are prevented from making money in return for their labor by anti-sex work regulations. These people are in a more difficult situation. (Flanigan & Watson, 2019, p.9) Moreover, the Nordic model has also been criticized by liberal feminists as follows: If only customers are penalized, customers who can continue to purchase sex services this time will be relatively more dangerous customers who are not afraid of punishment, increasing the risk of harm to women. On the other hand, the defenders of the Nordic Model believe that that is the only way to minimize sex work without damaging women. (Mason, 2021, p. 97)

Finally, the defenders of the Nordic Model aim to eliminate sex work by protecting the women who engage in sex work and deterring men who want to benefit from these women's vulnerable positions. They strongly believe that sex work's positive approaches strengthen inequalities and subordinative roles for women in society. On the other hand, the defenders of decriminalization who argue "sex work is work"

treat women who engage in sex work as agents who can choose their work. For them, the only solution to the sex work issue is to avoid any regulation that will harm the working conditions of women.

3.3. Hostess Work as Part of Sex Work

After putting forth the roofing of the sex work debate, this section is reserved for a focus on “hostess work” which constitutes a transitional ground of conceptualization for the concept of “*Konsomatrix* work” which is at the center of my analysis. Hostess work can be seen as a particular case of sex work where there is a common ground between gendered services based on the sexual attraction of women. At the same time, hostess work also blurs the boundaries of sex work, especially in terms of the service sector versus prostitution, which is linked to the debates about sex work for *konsomatrix* work and its hosting aspect.

3.3.1. Hostess Clubs

When I started to work on *Pavyons* in Ankara, I made a survey of the literature about nightclubs around the world. Although *Pavyon* was embedded in the cultural context and shaped by the cultural dynamics of Ankara, there was also a universal phenomenon behind it: women serving men for their entertainment. In light of such a fact, looking at other contexts of nightclubs made more sense, which means the rationale behind my curiosity about other contexts was not solely based on my inability to base this on the limited literature on *Pavyons* in the Turkish context. In this connection, the fundamental focus of my survey was places where women serve for men’s entertainment without selling sex but by containing its potential, just like in the case of *Pavyons*. At this point, I was looking for a middle ground between the two edges. On one side, women labor implied in the gendered work of a kind of waitress in their service to men by rendering the place attractive by using their own attractiveness inside the boundaries of the service sector. On the other side, women work as prostitutes in the context of having sex for money. I found that the Hostess Club originated in Japan as an East Asian nightclub practice, which was also at the middle of a scale like *Pavyon*. Hostess clubs² were venues of entertainment based on

² Although they are not as widespread as Hostess Clubs, there are also Host Clubs in Japan where men worked and served women customers, which has no equivalence in Turkey and is definitely outside the boundaries of this work.

women's labor by elder and charismatic women managers called Mama-san and women engaged in hostess work by serving drinks, engaging in conversation, dancing or singing for men. (Allison, 1994; Zheng, 2009; Chung, 2018; Gagne 2021)

At this point, there are some fundamental differences³ between *Pavyons* and Hostess Clubs: In *Pavyons*, the waiters tasked with serving customers are men, not women, which excludes serving from the definition of work for *konsomatris* working there. *Konsomatris* women engage in conversation, sit and drink with men, and dance - either with or without men, by the accompaniment of a specific musical genre common to *Pavyons* which is called *Ankara Oyun Havası*. Moreover, the managers of *Pavyons* are also men. Leaving these differences aside, what brought me to the decision to use hostess work literature as a theoretical ground for my study is based on the following similarity: Hostess work is based on the purchase of a channel and communication with women in both *Pavyon* and Hostess Clubs.

Hostess Clubs are places where Japanese white-collar men socialize after work or as part of their business relations with other men. There are two main reasons why these places are commonly used by these white-collar "salarymen"⁴ as a practice of "corporate entertainment". First, increasing the scale of trust and adding it a dimension of sincere friendship by witnessing each other while flirting with women or in their drunk state in socializing in a relaxed environment outside the strict business relationships. Second, it is to show other men they make business deals that they are able to make luxury spending or to please them with a hospitality based on such spending at a nightclub. Looked from the angle of these two purposes, hostess clubs are spaces that primarily do not harbor sexual service, i.e. prostitution, according to the literature (Allison, 1994).

Conversely, Norma (2011), who prefers the term "prostitution" rather than "sex work" through the sex work debate, and takes a radical feminist stance, claims that in her study she examined the historical origins of the concept of 'corporate

³ While my interest in the Hostess Clubs is to provide an understanding of the hostess work, which is fundamental to *Pavyons*, there is no tendency in this study for a comparative approach. For works analyzing the similar existence of these practices in Turkey and Japan, particularly based on the gender implications based on the modernization processes of these two countries following the sequence of cultural and then economic modernization, see: Toprak (2006) and Esenbel (2006).

⁴ For more detail information on "salarymen doxa" see (Taga, 2006, p. 108) and (Roberson&Suzuki, 2003).

entertainment' in Japanese culture and how this type of entertainment practice within hostess clubs promotes prostitution in Japan. According to Norma, "the practice of "corporate entertaining" that became popular in Japan's business world in the 1960s created demand for hostesses, which contributed to the expansion of the country's sex industry in the post-war period." Furthermore, she claims that the economic and social conditions of Japan at the time "led to the entry of working-class women and girls into hostess venues."(p.517)

At this juncture, while Alisson (1994) suggests that the avoidance of engaging in sexual activities serves as a means for Hostess Clubs to generate profit and that is why such activities are not preferred, Norma (2011) asserts that even if this is the case, we should scrutinize hostess clubs more closely as catalysts that prompt young women to aspire to and enter the sex industry. Norma emphasizes the need to examine hostess clubs more closely, even within this possibility, as integral components within the sex industry.

After presenting the entertainment practice in hostess clubs from two contrasting perspectives, I now turn my attention to more recent studies on hostess work and the concepts around which discussions revolve.

3.3.2. Hostess Work: "Sex Work Without Sex"

According to Gagné (2016), a "hostess club" is a social institution based on social, economic, and gendered factors. Despite the fact that these clubs provide comparable services, the titles and interactions inside them might have distinct connotations in different contexts. Gagné, (2016, p.75) explores hostess clubs in China, Korea, and Japan, emphasizing the gender and sexuality aspects as follows:

In both the Chinese and Korean contexts, then, hostess clubs in the form of private booths with sexual services provide explicit sexual intimacy, and the performance of a particular masculinity through the transgression of the normative gender ideologies is the primary method and motivation for constructing trust relations. In the after-work leisure spaces of hostess clubs in Japan, however, customers pay for expensive drinks and snacks and conversations with hostesses, but no sexual service is offered on-site. Even though customers pay high prices for drinking and the space is exclusive (based on trust-bound membership), there is little privacy within the space, and there are no individual booths.

As you can see, there is no private room or sexual service in Japanese Hostess Clubs, although it is available in Chinese and Korean Hostess Clubs. The occupation of Hostess work, which excludes prostitution, has evolved over time, and rooms as private spaces have started to appear in the Hostess Club environment. This highlights the need to look for diverse contexts and experiences in these establishments. Therefore, I would like to pay attention to the studies on hostess work in different contexts in a little more detail.

In Chinese dancing halls, a hostess is in charge of making a man feel central to her attention through physical intimacy and touch. Whether they have sex or not, the feeling of being intimate is critical.

From a male point of view, the deceptively simple characterization of what a hostess does is to make a man 'feel like a man'. A hostess may also act as a prostitute, but that is not integral to her role. The line between hostesses and prostitutes is not clear-cut, either across time or space. (Perkins, 2008, p.101)

The research obviously shows that prostitution is not completely integrated into the requirements of hostess work but rather can be a part of the dynamics of this matter, which revolve around the extent and type of sexual interaction that suffice for a man to feel truly masculine in the customer-hostess relationship.

In this line, Gagne (2021) added the practice of "personal entertainment" to the "corporate entertainment" of salarymen as the foundation for earlier works in literature. Men also prefer to visit hostess clubs alone to build a relationship with the hostess rather than spend time with the hostess as a shared activity with other men. Although this is not a room where the hostess and the customer will be able to be alone in Japan, it is no longer just about after-work or business entertainment but also about the customer and the hostess's interaction. Gagne (2021) highlights that sex with the client is not favored by the hostess for marketing reasons because the consumer is unlikely to come back to the hostess club if they have sex with them, as well as for ethical reasons. As a result, Gagne (2021) makes the following observations regarding the relationship between the Hostess Club and sexual activity: "This spatially and temporally bounded context is marked by both freedom and the possibility of licit sexualized interaction and mutually understood and managed limits of intimacy." (p. 119)

Taking charge of facilitating the freedom to engage in sexual activities within this context, alongside maintaining the potential for financial gain, becomes the responsibility of the hostess to ensure the ongoing patronage of customers at the hostess club. In academic discussions, we come across the concept of emotional labor among hostesses. Women undertake emotional labor, essentially carrying out emotional work by entertaining customers or making them feel valued, thus fostering a sense of involvement. Through this process, a contrast emerges between the romantic motivations that women develop in their personal lives and the monetary incentives driving their professional roles. This contrast highlights the disparity between the relationships they nurture in their private lives based on romantic motivations and the relationships they establish during work motivated by financial gains. (Choi, 2017; Fengjiang, 2021; Gagne, 2021) Consequently, this emotional work leads hostess women to construct a sex worker identity by “acting, performing, or playing the ‘role’ of a sex worker that enables women to separate themselves from their manufactured identity in the work setting.” (Fengjiang, 2021, p.214)

Taking into account the recent ethical focus on anthropology, this investigation on hostess women's emotional labor is extended by Fengjiang (2021) through a debate on “ethical labor,” acknowledging ongoing discussions in the field. In these conditions, these women work with the end in mind of accomplishing certain life goals that will take place with the financial advantages from the hostess work. They seek to redefine their occupation in a way that is free of the stigma associated with being a sex worker in order to avoid carrying the stigma of their current occupation into their future lives, in which they will engage in more “proper work.” This approach indicates their attempt to distance themselves from the sex worker identity without the stigma that comes with it, implying that they are also involved in ethical labor. Fengjiang (2021) states her preference not to categorize those hostess women as sex workers based on her present investigation. The reason for this is that these women do not self-identify as sex workers and are uncomfortable being labeled as such. She also highlights the insufficiency of discussions in the sex work literature in terms of hostess work. In this context, she explains her stance on the sex work debates as follows:

Politically, I stand with the efforts to decriminalize and destigmatize sex workers and hostesses because this is important to improve their working

conditions. However, I learned that many of my interlocutors' main concern was quitting their work for a socially recognized livelihood rather than seeking social, legal, and familial recognition and rights related to their current occupation. (p.311)

Following up on these debates, consider another definition of hostess work that integrates ideas commonly seen in the literature. In her research on Korean hostesses, Chung (2004) describes the hostess job and its breadth as follows:

A nightclub hostess is engaged in '*sex work without sex*' at a club space. A hostess does not have sexual intercourse with a customer on the premises of a hostess club. Instead, she psychologically and verbally caters to the customer's ego and entertains his sexual fantasy through her conversation skills and good appearance without having sex. (Chung, 2004, p.353)

To satisfy customers' sexual desires, this activity, which occurs without engaging in sexual intercourse, becomes rather unintelligible within the realms of both dominant hostess work literature and sex work literature when the hostess work becomes linked with the practice of sex. The hostess work literature tends to exclude the occasional instances when these women do engage in sexual activities with clients, whereas the sex work literature compares the conditions of individuals who earn their living through selling sex, namely prostitution, on the one hand, and those who work in other fields, such as dancing hostessing or webcam shows, on the other, despite claims to cover them together. This literature constantly fails to consider the fluid interplay between these roles, creating an ambiguous understanding of the practice of sexual labor. Despite the inclusivity intention behind the term "sex work," which aims to "save" these individuals engaging in sex work from the "prostitute" label as well as the "whore stigma" and improve their working conditions, it falls short in encompassing and focusing on occupations beyond prostitution that occasionally involve or include sexual services.

While they may claim to include these women and their activities, which contain a variety of dynamics, under the umbrella term of sex work, discussions concerning regulating their working conditions primarily focus around the premise of "selling sex," that is, prostitution. Within this setting, these women continue to be inadequately treated in a way that evaluates their occupation and its "whore stigma," element under the name sex work. On the other hand, talks about women staying in their jobs frequently assume their willingness to do so, leaving out a thorough

examination of the ethical labors of those who wish to leave this occupation. This facet is similarly underrepresented in the sex work literature.

In sum, this chapter delved into the sex work debate within two edges of the feminist political imagination, including the policy aspect, and then connected their discussions with the hostess aspect, which is both conceptually and empirically a starting point to understand *konsomatrix* work. In alignment with Frengjang (2021), I must emphasize the need to separately examine these women and their occupations to better comprehend their working conditions and the sexual tension inherent in their occupations. Therefore, I will refrain from labeling the women I have studied as sex workers or categorizing their occupations as sex work. Instead, I will descriptively explain their work conceptually, along with its main legal and economic aspects, to come up with a conceptual framework unique to their own situation. In the subsequent section, I will refer to them as *konsomatrix women*, also based on their own preferences, and present a conceptual framework for the *konsomatrix work* as the first step to understand the *konsomatrix* identity and its defining practices.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF KONSOMATRIS WORK IN ANKARA PAVYON'S PECULIAR ENTERTAINMENT CULTURE

4.1. Conceptualization of Konsomatris Work

There are two indispensable things in our industry, one, music and two, women. These two are indispensable. Because when there is no woman and no music, the customer would go to the tavern (meyhane) instead of coming here. Right?

- Personal interview with a Pavyon manager, 2021

“Pavyon,” as a nightclub characterized by the interplay of sexual desire and alcohol consumption, drives its unique spatial identity through three fundamental elements, namely women, alcohol, and music. At the heart of this environment are *konsomatris* women who take on dual and intertwined roles as dancers with an erotic appeal and hostesses conversing and drinking with clients while sitting at their tables. Their presence and interactions create a distinct atmosphere that fosters a sense of desire and intimacy. Alcohol consumption is central in terms of two main dynamics, first, as the main economic drive of the venue, and second, as a catalyzer to relax men in order to increase both their sexual desire and their willingness to spend more money. The presence of women at tables, whether by accompanying men’s alcohol use with alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages or on stage by dancing, allows alcohol to perform this function. The pricing strategies predictably aim for profitability. However, women's drinks’ being set at a higher cost than any other non-Pavyon entertainment venue further demonstrates the relation between alcohol and women as two of the central components of the venue. Moreover, music also plays a pivotal role, as the unique melodies and lyrics of *Yeni Ankara Oyun Havaları*, a predominant musical genre in the Pavyon, fill the air, setting the mood and enhancing the overall ambiance accompanied by a dim, red-dominated light. Both the women and the venue make money from women dancing on the stage with customers. As a result,

alcohol consumption and dancing became tools for the *Pavyon*'s profit generation. The interplay between dance and alcohol consumption, all within the context of the local culture of Ankara which include *Yeni Ankara Oyun Havaları* as I mentioned, offers a distinctive and alluring experience, setting it apart from other nightlife establishments. In this section, I will begin by discussing the term *konsomatris* and how it will be used in this thesis, as well as my motivation for doing so, by looking at its etymological background and its place within Turkish legal framework.

4.1.1. The Etymology of the Term “Konsomatris”

The origin of the term “*konsomatris*” can be traced back to the French word *consommatrice*, meaning “a woman who serves drinks to bar customers.” In its literal meaning, *consommatrice* is the feminine form of *consommateur*, the word for “consumer” in French. The earliest identified usage of the term *konsomatris* in Turkey is found in a newspaper from 1938 (Nişanyan, 2022). Öner (2010), too, notes that *konsomatris* is the borrowed form of the French *consommatrice*, and it means “bar woman.” Likewise, the Turkish Language Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*-TDK) defines *konsomatris* as “a woman who works in entertainment venues such as casinos⁵ and bars, providing income to the business by eating and drinking with customers” and states that it originates from the French word *consommatrice*. Similarly, the term “konsomasyon” is derived from the French *consommation* which is defined as either “the items that are eaten or drunk in entertainment venues such as casinos and bars” or “the act of eating and drinking such items” or “the moving of *konsomatris* from table to table in entertainment venues.” These definitions encapsulate all three elements of the act of “konsomasyon”: the customer, the consumed item, and the “*konsomatris*” woman. Aşıyan (2017), too, suggests that “konsomasyon” originates from the French word *consomation*, meaning “to consume, consumption, drinks consumed in cafes or restaurants” and he contends that it is derived from the French verb *consommer* (meaning “to consume”), which is

⁵ “Casino” (*gazino* in Turkish) is a word often used synonymously with “pavyon” in Turkish. However, it generally refers to a version of pavyon where women do not dance but rather sit with customers and soloists perform songs instead of *Yeni Ankara Oyun Havaları*. Today, although these are venues with casino (*gazino*) licenses, they, too, employ *konsomatris* women, albeit informally, and operate similarly to the pavyons in practice.

itself the borrowed form of the Latin verb *consumere*, meaning “to eat up, swallow, consume.”

Moreover, in Northern Cyprus⁶, there are women employees working in nightclubs who are also referred to as *konsomatris* in both law and practice. In academic literature, the words *konsomatris* or *consommatrices* are both used by scholars to define these women (Aliefendioğlu, 2013; Güven-Lisaniler, et al., 2005, 2008). In fact, Aliefendioğlu (2013, p. 47) made the following note in his own work on the issue that I want to clarify here: “Although there are many words referring to this profession such as hostess, bar-maid, escort girl, cabaret dancer etc, the common term in use in North Cyprus is *konsomatris*, coming from the French word *consommatrice*.”

In academic studies focusing on the Turkish case, we see that the word “*konsomatris*” (as is used in Turkish) is translated into English as “hostess” and used as such (Durmaz-Bodur&Akbaş, 2014; Özarslan, 2015; Çelik, 2022). For instance, in her work in which she describes the origin of *Pavyon*, Çelik (2022, p.9) states that “they were primitive forms of French-style pavillions (*pavyon*) and modified forms of traditional entertainments (*oturak alemi, koltuk meyhanesi*) where hostess (*konsomatris*) worked.” As can be seen, although employing the French word “pavillion” and claiming that the etymological and architectural origins of “*Pavyon*” are French, she was comfortable with using the standard English translation “hostess” for the phrase *konsomatris*.

Considering the facts that *konsomatris* women, moving from table to table, greet and welcome the customers at the beginning of the night, entertain the customers, and ensure that the customers enjoy themselves as if they were the hosts, the translation choice of these scholars can be well justified. However, as the term “*konsomatris*” is centered on the verb “consume” in terms of its origin and practical usage, this

⁶ I wish to clarify the reason why I exclude the *konsomatrislik* practice in a society very similar to Turkey socioculturally from this study’s analytical framework. Firstly, as much as the *konsomatris* women in Northern Cyprus are similar to women working in Ankara in name, they differ in terms of their job description which explicitly includes sex unlike the Ankara case. Furthermore, there are a very limited number of studies on the *konsomatris* work in Northern Cyprus, and the existing research is rather dated, focusing on migrant women.

translation remains lacking. Indeed, *konsomatris* women have a responsibility beyond providing hospitality to customers and ensuring their enjoyment in these venues as hosts. They are also expected to encourage customers to consume more than they initially intended at the table that night while accompanying them and to ensure the continuity of these evenings by enticing them to return to the establishment as customers. Therefore, for a practice so centered on consumption, I believe that the term “hostess” lacks the power to define it. Adding to this my aim to conceptualize this practice based on local cultural dynamics, this dissertation will use the term “*konsomatris*” to refer to these women.

4.1.2. Konsomatris Work in the Turkish Legal Framework

At this point, before delving into how *konsomatrislik* is practiced in Turkey, it is important to examine its legal representation. In the entirety of Turkish law, the term *konsomatris* is used in a single regulation which explains how to acquire licenses to open up businesses and to work in Turkey (*İş Yeri Açma ve Çalışma Ruhsatlarına İlişkin Yönetmelik*, 2005) to indicate that a *konsomatris* can only work in establishments with *Pavyon* licenses. Under this regulation, *konsomatris* women are defined as individuals “who eat and drink with customers to ensure their enjoyment.” Thus, even if only mentioned once, the *konsomatris* work exists in Turkish law as an occupation. This implies that only venues with *Pavyon* licenses can provide insurance for these women under the *konsomatris* occupation code. During my research, after completing this legal exploration of *konsomatris* work, I asked two *konsomatris* women to show me their employment contracts as registered in the Social Security Institution (*Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu-SGK*) (Figure 1). Afterwards, I also talked with the *Pavyon* manager on this issue. The information I received from him, and the documents provided by *konsomatris* women demonstrate that there are different practices in reality.

Before explaining these practices, it is essential to note that *Pavyon* managers, whom I will refer to in the following sections of this thesis, are not the owners of the *Pavyon* establishments. Each *Pavyon* has a separate owner, and managers are responsible for overseeing the operations of the *Pavyon* on behalf of these owners. Sometimes these *Pavyon* owners may own a single venue, and other times they may be the owner of multiple *Pavyons*. In addition to *Pavyons*, they may also be involved

in other businesses such as hotels and restaurants. Indeed, when examining the employment contracts of *konsomatris* women, we find that their ‘place of work’ information shows company names from various sectors, including but not limited to Tourism and Restaurant, such as Logistics, Construction, Automotive, and Import-Export. These *Pavyons* operate with licenses obtained from the municipality, and, as explained above, they hire *konsomatris* women based on this license, which is the only permit allowing an establishment to employ someone as a “*konsomatris*” under Turkish Law.

Figure 2: Employment contract of a *konsomatris* woman as is seen on online government portal (e-devlet)

Meslek Kodu	Meslek Adı: Garson (Servis Elemanı)
İşyeri No İşyeri/Kurum/Sandık No	İşyeri Bilgileri Mahiyeti: Özel İşyeri Ünvanı: CEYONA GIDA TURİZM LOJİSTİK İNŞAAT İTHALAT İHRACAT SANAYİ VE
Meslek Kodu	Meslek Adı: Dans Sanatçısı/Dansçı
İşyeri No İşyeri/Kurum/Sandık No	İşyeri Bilgileri Mahiyeti: Özel İşyeri Ünvanı: AYDOĞAN EĞLENCE TURİZM OTELCİLİK GIDA OTOMOTİV İNŞAAT KUYUMC

Source: Sent by the *konsomatris* woman to the author

However, returning to the employment contracts of the women, we see that they are commonly categorized as dancers or waitresses. When discussing this issue with the *Pavyon* manager, he explained that *konsomatris* women often prefer to be registered as dancers or waitresses due to legal concerns such as custody cases involving their children or to avoid the stigma associated with the occupation of “*konsomatris*” as it would stay in their formal employment record permanently. Therefore, the manager stated that they frequently register these women in different occupations, such as

dancers and waitresses. When asked about whether this practice would raise any legal issues, the manager expressed that the owners have multiple businesses, such as hotels, and the women can be employed by these businesses on paper (i.e., as a waitress working in a hotel) thus it would not present any legal problem. However, he added that the *Pavyon* management registers the women as *konsomatris* unless they explicitly request to be listed otherwise. Within this context, when asked about how many of the current female employees are registered as *konsomatris*, the manager answered that approximately 20 out of 50 *konsomatris* women currently working in the *Pavyon* are registered as dancers, 15 as waitresses, and 15 as *konsomatris*. As can be seen from here as well, the majority of the *konsomatris* women do not wish to have a legal record of what they do to earn their living. On the other hand, the practice of registering these women as waitresses has also been developed as a strategy for employing *konsomatris* women informally by casinos or bars operating under the *Pavyon* concept without a *Pavyon* license.

However, contrary to what the *Pavyon* manager reported, for the *konsomatris* women, having the occupation codes of waitress or dancer in their employment records instead of the *konsomatris* code does not prevent the legal stigma associated with having worked in a *Pavyon*. When I asked a former *konsomatris* woman how she felt after leaving, her initial response was as follows:

Do you know how I'm feeling right now, Tuğçe? After leaving the *Pavyon*, it says on our *e-devlet* [Turkish online government portal] that I worked in a *Pavyon*. They told us they would register us as waitresses. I was listed as a dancer, but I am a person who doesn't even perform in dances. On *e-devlet*, it is evident that I worked as a dancer in a *Pavyon*. After leaving there, I always said to myself, "Okay, my life is over now." I can't marry anyone after this. Even if I do, this will come up. The guy won't want me. That's why I thought like this. My boyfriend is 20 years older than me, for example. I have a 20-year age gap between me and my current boyfriend, and I have always put him in this place, for example, he understood." (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

This *konsomatris* woman had worked in a total of six different *Pavyons* in Ankara within approximately two years. Each time, she was told that she would be registered as a waitress, which reassured her. However, after seeing the legal records she shared with me, she realized that while three of these six *Pavyons* registered her as a waitress, the other three registered her as a dancer. She emphasized that despite not being one of the *oyun oynayan* girls (i.e., girls who perform dances) in the *Pavyon*

and being guaranteed that she would be registered as a waitress, she was registered as a dancer. In her post-*Pavyon* life, this remains as the only record of her experience as a *konsomatrix*, and the fact that it will follow her throughout her life as the evidence of her work in a *Pavyon*, essentially reproducing the stigma, makes her think that her life is over. It also leads her to believe that no one would marry her. Here again, it raises in her the anxiety of not being perceived by a man as a “desirable” woman independent of these stigmas, who would be seen as a party of the institution of marriage by men and society. As she repeatedly emphasized for the rest of our interview, the fundamental dynamic of the relationship between her and her partner, who is 20 years older than her and is described by her as a man who has reached a certain level of maturity due to his age, is his ability to accept her *Pavyon* identity. This 29-year-old, young, economically independent, and well-off woman, who started her own business after she quit the *Pavyon*, builds and describes her whole life on this stigma and does not believe that she can get rid of this stigma one day.

4.1.3. Economics of Konsomatrix Work: Maintaining the Engagement of Konsomatrix Women

When one of the women I interviewed learned that I was waiting in the toilets in the *Pavyon* to meet *konsomatrix* women, she offered to introduce me to her *konsomatrix* friends and then took me to a *Pavyon* on an evening when she was not working. Later that night, while we were sitting with the woman I went to the *Pavyon* with and her other friends, another *konsomatrix* woman working at the venue came to us. While crying, she told the *konsomatrix* woman next to me that she wanted to talk to her. Asking for permission, she turned to me and asked if she could take her friend to the toilet. I told her that, of course, she could, and if there were anything I could do, I would like to support her. She told me I could go with them to the toilet, too, if I wanted to, so we went together. In the toilet, she started to tell us what was wrong with her, that her boyfriend had paid the money she owed to the *Pavyon* and then left her in a difficult situation by asking for this money from her. She was very upset, sobbing her eyes out. We listened to her, we looked for solutions, we hugged. We had a very heart-to-heart conversation.

Later, when we met again with the woman who took me to the abovementioned *Pavyon*, she told me that her friend, who was crying in the toilet, told her how good

it felt when I hugged her. The fact that an “outsider” could share her troubles and understand her was very unusual for that woman. With this feedback, which also made me happy, the thoughts I have on my mind about the impact of *Pavyon* debts on the *konsomatris* women, which remained with me from that night, became even clearer.

Therefore, I decided to contact this woman and got her number. Although we started talking, it took two months for us to meet. During these two months, we agreed to meet several times, but we could not because she could not wake up, as is often the case with other *konsomatris* women. When we could finally meet, her eyes were full of sleep. She told me she would see me this time and had come even though she was sleepless. It was also her day off, and when we met at around 11 o’clock, she suggested that we first go to a coffee shop and then to another *Pavyon* where her boyfriend, a *sazcı*, was performing. I accepted. We chatted briefly, and I completed my interview with her at the coffee shop. In the interview, I inevitably focused on the practice of indebtedness in the *Pavyon* while learning a lot about the working conditions in these establishments. This woman, who had her own business before the COVID-19 crisis, went bankrupt during the lockdowns and then started working

Figure 2: The advance receipt



Source: The author

as a *konsomatrix* to pay off her debts, explained to me the economic functioning of the *Pavyon* systematically, thanks to her previous experience as a manager.

Afterward, we arrived at the *Pavyon* where her boyfriend was playing. After his performance, he joined us, and the three of us spent some time together. When we sat down, as she was going to put the money in her purse into her wallet, she said, “Oh, I forgot to show you these. Look,” and showed me the receipt in Figure 2. Since we were in the *Pavyon* at that moment and it was very noisy, I could not ask her further questions. However, I was very interested. In the following days, I texted her asking about the receipts. I continued to ask questions about these receipts to the other *konsomatrix* women I was in contact with. I also arranged another meeting with the *Pavyon* manager I interviewed to ask about them. Being aware of this receipt made me realize that the practice of indebtedness in the *Pavyon*, about which I considered myself sufficiently knowledgeable, was much more complex than I thought. Let us now take a closer look at this receipt and the practice of indebtedness.

3.3.1. Endless Indebtedness

There are essentially two forms of women's indebtedness in the *Pavyon*. The first one is when women get advance after they start working in the *Pavyon* in order to pay off the debts from their previous lives. The second way is through the advances they receive for large expenses they make while working in the *Pavyon*, such as expensive cosmetic surgeries or moving. Women owing money to the *Pavyon* is a method preferred by the *Pavyon* management to ensure the continuity of women working there. In fact, for this reason alone, women can be made to sign notes when drunk even though they have not received an advance, as can also be seen in the account of a *konsomatrix* woman quoted below.

The owners of the place get you drunk and make you sign a note there. They say... Like they make you drink when you first come, they see that you're something, you're a girl with the potential to do the job, and then they go and sit you at the big table. Since they already know the customers sitting at that table, they say, “Sit here today.” They make you drink and drink that day. Then, at night, they call you like to the manager's office. When you go to his office, you're already drunk. They tell you like, “You're our sister. You're new to this *alem*.” Then, like, “Now, other places can give you a higher wage, but then something can happen to you, you can get into trouble. Don't be fooled by them. Come and sign this note. At least when something happens, you can say you have a note. You know, like, ‘Don't mess with me.’” Because even at the

hairdresser, you know we go to the hairdresser every day, even there, *şefs* from other *Pavyons* try to get their hands on us, asking us to come work in their venue. That's what they told me. They said, "Sign this and nothing will happen. Don't you trust us?" and things like that. You're already drunk, then you say, "Okay, I trust you, no question." You sign it, but time passes, you want to leave the place. They say to you, "You can't leave, you have to work. You have a note. You will pay this note." Like, "You have to work this long." (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

As can be understood from the above quotation, the primary motivation of the *Pavyon* management is the fear of losing a well-performing *konsomatris* woman. At this point, a note of a large amount signed by the *konsomatris* woman prevents her from quitting her job there and working in another *Pavyon*. Because every time a *konsomatris* woman changes *Pavyons*, the new *Pavyon* she will work in pays off her debt to the *Pavyon* where she previously worked. In other words, in the event that she cannot pay off her debt and quit that particular *Pavyon* on her own, only one way remains for her to change where she works: making a deal with a new *Pavyon* management that agrees to pay off her debt, thinking the money she will earn there is worth paying off her debt. However, even if the *konsomatris* women change *Pavyons* this way, they cannot leave the Ankara *Pavyon* sector unless they are able to pay off all their debts themselves. If they do, legal processes⁷ immediately begin as they did not pay the notes they signed. Moreover, examining these legal processes shows that even if the *konsomatris* women paid their debts, they remain in a legally disadvantaged situation. At this point, we should go back to the receipt paper, titled *Avans Fişi* (Advance Receipt), shown in Figure 2. The paper's content can be translated into English as follows: "From Mrs/Miss [first name of the *konsomatris* woman], due to your advance debt, [the amount in numbers] TL (Turkish Lira). Only [the amount in writing] TL has been deducted. (This receipt is not a substitute for an invoice)."

The notes signed by women in the *Pavyon* are documents that are legally valid documents that are widely used within debt relations in Turkey. However, in their common use, the debtor gives the creditor the amount of money determined by the

⁷ The *konsomatris* woman quoted here left the Ankara *Pavyon* industry by fleeing to another city, and due to her debts, she has not been able to use even a bank account under her name for five years. After we met, she filed a complaint regarding how she was made to sign these notes under the influence. The authorities have demanded her file with those of 19 other women who left their jobs in the same way to examine for a usury case already opened against the *pavyon* manager. The process continues.

note, takes the note document from the creditor, and then destroys it. Thus, the legal validity of the note ends. In this common practice, for instance, a debt of ten units is divided into ten different notes, and the debtor takes back one of these notes each time he or she pays a unit. However, in the *Pavyon*, this debt of ten units is settled with a single note. This way, the *konsomatrix* women who pay their debts unit by unit⁸ can get their note back not for each payment but when the entire debt is over. At these intermediate stages, they receive advance receipts equal to the amount of debt that has been paid. Suppose the woman wishes to get an advance again. In that case, she gives a certain number of the advance receipts she has collected to the *Pavyon* management and receives the corresponding amount. This complex process works out in a way very similar to using credit cards as the original debt remains until the *Pavyon* receives the number of advance receipts that can pay off the *konsomatrix* woman's debt, and she takes back the note she signed. In the meantime, advance receipts can be used to borrow from the management again.

The legal validity of these advance receipts is highly controversial. Considering that invoices are used to keep records of commercial relations and can be presented as evidence in resolving disputes between creditors and debtors when necessary, we see that it is written at the bottom left corner of the advance receipts that they do not replace invoices. On top of this, most of the *konsomatrix* women use false names in the *Pavyon* environment, and these names end up being written on this document. At this point, considering the fact that only a first name appears on the document instead of a full one and that those first names are usually false, it becomes difficult to claim the legal validity of these advance receipts. Nevertheless, *konsomatrix* women carefully carry their advance receipts in the most proper and secret part of their wallets and collect them with the utmost care because they think there is no other way of proving the amount of debt they have paid. They are correct in that they can prove their payments with advance receipts, as long as they stay in the *Pavyon* sector. However, while notes are legally valid outside the *Pavyon* sector as well, the validity of advance receipts outside the *Pavyon* environment is highly questionable.

⁸ Although the *konsomatrix* women can pay their debts directly, the practice of deducting the same amount from their wages is more common.

Having examined how the maintaining of *konsomatris* women in a *Pavyon* or in the Ankara *Pavyon* environment is ensured through the practice of indebtedness, let us now look at why *konsomatris* women engage in this practice.

3.3.2. Unending Needs and Encouraged Expenditures

The money earned by the *konsomatris* women is a matter of interest and curiosity for everyone, both inside and outside the *Pavyon* environment. In fact, the chance of earning a much higher income than working in a formal job is the motivation of these women as well when they start to work as *konsomatris*. However, saving money is not as easy as they think once they start working. Generally, they are left with a minimal amount of money from their daily wages after deductions are made due to their debts and/or they make work-related expenses. Additionally, there may be periods when they do not work as they often get sick due to alcohol consumption and physical fatigue caused by working at night hours or when they want to spare time for themselves. During these periods, after spending their savings, they find themselves returning to work again. On the other hand, the amount they spend for the care of their families, such as their children, parents, or siblings and the continuity of

Figure 3: The dresses hanging on the kulis wall



Source: The author

this care also affect their inability to save money. However, due to the scope of this thesis, I will only focus on the expenditures they make for work.

How much do I earn in a month, love? 60-70 thousand, but I don't know where it goes. Where does this money go? (She laughs.) But it's true, it's not a fruitful earning, because we have a lot of expenses. For example, do you know how much I spend in a day? Hairdresser 150, taxi 250, you know, you see a dress and you buy it, my make-up stuff runs out quickly, you have a cat, you can't cook, so you order in. By the way, I get up at noon, I set the alarm to 12 o'clock, then I eat. I need to have a full stomach so that I don't feel sick when I get up in the evening because I feel sick when I'm hungry. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

On working days, *konsomatris* women spend their whole day preparing for work and then working. At this point, every stage in their preparation routine other than sleep comes with its own expenditure. In addition to daily expenses such as make-up or hairdressing, there are smaller expenses such as eyelash lifting, microblading for eyebrows, prosthetic nails, as well as much more costly periodic expenses such as aesthetic surgeries like liposuction when they gain weight due to irregular sleeping and eating schedules, heavy alcohol consumption, and smoking. However, in accordance with the scope of my thesis, I would like to focus on the expenditures they make inside the *Pavyon* and on the phrase “you see a dress, you buy it” uttered by the *konsomatris* woman quoted above in order to explain that *konsomatris* women are encouraged to spend within Ankara *Pavyons*.

In Ankara *Pavyons*, there are backstage rooms, called *kulis* in Turkish, where women make their final preparations, freshening up their make-up or changing into their outfits. There is a waiter called *kulis komisi* in these rooms. His job is helping *konsomatris* women with their preparations. He charges 30 TRY for each *konsomatris* woman working that evening, which is deducted from the money women earn that day. In addition to this, the *kulis komisi* has another source of income: Selling clothes backstage.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the backstage room is used like a shop. The *kulis komisi* hangs the clothes on the walls throughout the backstage room, and the clothes are sold at least twice as much as the prices outside. The surplus value created through selling these dresses far above the market price to the women who need to buy them for work is used as a source of income for the *kulis komisi*, himself also an employee

of the *Pavyon*. This way, the *Pavyon* management not only avoids the responsibility of covering these work-related expenses for the women, but also places the responsibility of paying the wage of *kulis komisi* on the women. Despite all these, then, why is it a common practice among *konsomatrīs* women to buy clothes from this backstage shop when they can buy clothes cheaper from a wider range of options outside?

Look, love, I know that I bought a dress for 1000 liras, I mean, if I went to a store, I would buy the dress for 400 liras, I mean, on the internet I would buy that dress for 400 liras, but I buy it for 1000 liras. Because at that moment, now, love, it is such an environment that your psychology does not want to wear the dress you brought with you at that moment because we are women there, you know? There is this thing there, he brought a dress, and it catches your eye. You directly start to dream, what if I wore it? You know, the important thing is to dress very beautifully there, or of course, visuality is very important, but the desire to be better than all those women. A woman coming up to you and saying, “Oh, how beautiful your dress is! Where did you buy it? Oh, I wish I had bought it,” every woman likes this. (Personal interview with a *konsomatrīs*, 2023)

As can be seen, the reason some women prefer to buy dresses backstage is that they want to buy a dress that the other *konsomatrīs* women would see and want to buy for themselves. The point where she says, “We are women,” leads me to think: The practice in question is not much different from wanting to wear and ultimately buying a dress from a famous brand, a dress desired by other women as well. Thus, the women wishing to look beautiful in the *Pavyon* as required by their jobs while wanting to do this with a dress that can be desired by other women as well, and the resulting marketing of these dresses to them appears as another profit-making tool in the *Pavyon* environment.

On the other hand, this small store in the backstage room is not limited to only dresses. As you can see in Figure 4, it also sells items that women may need while working, such as pantyhose, earrings, make-up, underwear, and, deodorant. Some *konsomatrīs* women are satisfied with the presence of this store in the backstage room since they do not have time to shop under their working conditions, and materials such as deodorant or underwear may become urgent needs from time to time. However, when it comes to products such as make-up, they prefer not to buy them because they apparently do not trust their quality.

Figure 4: Shelves containing other items *konsomatris* women may need



Source: The author

Firstly, all these show us the weight of expenses that women must undertake due to the obligation to stay beautiful and well-kept all the time while engaging in *konsomatris* work. In this business, which they usually start due to their debts and continue with the aim to invest beyond paying off their debts, they become positioned as consumers to maintain their *konsomatris* identity, and they fall into another economic challenge in the *Pavyon* environment by becoming consumers of

the beauty sector⁹, which aims to ensure and maintain that women try to be “beautiful” and “well-kept,” both inside and outside the *Pavyon*.

In this chapter, I began by examining the etymological origins of the *konsomatris* work and how this work is defined in terms of perpetuating consumption within the *Pavyon*. Then, I discussed the legal interpretation of this occupation in Turkey. Finally, by discussing the conditions in which *konsomatris* women work in Ankara *Pavyons*, I tried to demonstrate how these women become consumers and how they are kept within the *Pavyon* system this way. After explaining these dynamics, in the next chapter, I will discuss the two components of the *konsomatris* work, namely dancing and hostessing, and then conclude my discussion with the *konsomatris* women’s practices of meeting with customers outside the *Pavyon*.

⁹ Indeed, this is not fundamentally different from capitalism’s general logic of marketing these products to all women. The only distinction here is that *konsomatris* women performing sexual labor more susceptible to these pressures.

CHAPTER 5

KONSOMATRIS WORK THROUGH PERSONAL NARRATIVES OF KONSOMATRIS WOMEN

5.1. Konsomatris Work Through Personal Narratives of Konsomatris Women

[The culture] here is very different from our *Pavyon* culture. There, there is a soloist singing songs, arabesque or slow. There are girls dancing, club-style music playing, you can see girls doing pole dance there. Once I came here, I saw girls with *kaşık* (wooden spoons used in folk dancing) *zil* (finger cymbals) and men fighting to dance [with the girls]. He comes up [on the stage] when it's his turn. You say, "Fuck! What kind of place am I in?" (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

Pavyons in Ankara are distinguished from other *Pavyons* and nightclubs in Turkey by the distinct¹⁰ music genre performed in these venues. This genre, known as *Yeni Ankara Oyun Havalari*¹¹ (New Ankara Folk Dance Music), is performed by *sazcılar*¹² (*Pavyon* musicians) whose most characteristic act during their performance is called *kaynatmak* (to gab, to chatter). *Kaynatmak* can be seen as a type of stand-up show by musicians between songs to entertain the customers. During this *kaynatmak*, artists use slang and vulgarisms against both the *konsomatris* women and customers to entertain their audience. Additionally, musicians perform their own songs, which also have vulgar content. Customers dance to this music on stage with women by paying a certain amount. While this act of dancing is called *oyun* (the dance), the *konsomatris* women who dance are referred to as *oyuncu kız*¹³ (the dancing girl).

Ankara is different from other cities. In Ankara, there is a music genre called *oyun havası* (folk dance music) with beautiful *saz* instrument and lyrics and good conversation. For example, you can form a genuine bond with the

¹⁰ It can be said that this music has become widespread, especially during the COVID-19 era, as the *pavyon* musicians shot music videos that included *konsomatris* women as dancers from time to time and promoted them on social media. Although few of these musicians have started to play in different nightclubs in different cities as well, it is still early to argue that Ankara *pavyon* culture has also emerged in those venues.

¹¹ See the Literature Review Chapter for a more detail.

¹² These musicians are called *sazcı* in the *pavyon* environment as they play *saz*, a string instrument heavily used in Turkish folk music.

¹³ Women working in the *pavyon*, "konsomatris women" as used in this thesis, are generally called *kız* (girl) within *pavyon* environment.

customer sitting [at the table] next to you. If this customer and that customer run into each other every day, they start to greet each other. For example, it can be that one customer asks for a dance, and another customer might do the same. Then they talk between them, and one of them says, “My brother, I’ll be leaving, let me go up first.” There is a genuine connection. In this environment, it actually exists, but not in other cities. (...) In other cities, people are a bit like, you know, “Let me find a woman, go and sleep with her, get my business done. Tomorrow, I’ll hang out with someone else.” Such people exist here too, but you don’t have to sit with those. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

For example, I witnessed something the other day at the place where my boyfriend works [her boyfriend is a *sazcı*]. (...) “*Gardaşım*¹⁴, I came for you, *gardaşım*.” [a customer speaking to her *sazcı* boyfriend] They like his voice, that’s how they come. You know, actually, it’s better if they don’t come for the women because they can have fun, I mean, people like this really have fun. They *do kons*¹⁵, they *do oyun*¹⁶. They have fun like that. I don’t think a person who comes for the women can have much fun. He would be either a pervert-minded guy or trying to take the woman somewhere else. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

Except for one, all of the women I interviewed within the scope of this study have experience working in different types of nightclubs (like *birahane*¹⁷) or *Pavyons* in various cities of Turkey such as İzmir, Manisa, Uşak, Mersin, Diyarbakır, and Bursa. Their introduction to Ankara and its culture occurs when they come to work in Ankara *Pavyons*. These women sometimes view Ankara *Pavyons* as the culmination of their “careers,” sometimes prefer it over smaller towns due to its status as a major city, and sometimes see it as a place where they can escape from the violence of their families/partners back in the province. When they compare Ankara *Pavyons* with their previous *Pavyon* experience in different parts of Turkey, they highlight the *oyun* culture as the fundamental distinguishing feature of Ankara *Pavyons*. According to the accounts provided by the women, the fact that customers coming to Ankara *Pavyons* have motivations and desires besides spending time with *konsomatris* women and being with them at the end of the night, such as consuming music and dance, reduces the pressure of sexuality placed on the *konsomatris* work. Moreover,

¹⁴ In Ankara’s local culture, men use the word *gardaşım* to each other, which is the localized version of *kardeşim*, both meaning my brother. This is a form of address that shows the sincerity and solidarity between them.

¹⁵ The term *kons yapmak* (doing *kons*) refers to the act of buying the service of sitting with *konsomatris* women and paying for the women’s drinks, as will be explained later on.

¹⁶ The term *oyun yapmak* (doing *oyun*) refers to the act of buying the service of dancing with the *konsomatris* women on stage, in other words, buying *oyun* (the dance). This term, too, will be explained later on.

¹⁷ Although these venues are nightclubs that operate very similarly to the *pavyon* concept, they are generally called *birahane*.

women learning this unique dance of Ankara *Pavyons* and performing it on stage earns them the dancer identity of *oyuncu kız*, as they are called, alongside their *konsomatris* identity, which further diminishes the pressure of the work they engage in. Therefore, we can say that this is why the *konsomatris* women I interviewed describe Ankara *Pavyons* in a more favorable light and credit the culture of *oyun*, with all its components as the reason.

On the other hand, this unique *oyun* practice in Ankara *Pavyons*, which is believed to limit the sexuality associated with their work compared to other *Pavyons*, presents different challenges for the women. One of these challenges is that women coming to work in Ankara *Pavyons* from other cities face the obligation to learn to dance in the style of *Ankara Oyun Havaları* to acquire the identity of *oyuncu kız* in the eyes of male customers who have grown up in Ankara's local culture and practiced it for years.

Do you know when I even learned how to play *zil* (finger cymbals)? It's only been a year. [She has been working in Ankara *Pavyons* for two years now.] A guy told me something. He said, "You've learned how to dance, but you don't know how to play the *zil*. Why are you going on stage?" And I am an obsessive person, this really upset me. Not just a bit, I can't even explain. For three days, I watched *Pavyon* videos and practiced in front of a standing mirror, and you know what? I learned how to play the *zil* like that. I swear to you, I swear to you, I still can't get that day out of my mind. That day, I even tried to reach out to that guy, tried to remember him. I did reach him and said, "I learned how to play the *zil* thanks to you. Come, I'll pay the bill for your table, but I won't touch your kons bill." He didn't come. He apparently left the *alem*¹⁸. I mean, he's not hanging out in *Pavyons* anymore, that's what I heard. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

In *Ankara Oyun Havaları* dance, while men dance with *kaşık* (wooden spoons), women dance with *zil* (finger cymbals). Although women can easily learn general figures of arm and hip movements over time, not many women can play the *zil* and execute it properly. As can be seen in the experience reported by a *konsomatris* woman in the quotation above, being able to perform these general figures is not sufficient, and a customer can demean a woman, triggering her to perfect her practice. Thus, learning this dance practice also becomes a pressure on *konsomatris* women.

¹⁸ The word *alem*, which literally means "universe," "world," or "realm", is used to refer to the pavyon environment.

I love *oyun*, I mean, I love *Ankara Oyun Havası*. I didn't know a thing, Tuğçe. I mean, how to play the zil or how to do the *oyun*, I watched it once or something. My God, women are dancing, like slowly. I never do the fast *oyun*. Everyone knows me in Maltepe and they would never put me up for a fast *oyun*. I don't wiggle my hips or do twerk-like things with my butt. I'm more like into *köy havası*, I mean, into Ankara's *seymen*¹⁹ culture. I directly learned that. For example, there was [X]²⁰ in the *alem*, she got married now. You wouldn't find her on Instagram, either. She's a woman who's been in this *alem* for 30 years. I mean, think about it, she showed me [how]. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

During my research, I witnessed different practices regarding women learning how to dance. One of them is experienced *konsomatris* women who had worked for years teaching the newcomers, as displayed above. Another is a practice that I will further examine later: women who do the *boş oyun* (empty dance) on stage during the early hours when customers are just starting to fill the venue, learning over time by practicing on their own. In the practice of women teaching each other, as stated by the *konsomatris* woman quoted above, young women who are new to the *konsomatris* work learn from older women who have been working for a long time both the *oyun* and the *racon* (meaning other practices in the workings of the *Pavyon* environment), as in a type of mentorship. This *konsomatris* woman mentions that since the older *konsomatris* woman liked her and how she presented herself, she taught her many things. She learned from that woman's dance style from herself, and within her identity as *oyuncu kız*, she chose a dancing practice that is slower and closer to a certain category of *Ankara Oyun Havaları* dancing instead of the "fast" and more erotic dance style that sometimes includes twerk-like figures. By doing so, she sets herself apart from other *konsomatris* women who perform erotic dances during "fast" *oyuns*. Therefore, the "dancer" identity includes tools to reduce the sexuality inherent in the *konsomatris* work. However, learning the dance is not the only challenge of this *oyun* practice, where women face the pressure of sexuality and position themselves strategically to reduce it. In the following subsection, I will delve further into *oyun* practice to have a deeper discussion on this issue.

¹⁹ The terms *köy havası* and *seymen kültürü* refers to certain cultures within *Ankara Oyun Havaları* and these *oyuns* are danced with slow figures.

²⁰ The woman's name is subtracted by the author for confidentiality purposes.

5.1.1. *Pavyon* Stage as Chess Board and its Pawns: Dance in *Konsomatris* Work

The live music in the *Pavyon* starts at 8:30 PM. Between 8:30 and 9:30 PM, *konsomatris* women first arrive at the *Pavyon*, get ready in their backstage room and then move into the main hall. Around 10 PM, the number of customers starts to increase visibly. During these moments, lighter music genres such as arabesque are played, which is more suitable for listening while enjoying drinks instead of dancing. These music selections accompany the customers while they do not yet prefer to dance on the stage but continue drinking to get into the mood for dancing. The timing of the transition from this kind of slow music to danceable tunes can vary

Figure 5: The bracelet given to the konsomatris women for dancing in the oyun



Source: Sent by the *konsomatris* woman to the author

based on factors such as the crowd density in the *Pavyon* and whether it is a weekday or weekend. Afterward, more lively music begins, inviting dancers onto the stage. As

time progresses, the stage becomes more animated, and aside from brief breaks, *oyun* continues on the stage ceaselessly.

In the practice of buying *oyun*, which is the only time customers go up on the stage and dance, customers pay a price based on the number of women they dance with per *oyun*. Meanwhile, the *konsomatris* women receive a bracelet²¹ (*bilezik*) after each *oyun* to keep track of how many *oyun* they danced that night. At the end of the day, the women hand over these bracelets to the *şef garson*²² waiting at the door, who oversees this process, and their daily earnings are calculated this way. As of August 2023²³, the price for one *oyun* is 130 Turkish liras, and while the *konsomatris* woman receives 50 liras out of this money, the *Pavyon* management takes 60. One *oyun* consists of two segments: first, two songs are performed, lasting 6-7 minutes, and only the drinks consumed by the customers are brought to the stage. Then, another two songs, again lasting 6-7 minutes, are played. The total duration of one *oyun* amounts to be around 15 minutes.

An employee is responsible for organizing the *oyun* practice on stage called “stage *komi*”²⁴. Customers who wish to dance an *oyun* on stage have their names collected by the stage *komi*, forming a sort of queue. However, this queue does not actually follow the order they signed up for the *oyun*. Those who enlist the most women to join them on stage are placed at the forefront of the line. This results in competition

²¹ Konsomatris women receive different bracelets for their two different money-earning practices: drinking and dancing. Some konsomatris women choose to carry these bracelets on their wrists throughout the night while others prefer to keep them in their purses. According to the accounts by the konsomatris women I interviewed, women who like vanity wear the bracelets on their wrists, whereas women who do not like showing off collect them in their purses.

²² Chief waiters (*Şef garson*) are employees who are hierarchically positioned below the manager in the *Pavyon*, above the waiters and page(*komi*). There are organizational duties such as whether the hostess women come to work and deal with the problems that may arise while working.

²³ After the May 2023 general elections in Turkey, in June, the minimum wage was set at a monthly net amount of 11,402.32 TRY, and the lowest salary of a civil servant was determined to be 22,017 TRY. Since then, prices in the nightlife sector have also increased significantly due to the price raises on alcoholic beverages implemented by the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*-AKP). Therefore, I chose to use the current prices in my analysis instead of those I encountered during my field research. Moreover, from this point on, I will report the prices in the *pavyons* in *Ulus*. I observed the prices in *Maltepe pavyons* to be slightly higher. For instance, the price for an *oyun* is 130 TRY in *Ulus*, while 150 TRY in *Maltepe*.

²⁴ *Komi*, in Turkish, literally means a page helping out the waitstaff in restaurants. Within the *pavyon* environment, this employee is traditionally called *çökçü*.

among customers, leading to a practice called *çoklu* (multiple) *oyun*, where a large number of people dance on the stage at the same time. At the beginning of each

Figure 6: The checkered stage of a pavyon



Source: The author

oyun, the men who will come up to dance are announced by the musicians on the stage. Following this, the names of the *konsomatris* women who will join them are also announced. If customers do not have specific preferences on which woman they will dance with or wish for additional women to join them, announcements such as “three available ladies” are made to call more women to the stage. Then, the customers indicate to the stage *komi* the style of *oyun* they wish to do, meaning how they want the *konsomatris* women and themselves to be positioned on the stage. This way, everyone takes their place on the stage, and the *oyun* commences. Within this context, another significant aspect of the *oyun* practice comes to light: male customers reproducing their hegemony by enlisting the highest number of *konsomatris* women, which has led to the creation of *çoklu oyun* practice, and demanding a specific dancing layout or, in short, by way of their entertainment consumption. However, how do the *konsomatris* women themselves experience these practices?

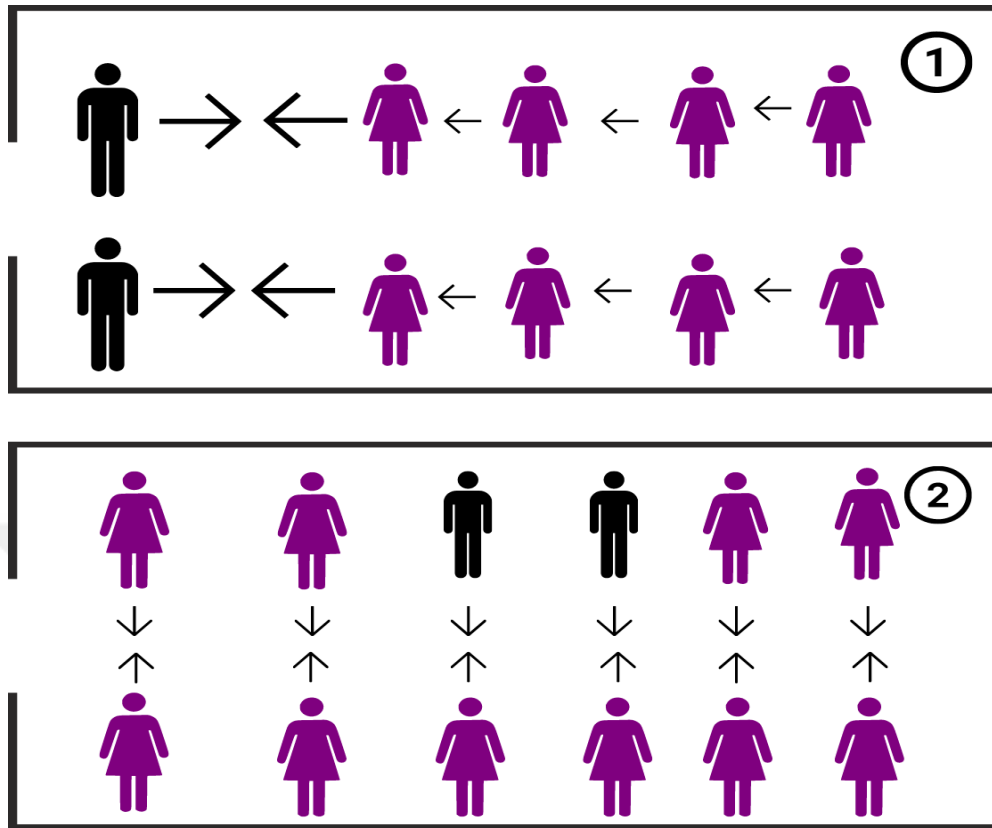
Pavyon is like chess for me, a place like a game of chess. Sometimes, I feel like a pawn there. (...) You know when I say “perceive us as pawns,” I mean, I really feel like a pawn there sometimes. For example, on stage, have you

noticed that the stage is always like checkered, divided? It always seems like a chessboard to me when we dance there. It feels like we are pawns each time we dance. For example, it feels like we're putting on a display, like how a knight moves in an L-shape. And then when you checkmate, you move diagonally. That's how you display yourself there, you know... (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

The excerpt above is from an interview I conducted with a *konsomatris* woman. The answer she provided when I asked her how she would describe the *Pavyon* was quite striking for me. She portrayed the venue as a place where men could have fun, spending time with the women they want, and thus a place where the focal point of the entertainment is male subjects as customers. This was an answer I was expecting; however, the way how the first images that came to her mind were the squares, how these squares reminded her of a chessboard, and how she equates herself with the most passive and the least valuable piece on the board (pawn) added a new dimension to my understanding of the gender and power dynamics within the *Pavyon* setting.

Later, when I was present at the *Pavyon* as an observer, I began to focus more on the stage. Initially, for me, women dancing on the stage was simply an act of commodifying the female body while creating a fun atmosphere within the venue. And *konsomatris* women dancing with the men was a practice of ensuring that men have more fun by accompanying them during the dance. I had noticed that different combinations and numbers of women and men were involved in the *oyuns* on the stage, but I kept postponing the necessary contemplation on this matter. Ultimately, the music never stopped in the *Pavyon*, and through music and dance, a continuous flow was already established. Therefore, among this continuous flow of entertainment practice, I used to maintain my focus on the scattered and private spaces within the public space of the *Pavyon*, which are the tables. However, this narrative made me realize that dancing is a significant part of the *konsomatris* identity, and I need to further contemplate and explore the interaction *konsomatris* women experience on the stage when they dance with or without men besides the interaction experienced by them at the tables alone with customers. In this account, while male subjects are visible and resemble important chess pieces like the knight, making strategic moves to achieve checkmate, the *konsomatris* women are passive. Taking a closer look at this narrative:

Figure 7: The two dominant layouts for çoklu oyun



Source: The author

Imagine, like how to say, in there, it's like constantly being a spare piece that a person wants. How can I explain it? A person dancing with the one he wants. There, you generally dance with the woman you like. You sit with the woman you like. It's a selective situation for men. It's not a selective situation for us. I mean, we can't choose men, but men can choose us. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

In general, men go up to the stage with the names of one or more women with whom they wish to dance on their minds. However, to get ahead in the line for the *oyun*, they need to say the names of more *konsomatris* women. *Sazcıs* (*Pavyon* musicians) announce the names of the women with whom the men want to dance, and those women come up to the stage. The musician announces the remaining number of women with phrases such as "five more available women," and those women also go up to the stage. The feeling of being a "spare piece" conveyed by the woman quoted above begins at this point. A hierarchy emerges between women as those the customers want to dance with and those the customers are made to dance with by the *Pavyon* so that they can buy *oyun* in the first place. While some women come up on

the stage as the “preferred (desirable)” ones, others are brought to the stage as “spare pieces” due to the man’s desire to reassert his hegemony and the *Pavyon*’s profit-oriented policy. At this point, the customer expresses the layout he prefers during the *oyun*. While there are different arrangements based on the number of women and men on the stage, I identified and later discussed with the *konsomatris* women two dominant *oyun* layouts in the *Pavyon* environment, as illustrated in Figure 4. The difference between these layouts lies in how the women are positioned in relation to the men or, more precisely, how the men position them. In the first layout, men usually place the women they want to dance with in front of them, and the women at the forefront are positioned with their faces turned towards the men while the rest of the women have their backs to each other. In the second layout, men have their preferred *konsomatris* woman in front of them again. However, this time, women also dance facing each other. In both layouts, the hierarchy mentioned above between the women who are preferred by the men for dancing and those who are not is visible. Nevertheless, this experience seems to be lighter in the second layout, as reported by a *konsomatris* woman:

I see the second one as someone who genuinely enjoys dancing. The first one you showed is 6,7,8 ladies in front of two men, ladies dancing only for them. It’s nothing but a show-off, in my opinion. (...) You showed another arrangement. This makes more sense as an *oyun*. That’s how it’s supposed to be. After all, you take [women] to the stage for *oyun*. Well, if you will dance, why take us with you? Why waste the ones in the back if you’re going to show off? I mean, we’re dying back there. We get bored, too, you know? Sorry, but you get really exhausted seeing everyone’s butt. We’re already dancing girl-to-girl all night long. In the end, we’re going up there to dance with men. There’s no need to see everyone’s back. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

As seen above, the *konsomatris* woman describes the first *oyun* layout as a “show-off” and finds being at the back boring. Stating they go up to the stage to dance with men, not women, she essentially emphasizes the idea of not being preferred. Indeed, between these two forms of *oyun*, I also observed the hierarchy among women based on being more desirable as well as a different hierarchy established by men over all women. For instance, in the first layout, described as a “show-off,” men tend to suddenly turn face to face and dance together, performing the dance as their own entertainment. Additionally, they may also display their hegemony to the hall, established by being able to bring the most women to the stage through practices such as hugging each other on the stage or raising a glass to the friends at their table.

In the second layout, with practices such as partner swapping, men can stretch the hierarchy established among women based on “desirability.” Even without this, this layout allows women to dance face to face rather than dancing “to each other’s butt” in a row. As these practices increase during the dance, undermining the abovementioned hierarchies, the layout becomes less and less strict, and towards the end of the *oyun*, people become mixed with each other. Thus, instead of men declaring their hegemony to the hall and women dancing in front of them as “spare pieces,” the image of a group of people enjoying themselves together on stage emerges. Nevertheless, this image, too, is insufficient to eliminate the inequalities inherent in the *oyun* and the pressure it puts on the *konsomatris* women due to both the way *oyun* starts and other underlying dynamics.

Usually, I never dance in group *oyuns* [*çoklu oyun*]. Because I don’t like it. It feels like showing off to me, I don’t like it. If someone really wants it, like even if they sign up for a group *oyun*, let’s say there are two [men] and they give the names of ten women. Let them bring two women [to the stage]. Let the rest wait off-stage, earn their money, get their bracelets, and leave. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

The *konsomatris* woman quoted above finds it fairer if the women who are not selected or “desired” to dance together but whose names were given by the man to get ahead within the group *oyun* practice stay off-stage and get their bracelets nonetheless. This way, she believes, there will be no “spare” women on the stage while they still earn their money. However, she overlooks a key point here. For the *Pavyon* management, having as many women as possible on the stage for *oyun* is not only about earning money from the *çoklu oyun* itself. It is also a marketing strategy to make further money by showcasing women on stage for customers to choose whom they will call to their table to sit with them. Therefore, women need to stay on stage during the *çoklu oyun*. With this in mind, I will elaborate on the importance of the presence of *konsomatris* women on the stage.

5.1.1.2. Konsomatris women as a window dressing on the stage

The girl who goes on stage is always at an advantage. Why is she at an advantage? [Because] the stage is a display window. For example, the guy sits here. He doesn’t see the girl sitting below, but he sees her when she goes on stage. The girl who goes on stage is always at an advantage, she displays herself to everyone on stage.

Generally, when you go on stage, you get noticed more. People notice you more. It's difficult to be noticed in this big place. You go up on stage, the guy notices you and says, "I want this woman, bring her." Even if he is in the most distant corner, he can see the stage. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

Women usually arrive at the *Pavyon* between 8:30 PM and 9:30 PM, and these are the hours when customers are just starting to fill the hall. This period generally lasts until around 11 or 12 o'clock when customers finally fill the venue and the *Pavyon* starts getting livelier. During this 2-3 hour period, the *konsomatris* women remain in a state of waiting. While waiting, *oyuncu* (dancing) *konsomatris* women dance on the stage. As mentioned before, this practice is called *boş oyun* (empty dance) as it does not involve the customers, and it is used as practice time by women who do not dance *Ankara Oyun Havaları* properly to improve themselves by dancing with other women. However, this is not the main motivation of this *oyun*. The primary purpose of this *oyun* is to display and advertise the *konsomatris* women working that night to the customers while keeping the atmosphere in the hall lively. It is essentially a marketing strategy.

On the other hand, not every *konsomatris* woman has to be *oyuncu*. While sitting at the tables is obligatory for the women, *oyun* is not. Those *konsomatris* women who do not dance and thus cannot benefit from the advertisement dancing provides move around from table to table at the beginning of the night to show themselves. They greet and welcome customers, and if they see familiar customers, they engage in small talk and chat with these customers briefly.

You're talking about that non-*oyuncu* girl. She moves around certain tables in the hall. She says, "welcome" or things like that. If a customer wants to call her over, he does. Our *şef* friends also help. (Personal interview with a *Pavyon* manager, 2023)

The *şefs* come up to us and say, "Just walk around." Since I don't go around shaking hands, saying hello and stuff, they say, "At least walk around like you're taking a stroll, let people see you, your stature." I mean, he doesn't say, "let people stare at your ass." Instead, he says, "let people see you." (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

When I first noticed this act by women, I thought they were welcoming the customers or guests as part of their role as hostesses of the establishment. However,

after my conversation with the *konsomatris* woman quoted above, I realized that this practice is beyond just a simple greeting. It is a marketing strategy prompted by the *Pavyon* management. The intention was for the women whose “asses cannot be stared at” on stage to be seen walking around and desired by the customers. The *konsomatris* woman who described this practice as such in the above quote is aware that it is a marketing strategy, and thus, she is uncomfortable with being told to do it by the *şef*. However, based on the statement quoted below, we can see that this practice is perceived differently by a different *konsomatris* woman.

I’m not someone who earns as much as other ladies. I work with a bit different strategy. I have my own working plan, my own principle. For instance, you must have seen when you came to the *Pavyon*. All the ladies go around table by table, say, “Welcome,” and shake hands. I never shake hands with anyone, they should come and shake hands with me. I mean, what’s going on? I’m the one who comes after all the preparation, makeup, showering, thinking about what to wear every day, and getting all dressed up. They should say, “Hi, we’re here.” etc., and greet me before sitting down at their tables. I will never go around to shake someone’s hand. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

This *konsomatris* woman sees herself as a woman getting ready for a date and says, “I have prepared so much, I am the woman, I will not go to anyone, they should come to me.” This was actually her answer after she stated that every *konsomatris* woman has a different way of working in the *Pavyon*, and then I asked her about her way of working. This *konsomatris* woman was not *oyuncu*, she was new to the Ankara *Pavyons*, and she did not know how to dance, nor did she want to. As seen above, she was also rejecting the remaining practice of displaying herself through greeting and shaking hands. By rejecting the two existing marketing strategies in the *Pavyon*, she developed a work strategy for herself. This strategy, in a way, allowed her to portray herself as a mysterious and cool woman, someone who did not engage with everyone to earn more money. This way, over time, she established a system where she only sat with 2 or 3 tables. As these tables were usually high-spending ones, she was able to interact with fewer tables while still earning sufficient money.

5.1.2. Konsomatris Women at the Tables of the Pavyon: Hostessing

On one of the nights I went into the toilets in the *Pavyon* to introduce myself more comfortably to *konsomatris* women (as I had the chance to be alone with them there) and ask if they would like to meet with me for an interview, there were three women

inside. As soon as I introduced myself and told them that I was conducting a research on *konsomatris* women and that I wanted to talk to them, one of the women gave me her number and said:

I'd meet with you again, but let me tell you what to write in advance. I was throwing up inside just now because I have to throw up so that I can drink. I vomit every night, and I have serious stomach issues. I have the beginning of stomach cancer. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

These sentences, which I heard in the early stages of my research, were very striking for me and, at the same time, made me realize that I needed to focus on the alcohol aspect of the *konsomatris* work more than I initially planned. According to the limited data I had gathered before this incident, I believed that *konsomatris* women did not have to drink in the *Pavyon* and could consume non-alcoholic beverages. Then, why did this woman choose to drink alcohol despite having health problems? Keeping these in mind, I paid more attention to the issue of alcohol in my subsequent interviews and also made it the central question of this subsection. I will now examine the practice of hostessing in detail to find answers.

When a customer purchases the service of having *konsomatris* women sit at their tables and accompany them while they drink, it is called *kons yapmak* (doing kons). To do this, the customer needs to pay for the *konsomatris* woman's drink as well, and this drink she drinks is called *vol*. The *konsomatris* woman has a maximum of ten minutes to finish a *vol*, and regardless of the type of alcohol she drinks, one *vol* costs the customer 250 TRY. While the *konsomatris* woman gets 100 TRY of this money, the *Pavyon* takes 150 TRY. The manager of the *Pavyon* claims that in this pricing method, the *Pavyon* and the woman earn equally, and the extra 50 liras that the *Pavyon* receives in between is there to cover the cost of the woman's drink. According to this rationale, it is the woman sitting at the customer's table that creates the surplus value of the *vol* as a commodity that originally costs 50 TRY. Thus, when the woman pays this 50 TRY for her own drink from her earnings out of this practice, the surplus value of 200 TRY is shared equally between the *Pavyon* and the *konsomatris* woman.

As I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, *oyun* is also a profit-making tool in the *Pavyon*. However, considering how it is used as an advertisement tool for the practice hostessing, and the ultimate goal is to increase the consumption of drinks

at the table, the primary profit-making tool in the *Pavyon* is, in fact, the *vol*. However, the issue does not end with the woman sitting at the table. The consumption at the table needs to be sustained. Here, the responsibility falls to the *konsomatris* woman, with the management and assistance of the *şef garson*. Within this context, the term *masa yürütmek* (running the table) means the *konsomatris* woman sustaining the consumption practice at the table, as explained above.

Look, don't let it confuse you. It's like this. The boss never wants the girl to be too drunk to drink. But he doesn't want her to be too sober to be a slut, either. You know that sweet tipsiness in between. The boss always wants to see you like that. He wants to see you as someone who's so bubbly, who can be saucy around the hall, who can like flirt. Or if you're very uncomfortable when a man puts his hand on your shoulder while you are sober, you can tolerate it when you're tipsy. I mean, your tolerance level increases a little bit more when you are drunk. Of course, this varies from person to person. For some people, their tolerance level decreases very much when they are drunk. These people become much more aggressive. I think it is all about the level of tolerance. (...) I mean, it is all about the person. Think of it like this: you go to a wedding, you don't feel like dancing when you are sober, the wedding seems very boring, you drink two glasses of *rakı*, and then you feel like dancing. In the same way, when you are sober, you dance out of necessity. When you are drunk, you dance for fun. I mean, it doesn't carry such big meanings underneath. I mean, everyone attributes a lot of meaning to it. I work with alcohol, I work without alcohol, there's no meaning in that. It's all about adapting to the atmosphere. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

At first glance, it seems that *konsomatris* women are free to consume their *vol* in non-alcoholic beverages. We can see that they display agency in this regard. However, as the empirical evidence in this chapter will demonstrate, this agency is not independent of the different dynamics of the *Pavyon*. Women's agency regarding what they drink is supported and even demanded by the *Pavyon* management because it increases the profit. Suppose a woman drinks non-alcoholic drinks instead of consuming alcohol. In that case, the *Pavyon* makes more profit from the 150 liras it receives as non-alcoholic drinks cost them less than alcoholic ones. Moreover, having non-alcoholic drinks, the *konsomatris* women would not be "stuffed," as the *Pavyon* manager puts it, and would be able to drink more. Thus, more *vol* can be sold. According to the *Pavyon* manager's account, he is uncomfortable that women want to consume alcohol under these conditions. He insists that both the women and the *Pavyon* will earn more if they do not drink. At this point, however, the *konsomatris* woman works amid three different dynamics: the customer who

demands her to drink, the *Pavyon* management who demands her not to drink, and the inherent practices of the *konsomatris* work that lead her to drink alcohol. Since I have already dealt with the demands of the *Pavyon* management, I will now discuss the demands of the customers from the women and the practice of drinking alcohol that develops due to the nature of *konsomatris* work.

It depends on how stupid the man is. It changes according to the man's knowledge of the *Pavyon*, his knowledge of drinking, his knowledge of the manners. For example, there are some tables, these are men who run a lot of illegitimate things²⁵. I mean, there are many illegal men. Most of them are men who sit the woman next to them and say, "Drink whatever you want, it doesn't matter." In this business, the man's education level, or things like that, is not important. It's all about character. Some men come and say, "You will drink alcohol, my friend." Some guys don't interfere. Some men say, "You will drink alcohol," but don't understand even if you drink water with them. You figure it out after a certain amount of experience. You act according to that. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

Whether or not the *konsomatris* woman drinks alcohol at the table apparently depends on the customer's demand or, in other words, whether he leaves space for the women to use their own agency. In the quote above, after implying subtly that this is related to income level, saying men engaged in illegitimate activities do not care whether she drinks or not, the *konsomatris* woman claims that the issue is essentially related to character rather than anything else. Based on my other data, I will also follow the line drawn by the *konsomatris*. First of all, engaging in informal and illegitimate work means that the client earns much more money than he can earn in a formal and legitimate work. In this way, the *konsomatris* woman imply that men with a lot of money do not mind whether they get their money's worth when they pay the same price for a non-alcoholic *vol* (e.g. fruit juice) a *konsomatris* woman drinks. I have not interviewed a *Pavyon* customer who is engaged in illegitimate businesses (and even if I had, it is doubtful they would have revealed it to me). However, when I asked a *Pavyon* customer with a limited income who has been going to *Pavyons* for about 30 years by borrowing money from his relatives, such as

²⁵ Illegitimate is a word used in the pavyon environment and Turkish society, in general, to refer to people engaged in illegal activities such as arms trafficking, smuggling of historical artifacts, organ mafia, and drug trafficking who earn much income this way. Thus, in the pavyon environment, this term is widely used as an umbrella term to describe the illegal-informal business lines in which some customers are involved, and these customers can spend considerable money in the pavyon.

his sister, about the money-related problems that may arise in the *Pavyon*, he gave me the following answer:

The most in-demand thing in that ‘shop’ is the lady. If you cause a problem for the lady, they take you to the manager’s office and run you down completely. The manager has to act according to the pulse of the place. [At this point, I ask, “What kind of trouble you can create for the lady, for example?”] Some dirty things happen on the table, I don’t know, the woman pretends to drink but then spills the alcohol on the floor and you see it. What gives! We pay for that alcohol, you know a brawl starts, something happens there. Either they remove the woman from the table or they do dirty to the man. The customer is always in the second plan. What’s a customer like? You’re there as much as your money. If you have a lot of money there, you’re the *ağa* [lord], you’re the pasha. If you don’t have money, they say fuck off. (Personal interview with a *Pavyon* customer, 2022)

The customer quoted above cares about the price he pays for the surplus value added to the *vol* and wishes to get his money’s worth; thus, he wants the woman to drink real alcohol. The *konsomatris* woman, on the other hand, develops a strategy of pouring it on the floor at the point where she does not want to drink it, and when the customer sees this, he objects. The consequences of this incident vary according to the economic state of the customer. If someone without money causes trouble by demanding real alcohol consumption, his demands will be ignored, the customer above complains. In this case, however, the management cannot be said to prioritize women; instead, they deprioritize and ignore the customer. But what if a wealthy customer protests? At this point, the woman can be subjected to physical violence, as can be seen in the quote below by a *konsomatris* woman. In other words, the *Pavyon* management is positioned in favor of neither the customer nor the woman, but only the profit they make.

I saw a lot of violence against the girls in the *Pavyon* as well. Like, when girls got drunk and messed up or did something wrong to a customer. For example, a serious table, a table that always comes, then the girl was disrespectful to the customer. I saw them beating her in front of my eyes until blood came out of her mouth and nose. (...) I saw the girl beaten until blood came out of her mouth. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

At this point, I should also touch upon how one of the *konsomatris* women says that it does not depend on income, but on the character of the customer. Even though a customer does not mind the price he pays for the *vol*, he may nevertheless demand that the woman drink alcohol. Here, what the *konsomatris* woman call “character” is

actually the nature of the customer's demand. Is it enough for the customer to have the woman on his table and accompany him while he drinks or does he want more?

As I say, it depends on the person. Both on the customer and on the lady. For example, I'm a customer, and you're sitting next to me, right? [I say,] "Brother, bring this girl an unopened Miller, and I'll see it." You say you want to drink water or fruit juice. And I tell you, "If you drink, you can sit. If not, get up." Why? To get you drunk and fondle you, like, to put the make on you. That's the point. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

Some customers say you have to drink alcohol, that's it. Like, the man's aim is to get you drunk. He wants you to get drunk, so he wants you to drink alcohol. There are some customers who say, "You don't have to drink anything, drink water if you want." You come across people like that, you come across people like this. It's all about the customer. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

The only drinks customers can be absolutely sure that they contain alcohol are beers that are brought to the table unopened. Therefore, if the customer wants the *konsomatris* woman to drink, he asks the waiter to bring an unopened beer and open it on the table. For other drinks, such as whisky, the customer pays a high price and has a bottle opened. Again, he demands that the woman's drink come from this bottle. However, even if the waiter does as he is told, he can put less on the woman's glass with certain hand tricks. Nevertheless, one way or another, the woman has to consume alcohol in these scenarios. When the customer does not have such a request, the woman's drink comes from inside, separately from the customer's drink at the table, that is, without alcohol. Apart from their economic concerns, the customers' motivations in this matter are shaped by the desire to intoxicate the woman by getting her to drink alcohol. They wish to take advantage of her "vulnerable" state created by her intoxication, hoping that she will be more open to sexual interaction this way. Returning to the beginning of this section, the most important strategy developed by the women when they are made to drink alcohol becomes vomiting.

I used to work that way as well. Here's how it works. Now, the man says, "You have to drink alcohol." Or, now, you know there are bottles, like 20cl bottles, 35cl bottles, 50cl bottles. Let's say the guy opened me a bottle of 35cl. Well, now, I can drink the 35cl bottle, but I can't continue afterward. If I know this, I'll drink the first glass, the second glass, and after the third glass, I'll go and make myself throw up. I'll come back and keep drinking. Why? To drink more. That's the logic. It happens. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

The customer above is most likely a table with a good economic status, that is, a table that can open bottles and that the *Pavyon* does not want to give up. Thus, the *konsomatris* woman has to “run the table” (*masayı yürütmek*), and the way to “run the table” for the woman is the practice of vomiting in these instances. This is a very common practice among the *konsomatris* women. However, over time, drinking alcohol, vomiting, and continuing to drink again, considering the additional effect of heavy smoking during these processes, cause these women to experience severe stomach ailments. But despite all this, why do some women want to drink alcohol even when the customer does not require it?

As I said, women who consume too much alcohol like this... Usually most women already believe that they need to drink alcohol to work. She say she can't talk to men without alcohol. Most of them are like that, their habits are like that, that's how they operate. They deal with men in that way. Some of them even find the men sullen, like, some of them say that the men are sullen compared to themselves. They were sullen to them in their speech, in their behavior. As I said, I can get along [with men] without drinking alcohol. They, on the other hand, can't get along without drinking alcohol, they need to drink alcohol in order to get along. They definitely have two or three drinks each time before going to a table so that they can deal with the men. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

You know, as long as there's booze, as long as we're a little bit drunk, we can talk. Otherwise, you can't talk anything. You are dull. You think about your own troubles, but at least when you have a few drinks, like, you can put your troubles aside and have a conversation. Because, imagine, you have many troubles in your condition, but you have to go there and laugh. You have to entertain the men there. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

As can be seen from these quotations, some women adopt alcohol consumption as a strategy that helps them be alone with the customers at the table in the *Pavyon* and talk to them. They state that this is the only way they can tolerate this job.

[Talking about the difficulties she experienced while getting used to wearing a dress] I said, “Why does a person put themselves on display, or why does the man stare so much?” I felt bad at first, but then I could barely get used to it after a month. I could relax, I continued. I absolutely couldn't get along with the men at the time, by the way. Okay, I like talking, but I don't know what to tell the men, and I was able to relax and talk to the men after about exactly half a year, half a year. At that time, I couldn't drink alcohol. They were ordering alcohol. Then, I slowly got used to it. Then I started drinking alcohol, I started to tell my problems with alcohol. Then, when I got used to alcohol, that is, I got used to it in my body, I said, “So, we could get along with people without alcohol as well.” I felt like that. Then, I started to get along with people

without alcohol. And then I ended up in Ankara. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

The woman quoted above, who shared her experiences regarding alcohol use, started working as a *konsomatris* woman at the age of 18 and has been working for four years. Spending the first two years of this period in *Pavyons* in different cities of Turkey, she has been working as a *konsomatris* in Ankara *Pavyons* for the last two years. While describing her experiences, she states that at the beginning, she had difficulty wearing attractive outfits and did not even understand why she felt obliged to display herself and why men were interested in this. While describing her process of negotiating with her job as a *konsomatris*, she states that it took one month to accept wearing attractive clothes and then six months to “get used to” chatting with men, that is, to do the hostessing. According to her account, she had to “get used to” drinking alcohol, and as she became more and more able to talk with men with the help of alcohol, she realized she could do this without alcohol as well and stopped drinking. When she says, “I ended up in Ankara,” she claims having reached a professional point in her job and now works at the highest point in Turkey’s *Pavyon* sector, Ankara, after she could do this job without alcohol. Indeed, this woman, whom I have met several times for months, with whom I have been to the *Pavyon* twice, whose *Pavyon* and private life I have listened to many times in her own words, works without alcohol most evenings and only drinks when she wants to have fun.²⁶ However, what do women who cannot sustain this and cannot negotiate with this job experience?

Instead of sitting next to people and dealing with them like this, I was aiming to show myself on stage and cover that wage with the *oyun*, and that’s how I was managing. I was getting my wage, I was enjoying myself. [I ask, “Was it easier for you to do it with the *oyun* then?”] Of course. You don’t have to deal with anyone, think about it. I mean, you don’t witness stupid-ass conversations. “Who brought you here?” I was saying, “I came on my own two feet.” “No, no, you must have a pimp.” What are you going to do? Become his partner? (...) I mean, the reason why I worked by drinking alcohol was this: At that time, fuck the alcohol, I couldn’t work without taking drugs. I couldn’t go on stage

²⁶ When I say that this woman (and a few other women) can do this as an occupation, I do not wish to glamorize the *konsomatris* work or to say that it is a job that can be done when one is in the mood for it. Indeed, the woman quoted here is someone who was raised in the social services system. She recently won the lawsuit she filed against the relevant administration of the Turkish state and will be appointed as a civil servant, which is a benefit she should receive from growing up in one of these state facilities. She is very happy that she will quit her *konsomatris* job to become a civil servant and does not even mind not earning as much money as she does now. She expresses that she is very tired despite her age.

without taking pills. (...) After that, my goose was cooked. In everyone's eyes, I was a pill popper, a pothead. I mean, even though the entire environment is so illegitimate, girls who do drugs would not be very popular. Like, for example, [the guys want you to] be a girl who doesn't do drugs, a girl who goes between home and work, but also goes to the soup place with him. That's how smart girls portray themselves. While, the stupid me, I pop pills, I go on stage, yell out "Wooooooooo!" dancing, and so on. So we advertised everything. In Ulus, in Maltepe, I got a bad name as a pill popper, pothead, etc. People stopped giving me much work. I started to have symptoms on my face and in my eyes that showed drug use. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

This woman quoted above starts to work as a *konsomatris* in the city where she was born and grew up to get the opportunities that her family could not offer her and to "go to the shopping mall and spend money comfortably," as she puts it. While explaining her motivations for starting this work, she says, "I already drink and have fun, why shouldn't I make money from it?" However, after years of working, she became unable to work without alcohol and then without drugs. Firstly, she cannot tolerate sitting at the tables, so the stage, the *oyun*, becomes an escape for her. Then, she becomes unable to dance without using drugs either, and she states that no one gave her a job at that moment because of her growing drug use. In fact, the issue here appears to be whether she can continue this as an "occupation" or not because the *Pavyon* management is not really interested in the alcohol or drug consumption of the *konsomatris* women. What they are interested in is whether the *konsomatris* woman can "run the table" despite all these. The main issue for the *Pavyon* management is the reproduction of the *Pavyon* through the act of "running the table". I have already mentioned that the responsibility of "running the table" lies on the shoulders of the women in the *Pavyon* with the management and assistance of *şefs*. Whether or not to drink alcohol is one aspect of this. Now let us delve further into the private areas in the public space of the *Pavyon*, which are the tables: What are the main forms of communication that the customers expect from the *konsomatris* women at their table, and how do these demands shape the different *konsomatris* identities?

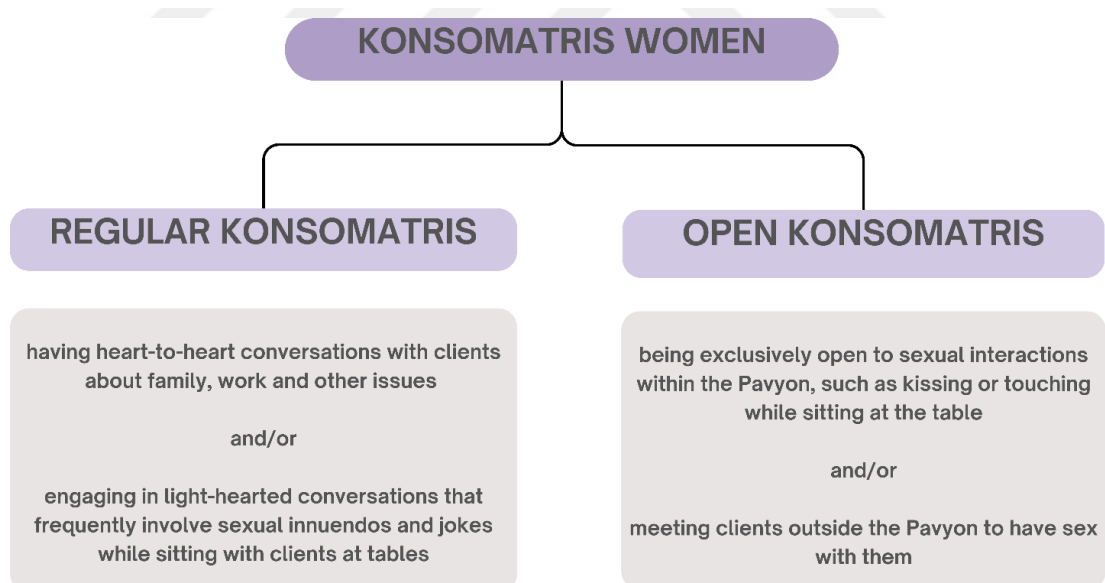
5.1.2.1. Divergent Manifestations of Konsomatris Women

It's really hard to be a woman in Turkey. Make this your title. It is very difficult to be a woman working in a *Pavyon* in Turkey. Maybe just say "*Pavyon*" because *Pavyon* is more difficult. *Pavyon* is really much more difficult than normal life. I mean, okay, everyone thinks that we earn money easily, but it's not easy at all. I wish you knew how many maniacs I deal with

until the morning, how many drunks, how many maniacs who try to grope me. It seems easy to everyone, but it's not easy. We have a lot of difficulties there. (...) You can't choose, you don't know, you don't know that the person who calls you over is that kind of person. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

Konsomatris women cannot choose with whom they will sit. Instead, another *Pavyon* employee does it for them: the *şef garson*. They have the critical task of matching the customers and the *konsomatris* women. When customers wish to have a *konsomatris* woman at their table, they send their requests to the *şef garsons*. The *şef garson* gets to know the customers and the *konsomatris* women over time and makes the right match. If the customer is satisfied with this service, they show their appreciation by tipping the *şef garson*. After the matching is completed and the woman is seated at the table with the customer, her responsibility of “running the table” begins. There are different “*konsomatris* roles” that the *konsomatris* women perform while “running the table.” These roles are formed by the demands of the customers and the different ways and degrees women fulfill these demands.

Figure 8: Different *Konsomatris* Identities



Source: The author

According to the accounts of the women, a term called “open *kons*” is used in the *Pavyon* to refer to the women who are open to being sexually intimate with men at the tables and/or the women who are open to having sex with the customers, meeting with them outside. The first association I made on my mind when I heard this concept was that if there are women called open *kons*, then there would be a “closed *kons*” who does not have sex, in contrast. However, when I discussed this with the

konsomatris women, they told me there is no such thing as closed *kons*. In fact, no concept can be used in contrast to open *kons*, and being a non-open *kons* is regular *konsomatris* work. In this context, while open *kons* is a concept encompassed by the *konsomatris* work, it was an anomaly to the *konsomatris* women I interviewed²⁷, and they did not want their job description to include being an open *kons*. As in the quotation below, although they rarely judge other *konsomatris* women who work this way, this can still become a whore stigma²⁸ they impose on each other. With this definition and the further questions I asked the women about the scope of their work and how they define and perform their work, I categorized and conceptualized two different *konsomatris* identities.

In the same way, no one can forcefully sit a woman there when she doesn't want to be touched. Then, you know what would this job turn into? In every establishment, there would be cheap women working, women who let you touch or finger them under the table, and also others like me. For example, I had a friend in the *Pavyon*, she's not good at talking, she kisses the customer. She's the kissing *kons*. I don't know how she can go to those tables and kiss everyone. That's what is easy for her. She can't talk, she kisses. I am a person of good conversation. But for example, the word I learnt in Ankara is *kaynatmak* (to gab), I am not a woman who gabs. I don't know how to gab. I like a levelheaded person with a strong conversation who knows what he is talking about. I'll sit and talk with him like I'm talking to you right now. He'll talk, I'll talk, I mean, a normal conversation. I'm someone who can talk like this. *Kaynatmak*, *kakara kikiri* (giggling sound in Turkish), I can't do it, I mean, it's been only 15 minutes since I sat with you, what can I gab with you about? (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

The first concept I examine is “regular *konsomatris*,” which corresponds to the standard *konsomatris* work of sitting at tables with customers, chatting with them, and accompanying their drinking. This practice is also divided into two. The practice of *kaynatmak*, described earlier in the chapter on dancing as the main distinguishing element of *Yeni Ankara Oyun Havalari*, is also the differentiating element here. Customers demand this *kaynatmak* service performed by the musicians in the public space of the *Pavyon*, which includes swearing and below-the-belt conversations, to continue at the private space of their table. At this point, to run the table, the *konsomatris* women are expected to have below-the-belt conversations with the

²⁷ As I have stated in my Methodology subsection, I was only able to interview women who identified themselves as “regular *konsomatris*” I did not have a chance to speak with any open *konsomatris* women.

²⁸ For detailed information on “whore stigma” see Pheterson (1993)

customers. Nevertheless, not every *konsomatris* can do this. The ones who cannot have these kinds of conversations talk about “more serious” issues and have heart-to-heart talks instead while sitting at the tables with the customers. As can be seen from the quote above, the *konsomatris* woman says that it is easy for this other *konsomatris* woman to kiss instead of talking, and at some point, she understands that she can only do her job in this way. However, after a certain point, when the dominant practice in a *Pavyon* becomes being an open *kons* and having sexual intimacy with the customers, it becomes threatening to the regular *konsomatris* women.

The reason why I left the *Pavyon* [X] for the last time was because, you know, when I said that our *Pavyon* [X] had gone bad, the girls started to give blowjobs at the tables. And I can see that, unfortunately I see that scene. I mean, sorry, but I see the guy ejaculating. There was this one girl, we call them open kons, you know, who can do everything at the table and all. She does everything, she touches the guy’s thing, she makes out with him, she lets him lick her neck, I mean, she does everything. One of the girls did it, I saw it, I mean I saw it, and then one of the şef garsons said, “it’s almost closing time, come on, I’ll write down one drink for you, sit down for five minutes, you don’t even have to talk.” I said okay. I went and got a big beer, they give two bracelets for those big beers, not the small Miller but the other one. I went and sat down, the man opened his arms, Tuğçe, unzipped his zip, took off his thing, and he said, “Come on, give me a blowjob.” Boy, was I furious! I saw it like that, I mean, I was disgusted, it’s disgusting. I already have one person in my life, and even he came before my eyes, I was disgusted. [I asked when this incident happened] Just last week, before I went on to work in the *Pavyon* [Y]. Then I took the beer bottle, what did I do, I hit his dick with the bottle. It didn’t break. I hit it on the table. Then, I said, “Damn this place, I can’t work here with you.” I mean, I don’t have to watch a woman’s disgusting behavior. How dare a customer [treat me like that]? (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

In the *Pavyon* referred to as X in the quotation, over time, the practice of being an open *konsomatris* has become widespread in the form of sexual intimacy at the tables inside the *Pavyon* as well as having sex with customers outside the *Pavyon*. This results in, as the incident reported by the *konsomatris* woman above, customers demanding this from every *konsomatris* in the venue. So much so that, as quoted above, after a customer receives oral sex from a *konsomatris* woman in the *Pavyon*, he requests another one from another *konsomatris*, and as soon as she arrives, he spreads his legs and shows his penis. According to the woman who gives this account, she reacted by slamming the bottle first on the man’s penis and then on the

table; however, a week before this incident, in the same *Pavyon*, another customer wanted to grope the breasts of a *konsomatris* woman. When the woman protested, he hit her in the face with the bottle and cut the side of her face almost up to her eye. After all of these incidents happening one after another, the *konsomatris* woman quoted above says what she experienced was the last straw. She went to the backstage room that night and told the other women she did not want to work there anymore and that they should raise their voices together. They agreed, and a significant number of the regular *konsomatris* women decided to leave that *Pavyon* and work in another place. Moreover, *Pavyon X* laid off the open *konsomatris* women for not saying something until that day. On the night of our interview, this woman showed me the countless missed calls on her mobile phone and told me they were still calling her to return to *Pavyon X*; however, she would not return. When I asked her why, she said she did not want to return to *Pavyon X* because it was now considered a Tele Bar²⁹. Therefore, labeling the *Pavyon X* as a Tele Bar, a place that directly sells sex, means that the customers who come there will now be demanding sex and that it is no longer a safe workplace for the regular *konsomatris* women. When I asked her if she had any information about the fate of the open *konsomatris* women whom the *Pavyon X* had laid off, she replied, “They would have gone to other *Pavyons* or Tele Bars that were open to this kind of work, where else would they go?” While saying these, she did not sympathize with these women. On the contrary, she thought that the reason for the sexual harassment and violence the regular *konsomatris* women face was the open *konsomatris* women rather than the customers and the dynamics of the *Pavyon* environment conducive to these incidents. Now, I will present the opinions of other regular *konsomatris* women I interviewed, who led me to the idea that this image of open *konsomatris* women is widespread among regular *konsomatris* women.

There is no such thing like having to do it there because if I don't accept it, there are many women who will accept it. I'm not going to lie. Because not everyone is the same, there are also women here who act by using their own bodies. Well, these women are the ones who turned this *Pavyon* world, this nightlife scene into what they are now. I mean, it's always this woman. [I ask what she means by this.] I mean, I think it's women who bring this perversion

²⁹ These bars, primarily located in Esat district of Ankara, are places where women directly engage in sexual intercourse with customers. When people in the pavyon environment wish to emphasize that pavyons do not provide any sexual services, they compare the pavyons to Tele Bars in this regard and say, “This is not a Tele Bar. Those who want sex should go there.”

because I know women who go on top of a man just to have one drink. Yes, and this starts to make the men perverted. Then they say, “She’s doing it, why don’t you?” He’s right, you know? He’s right. Some say, “Look, look at your friend.” You know, you can’t say that she is not your friend, we are always in the same environment, so we are all friends, but you can’t say, “We’re not friends. We are not the same”. I can’t explain it. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2022)

As can be seen, when the customers have physical intimacy with open *konsomatris* women and demand this from the regular *konsomatris* women as well, she blames the open *konsomatris* women while justifying the customer. Feeling uncomfortable with being defined as friends with her or the same as her, she establishes her identity as a regular *konsomatris*, being different from her. Accusing the open *konsomatris* women for the sexual demands of the customers and of disrupting the dynamics of the standard *Pavyon* environment, we can see that regular *konsomatris* women, too, approach open *konsomatris* women with the “whore stigma” and positions the open *konsomatris* woman who uses her body as her “other.” Thus, in negotiating with their job after the harassment they are exposed to, *konsomatris* women establish different identities by imposing the “whore stigma” on each other instead of blaming the customers, the real perpetrators of this harassment.

During all these, what is the attitude of the *Pavyon* management towards the customers harassing the *konsomatris* women as described above? Frankly speaking, it is not possible to point out a single attitude on this issue. The primary aim of the *Pavyon* managers and *şef garsons* is to sustain consumption and to maintain and increase profits and tips. As can be remembered from the *Pavyon X* example explained above, the *Pavyon* management can easily switch from a point where they tolerate the open *konsomatris* identity to a point where they fire these women in one stroke. Thus, *konsomatris* women stay mobilized between different *Pavyons* where they consider having more suitable working conditions. Building on this, I would like to discuss the impact of *Pavyon* management and *şef garsons* on this issue in more detail by sharing the experience of the *konsomatris* woman who changed the *Pavyon* she worked in during my study. Compared to the other women I interviewed, she had been working in the same *Pavyon* for a long time and had little mobilization. Therefore, I was surprised when she told me she had started working in a different *Pavyon*. I asked her why, and she only told me, “Because of the *masa bozan* (table-

spoiling) escorts, my love.” When I asked her to explain in more detail, she said the following:

You know, when girls are seeing other guys outside, the establishment doesn’t know about it, and the girl goes and sleeps with a guy and brings him to the *Pavyon* to make the table she wants. I’m not talking about that. For example, I’m working, I found a decent table, I’m sitting, chatting. The manager brings a girl. He says, “Brother, X (the name of the woman quoted here) doesn’t go out, doesn’t meet with the customers, doesn’t give a number, doesn’t drink soup³⁰. She just sits like that and leaves.” “I’ll get you a girl,” he says. “Take her with you in the morning, have soup together, go out for dinner, or take her to the hotel.” Well, the guy takes her and then says, “X don’t come to the table.” (Personal interview with a *konsomatrix*, 2023)

Therefore, as can be seen here, the practice of “table-spoiling,” which can be put in opposition to “running a table,” means the *Pavyon* management preventing the earnings of a regular *konsomatrix* by offering an open *konsomatrix* woman to the customer. In this example, as the *Pavyon* management wishes to spread the practice of being an open *konsomatrix* in their *Pavyon*, they reduce the earnings of regular *konsomatrix* women and encourage them to become open *konsomatrix* women. Under these circumstances, the remaining regular *konsomatrix* women move to other *Pavyons* that do not operate this way, where they can earn money only by hostessing. However, it is evident that the regular *konsomatrix* woman blames the open *konsomatrix* women for this, not the *Pavyon* management. In order to better understand the impact of pavyon environment on tension between the open and regular *konsomatrix* women, I will present the different dynamics of meeting outside the *Pavyon* and the customer chasing the possibility of going outside with the woman, which I argue to be inherent in the *konsomatrix* work and, in fact, ensures the continuity of consumption that makes money for regular *konsomatrix* women, too.

³⁰ After the pavyon closes, there is a phenomenon called “going to the soup place.” *Konsomatrix* women tell the customers that they will go to the soup place with them in the morning, and this statement serves to increase the possibility of sexual intercourse in the customer’s mind, leading him to spend more at the table. Open *konsomatrix* women can go to the soup place and then to a hotel with customers.

5.1.3. Meeting outside the Pavyon: Chasing and Actualizing Having Sex

Despite the customers' different economic, cultural, and social backgrounds, they have one common fantasy: To be able to meet with and, of course, to have sex with the *konsomatrıs* they meet in the *Pavyon*, outside the *Pavyon*. As a practice that has existed in Ankara *Pavyons* for years, the institution of *Yemek Dönüşü* (after dinner) is considered to be a way to ensure the continuity of profit in the *Pavyon* by reproducing this fantasy of the customers. In Ankara *Pavyon* culture, *yemek dönüşü* essentially means *konsomatrıs* women going out to dinner with the customers under the supervision of the *Pavyon* management and then returning to the *Pavyon* at night. One condition here is that the customer has to open a bottle rather than a one-off drink such as beer or *rakı* that comes in a glass. The size of the bottle to be opened in centiliter (cl) varies according to the time the customer spends outside with the *konsomatrıs* woman. The customer tells the *şef garson* about the *konsomatrıs* women with whom he wants to do *yemek dönüşü*. The *şef* asks the *konsomatrıs* woman if she wants to do it, and if she agrees, a date is set. Generally, the starting time of a shift in the *Pavyon*, which is 8:30 PM, is accepted as the starting time of the date. However, they can meet earlier if the *konsomatrıs* woman wishes. The critical point is that when the customer and the *konsomatrıs* woman go out for dinner, the *şef garson* sits at another table in the same place, waiting. The aim here is to ensure that the *konsomatrıs* woman is safe during the time she spends outside with the customer and that they eventually return to the *Pavyon*. While they are at dinner, a table in the *Pavyon* remains reserved for them according to the time they return. If they arrive at 10 o'clock, a 35 cl whisky bottle is placed on the table. If they arrive at 10 o'clock, a 35 cl whisky bottle is placed on the table. If they arrive at 11 o'clock, 50 cl whisky is put on the table, and if they arrive at 12 o'clock, 70 cl whisky. At this point, the name of the *şef garson* accompanying them is written on the drink placed on the table, and the reservation is made this way. The *konsomatrıs* woman does not receive more money for eating out with the customer. However, she finds herself relieved from the responsibility of "running the table" that night. In other words, the *konsomatrıs* woman drinks the whole bottle opened for them. Out of a bottle of 70 cl, 50 drinks come, while 40 drinks come out of a bottle of 50 cl, and 20 drinks come out of a bottle of 35 cl. Thus, if we consider that an average *konsomatrıs* woman drinks 10-12 drinks a night, the woman who does *yemek dönüşü* guarantees to have

50 drinks before the night even starts. According to the *Pavyon* manager, the customer who wants to spend time with the *konsomatrıs* woman in a quieter place outside guarantees this money for both the *Pavyon* and the woman.

So far, I have explained the practice of *yemek dönüşü* and its place and functioning in Ankara *Pavyons* based on the account of the *Pavyon* manager I interviewed. Now, let us take a look at the *yemek dönüşü* through the narrative of a *konsomatrıs* woman:

Look now, my love. There is a system in Ankara called yemek dönüşü. Suppose that the customer came. Then, you made an agreement with the customer. You agreed that you would meet, blah, blah, blah. Actually, this is the “I’m going to sleep with you” thing. Very few people actually go to dinner. The customer picks you up, then, like, you go to the hotel with the şef garson beside you. They drop you off there. Then, you hang out at the hotel. You have until 12:00 or 1:00 at night. After that, the customer comes to the *Pavyon* with the girl at 12 or 1 o’clock, and he has to open a big 70cl for the girl. (...) What is the duty of the şef garson? In the hotel, maybe he will beat the woman, maybe he will do something violent to her, something she doesn’t want, I mean, he will want to be with her in another way, something will happen. The şef garson is waiting for these things.” (Personal interview with a *konsomatrıs*, 2023)

As can be seen through the narrative of the *konsomatrıs* woman, the practice of *yemek dönüşü* actually refers to the practice of prostitution under the management and control of the *Pavyon* even though it is not within the physical boundaries of the *Pavyon* establishment. Although the *konsomatrıs* woman explains the presence of the *şef garson* as a precaution against women being subjected to violence during prostitution, the meaning of the *şef*’s presence is clear evidence that this practice of prostitution is carried out under the supervision of the *Pavyon*. While the *konsomatrıs* woman states that it was rare for anyone actually to eat, the *Pavyon* manager claims that this practice absolutely excludes prostitution and is limited to men spending time with women alone and outside. However, I had a second interview with this particular *Pavyon* manager more than one and a half after the first one when I had more information about the *Pavyon* environment. Thus, I could ask him more detailed questions about the *yemek dönüşü* and whether this practice sometimes results in prostitution. This time, in his response, the manager told me that this practice has now turned into an institution that can be defined as *Otel Dönüşü* (After Hotel) within the Ankara *Pavyon* scene. However, according to him, they are mindful of this issue in the *Pavyons* under their management, and they try to

maintain the *Pavyon* culture they learned from their “elders,” which excludes prostitution, and resist the transformation in the Ankara *Pavyon* culture, which includes prostitution more and more day by day. Afterwards, he told me that the *konsomatris* women whose “tables were spoilt” and who were prevented from earning money by the *şef garsons* because they did not engage in prostitution switched to their *Pavyon*. He stated that the strongest reason why they were able to maintain this practice was that they were working with *şef garsons* who “knew the business,” had been in the *Pavyon* environment for years, and had been trained in the Ankara *Pavyon* culture that excluded prostitution³¹, which they themselves try to maintain. From these statements by the manager, I would like to return to the issue of *şef garsons*.

The *şef garson* is the one arranging, he already knows which table [wants *yemek dönüştü*], but it depends on the lady. For example, she is a woman who goes to the hotel in the morning. She makes an agreement with the *şef garson* as well, she says to her *şef*, “At every table you arrange for me to go to the hotel in the morning,” for example, “Out of 1500, you take 500, and I take a thousand.” You know, it depends on the agreement between the lady and the *şef garson* who will arrange the customer or on what she feels like giving [to the *şef garson*]. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

[The *şef*] knows the customer, (...) the customer tells the *şef* what he wants. For example, he says, “Is there a lady who can come to the hotel in the morning, my brother? If there is, call her over, and let’s stay.” [I say, “This happens, right?”] Of course, it does. Do you know what happened? So, for example, the *şef* comes, the *şef* naturally knows all the ladies in that *Pavyon*. He knows which lady will go to the hotel in the morning, which lady will go to the soup place, which lady will lie, which lady can run that table. So, he takes a lady to the table accordingly. And that lady runs that table. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

As can be seen, the *şef garson* is positioned at an intermediate point where he is aware of the limits of the “service offered” by the women and the “demands” of the customer. When the “service” in question is prostitution, he takes on the role of a pimp. Therefore, it can be either the *konsomatris* or the customer who demands the act of prostitution before the *şef garson*. However, when we consider the legal definition of *konsomatris* work, which is only to have a meal and drink with the

³¹ He claimed that in pavyons that include prostitution, *şef garsons* come from outside the pavyon environment and are young men involved in drug dealing who bring young women suffering from substance abuse to work in the pavyons so that they will earn money for drugs. He believes that this is how the pavyon culture deteriorated.

customer, I believe the real issue here is that this is informal prostitution with the şef garson as the pimp. On the other hand, if we leave the law aside and take the managers and norms in different *Pavyons* into consideration, it is debatable whether this is formal or informal prostitution.

I just thought I would go, have a drink, have a chat. In İzmir, for example, there are birahanes (literally meaning beerhouses, a different type of nightclub operating very similarly to *Pavyon*). But in Ankara, I thought the *Pavyon* was a more serious establishment there because the *Pavyon* culture was more established. I thought it wouldn't be like "let's go out" blah blah blah, but it wasn't like that at all. On the contrary, the owners of the venues officially, sorry but sell you like a pimp. (Personal interview with a *konsomatris*, 2023)

As explained above, *Pavyon* management gets involved in the prostitution process from time to time, and this seems to vary from *Pavyon* to *Pavyon* as well. It should be noted that the *Pavyon* management, whether involved or not, does not receive a direct profit from prostitution. Fulfilling the demand for prostitution leads to customer satisfaction within the confines of the *Pavyon*. It ensures that the customer continues to come to the *Pavyon* and consume. This is how the *Pavyon* management makes a profit. However, as I have mentioned above, the şef garsons take on the role of the pimp and make a direct profit. Thus, in cases where the *Pavyon* managers are not involved, we can say that prostitution occurs informally within the *Pavyon* environment with the pimping by the şef garsons. However, the *konsomatris* woman quoted above also adds that the *Pavyon* management can call the *konsomatris* woman to the manager's office sometimes and "requests" that she has sex, claiming that the man who wants to have sex with her is a very good customer. Therefore, at the point where the woman accepts prostitution, it becomes an observable practice known and demanded by the management, making it very difficult to describe this as an informal activity within the norms of the *Pavyon* environment.

Overall, as a result of the prostitution demands by customers, which the *Pavyon* management weighs based on the economic background of the customer, or with the prostitution practices the women display in agreement with şef garson, the women perform the practice of being an open *konsomatris*. In this chapter, I have stated that the practice of yemek dönüşü which is inherent to the *Pavyon* culture and contains the possibility and sometimes the reality of prostitution has been turning to the practice of otel dönüşü, which without a doubt contains prostitution. Going back to

the beginning of the discussion, even though there is a “whore stigma” between the open *konsomatrix* women and regular *konsomatrix* women based on whether they have sex or not, the “whore stigma” is, in fact, a practice that is inherent to the *Pavyon* environment in which all *konsomatrix* women act in a way that changes in degree with the demands of male subjects, namely customers and managers. Therefore, while I have described the “visible” *konsomatrix* work in two parts, as the hostessing and dancing, I argue that prostitution is also a part of this work.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

“We don’t have a place in the society because we are not ordinary people. People also will never get used to it and will never perceive us as normal. So, thank you and have a good day!”

- *Konsomatrıs* woman, while rejecting interview, 2023

My study on the work of the *konsomatrıs* women started with a background regarding how the Ankara *Pavyons* were formed and transformed. In sum, they were formed as the entertainment venues of the Kemalist elite in Ankara, the first modern city of the republic, but later gravitated towards the dominant local entertainment practices of the interior Anatolian region that had been excluded by the same republican elite. Then, I presented how there is a lack of studies focusing on *konsomatrıs* women despite the increasing interest by the media and society in the *Pavyon* sector in general and Ankara *Pavyons* in particular, even within the emerging academic studies on the topic.

In presenting debates on sex work in Chapter 3, I began by defining the umbrella term “sex work”, which claims to encompass all the different types of sexual labor and engagements that can be included under its roof, along with a presentation of the perspectives offered by different feminisms on the term I presented the debate between liberal feminists, who argue that people are free agents who choose to engage in sex work to put their emphasis on improving their working conditions, and radical feminists, who argue that prostitution is inherently problematic in gendered societies, making the people who engage in this work victims of these social settings and therefore aiming their fight at overthrowing the social settings altogether. Then I presented the debate on the legal regulations of selling sex, which has become a

fundamental issue in sex work debates, along with four different public policy models on which the debate centered. In brief, there are four policy models. First, criminalization refers to introducing penal codes that treat all activities related to sex work as crimes, including pimping, managing brothels, etc. Second, decriminalization refers to making legal all activities related to sex work by treating sex work as any work people engage in in the rest of society. Third, regulation refers to regulating sex work by considering the work's specific conditions in order to protect the rights of people who engage in activities related to sex work. Finally, the Nordic Model refers to the criminalization of only clients of sex workers, along with the people who engage in sex work-related activities to make money from sex workers.

Then, in the same chapter, I introduced "hostess work," practiced in venues that are among the most similar venues to the *Pavyons* considering all the different nightclub cultures in the world and which shows profound similarities with *konsomatrix* work, alongside being commonly used as a concept in the translation of *konsomatrix* work. This part connected me to the discussions on whether hostess work should be considered sex work or not, utilizing the literature on hostess work that discusses the dynamics involved in and implied for the women who engage in this work, such as emotional or ethical labor. By referring to the discussions on sex work, I also mentioned that using the umbrella term sex work for addressing types of sexual labor such as hostess work, which does not directly involve prostitution but involves the potential of sex, may strengthen the whore stigma by ignoring the different dynamics of sexual labor. In connection with this, I underlined that such a result may impair the lightening of the whore stigma that proponents of the term sex work aim to reduce. In this context, I presented studies illustrating that hostesses who are involved in sexual labor do not prefer to define themselves with the term sex work, due to its implication and inclusion of prostitution. In parallel, I preferred to define the work centered by this study as "*konsomatrix* work," since the women I interviewed defined it as such and were not even aware of the term sex work, let alone rejecting it.

The next chapter, where I conceptualized *konsomatrix* work by considering and conveying the unique dynamics of the Ankara *Pavyons*, started with an etymological

discussion by going back to the French and Latin origins of the word *konsomatrix* which is rooted in the act of consuming. The effort here was to explain why hostess work, while widely used as a translation of *konsomatrix* in Turkish academia, would not fully meet the work of *konsomatrix*. Later, I presented the only legal document in Turkish law that mentioned the term *konsomatrix* which also departs from the act of consuming. However, I showed that different legal representations of the work existed from the point of view of the *Pavyon* sector, as reflected in the legal documents of public institutions such as the Social Security Institution (SGK). In order to present the economic aspect of the *konsomatrix* work, I concluded my conceptualization by explaining that the conditions of work of the *konsomatrix* women in the *Pavyon* environment are based on earning and spending money, which also encourages *konsomatrix* women to indulge in excessive spending.

In Chapter 5, I aimed to convey the internal dynamics of the *konsomatrix* work by trying to understand the two parts of the work, namely dancing and hostessing, through the narratives of the *konsomatrix* women themselves. Here, I explained that being able to dance Ankara's New Dance Music/Airs, which is the distinctive music of Ankara *Pavyons*, allows *konsomatrix* women to see themselves as artists with the agency it offers them. While this was a route for them to escape from the stigma of being *konsomatrix*, to some extent, it was also a source of pressure to have to learn and practice this dance. I also explained that being on stage through dance practice is a marketing strategy that allows customers to see all the hostesses in the venue.

The second dynamic of the *konsomatrix* work I defined as "hostessing" with respect to consuming alcohol together with the customers at the tables. I argued that the main profit-making tool in the *Pavyons* is to sustain the alcohol consumption of the customers through the labor of *konsomatrix* women. At this point, I explained that the *konsomatrix* women do this job with two different identities: the *regular konsomatrix* and the *open konsomatrix*. While regular *konsomatrix* work is realized mainly by either talking to the customers about serious issues or making casual sexual jokes, *open konsomatrix* work is realized by allowing physical intimacy with the customers at the table of the *Pavyon* or by having sex with the customers outside the *Pavyon*. At this point, I argued that regular *konsomatrix* women negotiate the "whore stigma" that the job of being a *konsomatrix* involves by associating it with

open *konsomatrix* women they construct as their other. In the next section, I defined "After Dinner", which is the practice of returning to the *Pavyon* at the end of a night after meeting with and spending time with the customers outside, which is realized under the control of the *Pavyon* and with the condition that the customer opens a bottle in the *Pavyon*. This is a practice that creates the possibility of realizing the sex potential of *konsomatrix* work. At this point, I explained that the practice of "After Dinner" is practiced as "after hotel" under *Pavyon*'s knowledge by spending part of the working hours in the hotel having sex with the customer. As a result, I put forward prostitution as another strategy for the main profit-making tool of the *Pavyon*, which is the consumption of alcohol.

After all this, the following is a fundamental argument of this work that unify my whole discussion: The work of *konsomatrix*, just like every other form of sexual labor which includes prostitution as a possibility, should be evaluated according to its own internal dynamics. Just as every woman in society experiences "whore stigma" in different degrees and forms, women who engage in different forms of sexual labor also experience it in different forms and degrees. The intervention of the umbrella term sex work is insufficient in its attempt to reverse the "whore" discourse by assuming that the stigma in question applies to all forms of sex work in the same way in its effort carry the attention to the conditions of work. It is also inadequate because, where the focus is primarily on labor conditions, the focus is only on the labor conditions of individuals engaged in prostitution. Since other forms of sexual labor under the umbrella of sex work are not evaluated in terms of the degree and form of the "whore stigma" they carry, the degree and form of the possibility of prostitution and the ways in which they are realized are effectively excluded, resulting in inadequate political discourse and policymaking.

In this thesis, I have tried to understand and convey the dynamics of the *Pavyon* environment in which women are engaged in this work through their own narratives. Undoubtedly, research with a question centered on prostitution, which is the primary condition for understanding the work of *konsomatrix* from these aspects, might tell much more in terms of a comprehensive answer to these aspects related to prostitution, a literature that I hope will continue the work of *konsomatrix*. At this point, the data I collected and the research I conducted as part of a master's thesis can

only present the main dynamics of *konsomatris* identity and work in terms of the sex work aspects, which can serve as a starting point for further research. The fact that I was not able to interview any open *konsomatris* and that my interviewees were only regular *konsomatris* women is a limitation that also prevented me from addressing the prostitution aspect entirely, even though it will remain within the scope of my study. Apart from the boundaries and limitations of my study, some issues I encountered in the field also warned me to refrain from presenting sharper arguments on the prostitution aspect. I would like to present them as part of a concluding discussion below.

Based on the interviews and daily conversations I had in the *Pavyon* environment, there is a common judgement and/or concern that Ankara *Pavyon* culture, which excluded prostitution in the past, is gradually "deteriorating". The concern is that in the near future, all the *konsomatris* will become *open konsomatris*. In this transformation, the COVID-19 period is shown as the critical junction point. At the point where the *Pavyons* were closed to service as part of the lockdown and under the ruling Justice and Development Party's restrictions as a tool to restrict nightlife with its political agenda, *konsomatris* women were unemployed for a serious period of time. During this period, the women started to practice prostitution by meeting with certain customers as a survival strategy. In parallel, this practice became more widespread through other social media apps such as *Tiktok*, where users send gifts to the creator and express their interest. Adding to the fact that the use of such digital platforms boomed during the pandemic, it is argued that these women usually did not go back to working as *konsomatris* after they started to make a living in this way.

In fact, due to the decrease in the number of *konsomatris* women in the Ankara *Pavyons* after the opening of the *Pavyons*, the wage system for women changed during the COVID period to *konsomatris* women's advantage. They started to earn more money, which affected the agencies of the women who continued to work in *Pavyons*. This period also corresponds to a point when the clips of the *Pavyon* musicians, and *Pavyon* videos began to circulate, and the public recognition of the *Pavyon* environment increased also by the narratives of the *konsomatris* women on social media. According to what I was told, there is an ongoing demand for women to work in the *Pavyon* environment, but women coming from outside the sector now

tend to work as *open konsomatris*. I think this is another reflection of the transformation in the *Pavyon* sector in parallel with the spreading of social media during the digitalization of COVID-19, which is also somehow connected to the transformation in the understanding and practice of sex work in Turkey. However, as I expressed, proper field research has to be conducted with specialized research questions on the dynamics I have mentioned.

Similarly, what I initially wanted to write about was the life stories of the *konsomatris* women who came to the Ankara *Pavyons* after working in *Pavyons* in other cities of Turkey to share the stories that accumulated in many different contexts before, during, and after the *Pavyons*. I aimed at addressing these stories together with gender and class inequalities, that is, the capitalist patriarchy, and revealing the patriarchal patterns of violence and poverty in the lives of *konsomatris* women. However, due to my limited means, I have not been able to carry out such a comprehensive study at this stage. Therefore, I hope that I can continue to contribute to this field, and I keep the stories and experiences of these women, which I could not fit into the scope of this thesis, in the hope that I will be able to convey them in another academic study in the future.

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APPENDIX: EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS IN TURKISH

1. Bizim sektörde olmazsa olmaz iki şey var, bir müzik iki kadın. Bu ikisi, olmazsa olmazı bu. Çünkü müzikle kadın olmadığında müşteri buraya geleceğine meyhaneye gider. Doğru mu? (pavyon yöneticisi, kişisel görüşme, 2021)

2. Şu an nasıl hissediyorum biliyor musun? Tuğçe, pavyondan çıktıktan sonra şimdi bizim e devlette pavyonda çalıştığımız çıkıyor ve bize dediler ki hani garson olarak göstercez sizi ben dans işçisi olarak görünüyordum ki ben oyuna bile çıkmayan bir insanım. Dans işçisi olarak e devlette benim pavyonda çalıştığım görünüyor. Hep oradan çıktıktan sonra dedim ki, tamam dedim artık benim hayatım bitti. Ben kimseyle evlenemem ondan sonra. Çünkü evlensem de bu benim karşıma çıkacak. Yanımdaki adam da beni istemeyecek hani. Bu sebepten öyle düşündüm. Erkek arkadaşım benden 20 yaş büyük mesela şu andaki erkek arkadaşım 20 yaş var aramızda hep onu o şeye koydum mesela o bunu anlayışla karşıladı. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

3. Mekan sahipleri seni sarhoş edip sana orada, senet imzalattıyorlar diyorlar ki işte içiriyorlar sana seni ilk geldiğinde bakıyorlar sende iş var sen iş yapabilecek potansiyelde bir kızsın o zaman seni gidiyorlar büyük masaya oturtuyorlar. O masa onların zaten tanıdıkları olduğu için diyorlar ki bugün buna otur, o gün seni içiriyorlar, içiriyorlar. Ondan sonra gece seni şeye çağırıyorlar müdüriyete. Müdüriyete gittiğin zaman sen zaten sarhoşsun. Sana diyorlar ki işte sen bizim kardeşimizsin. Sen bu alemde yenisin. Ondan sonra şimdi mekanlar sana daha yüksek bir ücret verirse ondan sonra ama sana işte başına iş gelir, sen sakın bunlara kanma gel sen bu senedi imzala en azından bir şey olduğunda dersin ki benim senedim var. Hani bana bulaşmayın, çünkü kuaförde bile kuaföre gidiyoruz ya biz her gün orada bile başka mekanların şefleri gelip bizim yakamıza yapışıyordu. Yani bizim mekan yani bizim mekana gel. Bana o şekilde söylediler. Dediler, bunu imzala sonra hiçbir şey olmayacak. Bize güvenmiyor musun falan zaten alkollüsün ondan sonra tamam diyorsun, güveniyorum falan sorum yok imza atıyorsun ama zaman geçti, sen orayı bırakmak istedin sana diyorlar ki gidemezsin, çalışacaksın senin senedin var. Bu senedi ödeyeceksin. Bu kadar çalışmak zorundasın gibi. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

4. Aşkım ben aylık ne kadar kazanıyorumdur 60-70 bin kazanıyorumdur ama nereye gidiyor bilmiyorum. Nereye gidiyor bu para? (Gülüyor.) Gerçekten bereketi yok ama bu doğru, çünkü giderimiz çok fazla. Günlük mesela benim giderim ne kadar biliyor musun? Kuaför 150, taksi 250, işte elbise gör al, makyaj malzemen çabuk bitiyor, kedin var yani yemek yapamıyorsun dışarıdan söylüyorsun bu arada ben öğlen kalkarım 12’de benim alarmım var, yemek yerim bir karnımın doyması lazım akşam kalktığımda midem bulanmasın diye çünkü aç kaldığımda midem bulanıyor. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

5. Aşkım bak 1000 liraya elbise aldığımı bilirim yani, gitseydim mağazadan 400 liraya alacağım elbiseyi, yani internette 400 liraya alacağım elbiseyi, ben 1000 liraya alıyorum. Çünkü o an, şimdi aşkım öyle bir ortam ki psikolojin o an yanına aldığı elbiseyi giymek istemiyor çünkü, çünkü orda biz kadınız tamam mı? Orda bi şey, bir elbise getirmiş o senin gözüne gözüne geliyor. Direkt hayalini kuruyorsun ya ben bunu giysem, ya hani önemli olan hani orada çok güzel giyinmek veya tabii ki görsellik çok önemli ama o kadınlardan böyle iyi olmak isteği, kadın gelsin sana “oha elbisen ne kadar güzelmış, nerden aldın, ay keşke ben alsaydım” ya bu her kadının hoşuna gider. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

6. Bizim o tarafın pavyon kültürüyle burası çok başka. Orda işte solist vardır şarkı söyler arabesk slow ne biliyim dans eder kızlar vardır club tarzında çalan direk dansı yapan kızlar falan görürsün orada. Ben buraya bi geldim, kızlar ziller falan adamlar oyun için kavga ediyorlar. Oyun sırası için çıkmış, ha siktir nasıl bir yere düştüm diyosun. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

7. Ankara diğer şehirler farklı bir yer. (Fark ne diyorum) Ankara’da oyun havası diye güzel bir saz var söz var muhabbet var mesela yandaki oturan müşteriyle sen samimi olabiliyorsun yani o müşteriyle öteki müşteri her gün mesela denk geliyorsa selamlaşıyorlar mesela oyun istemiştir diğer müşteri de oyun istemiştir yani kendi aralarında işte hani derler ki kardeşim ben gidicem önce oynayayım hani bir samimiyet var aslında, bu ortamda var gerçekten, var ama diğer şehirlerde yok. (...) Diğer şehirlerdeki insanlar biraz şey öyle hani kadını ayarlayayım gidiyim yatıyım hani işimi göreyim yarın başkasıyla takılayım. Burda da öyle insanlar var, var ama oturmak zorunda değilsin öyle insanlarla. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

8. Mesela ben geçen şeye şahit oldum şu erkek arkadaşımın çalıştığı yerde mesela (erkek arkadaşı sazıcı) (...) ‘gardaşım sana geldim gardaşım.’ (diğer iletişimde bulunduğu müşteri böyle diyor.) sesini seviyorlar o şekilde geliyorlar ya aslında bayan için gelmemeleri daha mutlu edici bir şey çünkü eğleniyor o gibi insanlar gerçekten eğleniyor konsunu da yapıyor , oyununu da yapıyor , o şekilde eğleniyor ama bayan için gelen insan ben pek eğlenebildiğini düşünmüyorum. Ya sapık düşünceli bi adamdır ya da yani alıp götürme derdindedir. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

9. Hatta ben zili bile çalmayı ne zaman öğrendim biliyor musun? bir sene oldu daha (iki yıldır Ankara Pavyonlarında çalışıyor.) bana adam şey dedi. Oynamayı öğrenmişsin de zil çalmasını bilmiyorsun. Niye sahneye çıkıyorsun dedi. Ve ben takıntılı biriyim çok moralim bozuldu. Öyle böyle değil anlatamam sana. 3 gün boyunca pavyon videoları izleyip boy aynasında oynaya oynaya öğrendim zili biliyor musun sana yemin ederim sana yemin ederim o günü hala aklımdan çıkaramıyorum. O gün hatta adama ulaşmaya çalıştım, hatırlamaya çalıştım. Adama da ulaştım dedim ki senin sayende zili öğrendim. Gel sana masa hesabını ben ödeyeceğim, kons hesabına elleşmem ama dedim (gülüyor) gelmedi alemi bırakmış. Yani daha pavyonda takılmıyomuş öyle duydum. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

10. Ben oyun seviyorum yani Ankara Oyun havasını seviyorum. Hiçbir şey bilmiyordum ben Tuğçe yani zil nasıl çalınır yani oyun nasıl oynanır yani bir kere falan izledim, Allahım oynuyorlar kadınlar böyle ağır ağır oynuyorlar ya hızlı oyun asla oynamam beni zaten Maltepe’de herkes tanır beni hızlı oyuna çıkarmazlar. Kıvırtmam, popomla twerk tarzı şeyler yapmam, ben biraz daha şey köy havası yani Ankara’nın seymen kültürüne yatkınım. Ben direkt onu öğrendim yani mesela X vardı alemde , şimdi evlendi. Instagram’da bulamazsın da, o hani bu alemin, hani 30 yıldır alemde olan bir kadın. Yani düşün mesela, o bana gösterdi. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

11. Pavyon, benim için satranç gibi bir yer yani satranç oyunu gibi bir yer. Orada bazen kendimi piyon gibi hissediyorum. (...)Hani diyorum ya piyon olarak algıla bizi mesela gerçekten piyon gibi hissediyorum bazen orada mesela sahnede hem fark ettin mi sahne hep şey böyle kareli kareli, bölmeli bölmeli. Hep bana orası şey gibi geliyor, satranç tahtası gibi geliyor orada biz oynadığımızda biz piyonmuşuz gibi

geliyor her oynadığımızda. Biz bir gösteriş yapıyormuşuz gibi geliyor mesela at nasıl L gider. Ondan sonra işte şah mat yaptığında nasıl çapraz gidersin? O şekilde orada kendini gösteriyorsun yani. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, (2022)

12. Sürekli böyle nasıl yedek taş gibi düşün orada mesela insanın istediği. Nasıl anlatılır ki bu insanın istediği bir bayanla oynaması tiplene özellikle orada genellikle beğendiğin kadınla oynarsın. Beğendiğin kadınla oturursun. Erkekler için seçici bir durumdur. Bizim için seçici bir durum değil. Yani biz erkekleri seçemiyoruz ama erkekler bizi seçebiliyor. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

13. İkinciye daha çok gerçekten oynamayı seven insan olarak görürüm. İlk gösterdiğin, iki erkeğin karşısında 6-7-8 tane bayan, bayanların sadece onlara oynaması. Bu gösteriştten başka bir şey değil bana göre. (...) Diğer şekil gösterdin. Diğer şekilde mantıklı olan oyun. Şimdi olması gereken o sonuçta oyuna kaldırıyorsun. E sen oynayacaksan bizi niye kaldırıyorsun öyle sen gösteriş yapacaksan arkadakiler niye orada heba ediyorsun? En arkada hep ağlıyoruz. Canımız sıkılıyor, bir de anladın mı? Çok affedersin milletin poposunu görmekten gına geliyo. Zaten sabaha kadar kız kıza oynuyoruz zaten. Sonuçta biz orada erkeklerle oynamaya çıkıyoruz, ne gerek var arkada milletin sırtını görmeye. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

14. Genellikle toplu oyunlar da asla oynamam. Çünkü sevmiyorum. Bana gösteriş gibi geliyor, sevmiyorum. Çok isteyen bir insan mesela eğer toplu oyun bile yazılacaksa sonuçta 2 kişi mi mesela 10 tane kadına yazdı, 2 tanesini çıkarsın. Diğer kalanı sahne kenarında dursun. Onlar da ekmeğini kazansın, bileziğini alsın gitsin. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

15. Sahneye çıkan kız her zaman avantajlıdır. Niye avantajlıdır sahne vitrindir. Örnek, adam burada oturuyor. Aşağıda oturan kızı görmüyor, sahneye çıktığı zaman görüyor. Sahneye çıkan kız her zaman avantajlıdır, sahnede kendini herkese göstermiş oluyor. (pavyon müdürü, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

16. Genellikle zaten sahneye çıktığında daha çok fark ediliyorsun. Daha çok seni fark ediyor. Koca dükkanda fark edilmen zor. Sahneye çıkıyorsun seni adam fark ediyor sahnede diyor ki ben bu kadını istiyorum, bunu getir diyor. En köşede bile olsa sahneyi görüyor. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

17. O oyuncu olmayan kızı diyorsun, o da belli masaları salonda gezer. Hoş geldin yapar şu bu yapar zaten çağırır çağırıyor, şef arkadaşlar yardımcı olur. (yönetici, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

18. şefler yanımıza gelip diyor ki, hani şöyle bir dolanın hani en azından ben mesela gidip böyle el sıkıp merhaba falan da yapmadığım için artık diyorlar ki en azından böyle hani bir geziyormuş gibi dolan millet boyunu posunu görsün. Yani demiyor ki millet senin götüne baksın demiyor. Boyunu posunu görsün diyor yani. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

19. Ben diğer bayanlar kadar çok kazanan birisi değilim. Biraz farklı bir stratejiyle çalışıyorum. Şimdi kendime göre bir çalışma planım bir prensibim var. Mesela geldiğin zaman mekanda görmüşsündür. Bayanların hepsi masa masa gezer hoş geldin der tokalaşmaya gider. Asla kimseyle tokalaşmam, onlar benle toplansınlar. Hayırdır, o kadar hazırlanan makyaj yapan duşa giren her gün ne giyeceğim diye düşünüp süslenip püslenip oraya gelen benim, biz geldik, merhaba falan deyip onlar bana selam verip öyle otursunlar, asla kimseyle tokalaşmayı gitmem. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

20. Ben de insanların yanına oturup böyle onlarla uğraşmak yerine sahnede kendimi gösterip oyunla o yevmiyeyi kurtarmayı hedefliyordum ve o şekilde başarıyordum. Alıyordum yevmiyemi, keyfime bakıyordum. (Oyunla yapmak o zaman senin için daha mı kolaydı?) Tabii ki. Hiç kimseyle muhatap olmuyorsun, düşünsene. Aptal aptal konuşmalara şahit olmuyorsun yani. “Seni buraya kim düşürdü?” “Kendi ayaklarımla geldim.” diyordum. “Yok, yok vardır senin bir pezevenğin.” Ne yapacaksın? Ortak mı olacaksın yani? (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

21. Bak kafanı karıştırmasin. Mevzu şöyle. Patron hiçbir zaman için kızın içemeyecek kadar sarhoş olmasını istemez. Ama kaşarlık yapamayacak kadar ayık olmasını da istemez. O hani arada tatlı çakırlık var ya. Patron seni hep öyle görmek ister. Böyle fıkır fıkır kıpır kıpır, salonda şımarabilen, böyle cilveleşebilen birisi olarak görmek ister. Ya da ayık kafayla adam elini omzuna attığında sen çok rahatsız oluyorsan çakırken bunu tolere edebilirsin. Yani, tolere edebilme seviyen biraz daha artıyor alkollüyken. Tabii, bu insandan insana da değişir. Kimi insanın da alkollüyken tolere edebilme seviyesi çok daha düşüyor. Çok daha agresif oluyor bu

insanlar. Tamamen tolere edebilme seviyesiyle ilgili diye düşünüyorum. (...) Yani tamamen kişinin kendisiyle ilgili. Şey gibi düşün, bir düğüne gidersin ayıkken hiç oynamasın gelmez, düğün çok sıkıcı gelir, iki duble rakı içersin, oynayasın gelir ya. Aynı kafa alkolsüzken zorunluluktan alkollüyken keyfine oynarsın. Yani bunun altında çok böyle büyük bir anlamlar taşıyor. Herkes buna çok anlam yükler mesela. İçkiyle çalışıyorum, içkisiz çalışıyorum. Bunda bir anlam yok. Tamamen ortama ayak uydurma. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

22. Adamın mallığına göre değişir. Adamın pavyon bilgisi, içki bilme, adap bilme kültürüne göre değişiyor. Mesela bazı masalar vardır işte bunlar gayrimeşru çok koşturan adamlardır. Yani gerçi birçok gayrimeşru adam var. Bunların birçoğu kadını yanına oturtup “Ne içersen iç ya, önemli değil.” diyen adamlar. Bu işte adamın eğitim seviyesi şu bu falan önemli değil. Tamamen karakterle ilgili. Kimi adamlar geliyor diyor ki, “Alkol alacaksın arkadaşım.” Kimi adamlar karışmıyor. Kimi adam “Alkol alacaksın.” diyor, yanında su bile içsen anlamıyor. Bunu zaten sen belli bir tecrübeden sonra çözüyorsun. Ona göre davranıyorsun. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

23. O dükkanın mekanın en gözde şeyi bayandır. Bayana bir sıkıntı oldu mu müdüriyete çekerler seni komple üstünden geçerler. İdareci oranın nabzına göre hareket etmesi gerekir. (Bayana sıkıntı nasıl olur mesela?) Masada pislik olur ne biliyim kadın içiyorum diye yere döker alkolü sen de görürsün, hayırdır lan para veriyoruz alkole, hır güre çıkar orada bi şey olur ya kadını masadan kaldırırlar ya adama pislik yaparlar. Ya müşteri her zaman ikinci plandadır. Müşteri nasıl şeydir, orada paran kadar varsın. Paran çoksa orda aga da sensin paşa da sensin. Paran yoksa siktir git lan derler. (müşteri, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

24. Pavyonda kızlara da çok şiddet olduğunu gördüm. Hani kızlar mesela içip kendini dağıttığında veya müşteriye yanlış yaptığında, mesela ağır bir masa, hep gelen bir masa, ondan sonra müşteriye kalktı kız terbiyesizlik yaptı. Onu böyle gözümün önünde ağzından burnundan kan çıkana kadar dövdüklerini gördüm. (...) Kızın böyle ağzından kan çıkarana kadar vurduğunu gördüm. (konsomatris kadın, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

25. İşte diyorum ya kişiye göre degisir. Musteriye göre de bayana da göre de. Ornek vereyim mesela ben musteriylim yanimda sen oturuyosun degil mi? Abi bu kiza kapali bir miller getir ben gorecem. Sen de diyorsun ki ya ben su ya da meyve suyu iceyim diyorsun. Icki iceceksen otur icmeyeceksen kalk diyorum mesela. Niye? Seni sarhos edip orana buranı ellemek, iste sirnasmak. Mevzu bu. (müşteri, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

26. Kimin müşteri var illa alkol alacaksın, yani adamın amacı seni sarhoş etmek, sarhoş olmanı istiyor, o yüzden alkol almanı istiyor. Kimi müşteri var, su iç istersen, bir şey içmek zorunda değilsin diyor. Böyle insana da denk geliyorsun, öylesine de denk geliyorsun. Tamamen müşteriyle alakalı. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

27. Ben de o şekilde çalışıyordum. Bak şöyle oluyor. Şimdi adam diyor ki, “İllaki alkol içeceksin.” Ya da şimdi şişeler var ya, 20’lik şişe, 35’lik şişe, 50’lik şişe. Adam tutmuş bana 35’lik şişe açmış. E şimdi ben 35’lik şişeyi tamam içebilirim ama sonrasında devam edemem. Bunu biliyorsam ilk dubleyi içerim, ikinci dubleyi içerim, üçüncü dubleden sonra gider kendimi kustururum. Gelir içmeye devam ederim. Neden? Daha fazla içebilmek için. Mantık bu yani. Yapılıyor yani. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

28. Dediğim gibi böyle çok fazla alkol tüketen kadınlar, genellikle zaten çoğu kadın alkolü alıp o şekilde iş yapabildiğine inanıyor. Alkol almadan adamlarla konuşamam diyor. Çoğunun şeyleri böyle yani alışkanlıkları böyle o şekilde hareket ediyorlar. O şekilde adamlarla muhatap oluyorlar. Hatta adamlar onlara suratsız geliyormuş, kimisi de öyle adamlar onlara suratsız geliyormuş yani. Ne konuşmada ne hareketlerde suratsızmışlar onlara göre. Dediğim gibi hani alkol almadan anlaşılabiliyorum ya onlar da alkol almadan anlaşılamıyor, almaları gerekiyor anlaşılabilmeleri için zaten her masaya gitmeden önce iki üç duble kesinlikle içerler adamlarla muhatap olabilmek için. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

29. Hani içki olsun, yeter ki birazcık kafamız güzel olsun ki konuşalım, yoksa hiçbir şey konuşamıyorsun. Donuksun. Kendi sıkıntılarını düşünüyorsun ama en azından birkaç duble içtiğin zaman bu sefer şey oluyor, hani kendi sıkıntılarını bir kenara atıp muhabbet edebiliyorsun. Çünkü düşünsene çok sıkıntılı bir durumun var ama oraya

gidip gülmek zorundasın yani. Orada adamları eğlendirmek zorundasın.

(konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

30. elbise giymeye alışamadığını anlatmaktan bahsediyor) dedim ki bir insan kendini neden sergiler ya da adam neden bu kadar bakar? Kötü hissettim başlarda, sonra bir ay sonra anca alışabildim rahatlayabildim, devam ettim adamlarla anlaşıyorum bu arada kesinlikle o zaman tamam konuşmayı seviyorum ama adamlara ne anlatacağımı bilemiyorum ve ben yaklaşık tamı tamına yarım sene sonra yani yarım sene sonra rahatlayabildim, adamlarla konuşabildim. O zamanlar alkol içemiyordum. Alkol söylüyorlardı, sonra yavaş yavaş alıştım. Sonra alkol içmeye başladım, alkolle derdimi anlatmaya başladım. Sonra da böyle alkollü alıştığымda yani bünye olarak alıştığымda dedim ki, alkol olmadan da anlaşabiliyomuşuz insanlarla diye hissettim yani. Sonra alkol almadan insanlarla anlaşmaya başladım. Sonra da sonum Ankara işte. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

31. Ben de insanların yanına oturup böyle onlarla uğraşmak yerine sahnede kendimi gösterip oyunla o yevmiyeyi kurtarmayı hedefliyordum ve o şekilde başarıyordum. Alıyordum yevmiyemi, keyfime bakıyordum. (Oyunla yapmak o zaman senin için daha mı kolaydı?) Tabii ki. Hiç kimseyle muhatap olmuyorsun, düşünsene. Aptal aptal konuşmalara şahit olmuyorsun yani. “Seni buraya kim düşürdü?” “Kendi ayaklarımla geldim.” diyordum. “Yok, yok vardır senin bir pezevenğin.” Ne yapacaksın? Ortak mı olacaksın yani? (...) Yani benim alkol alarak çalışmamın sebebi şuydu. Ben o dönem alkolü siktir et, uyuşturucu almadan çalışmıyordum. Ben hap atmadan sahneye çıkamıyordum. (...) ondan sonra benim zaten piyasada suyum ısınmaya başladı. Herkesin gözünde işte hapçı, esrarcı. Yani ortam o kadar gayrimeşru bir ortam olmasına rağmen uyuşturucu kullanan kızlar pek tutulmazlar. Ondan sonra kız mesela uyuşturucu falan kullanmasın. Evinden işine, işinden evine gidip gelen bir kız olsun ama benimle çorbacıya gelsin. Akıllı kızlar da öyle imaj çiziyorlar işte. Ben mal da işte hap atıyorum, sahneye çıkıyorum, “Vuhuuuu!” diye patlıyorum falan filan. Her şeyin reklamını yaptık yani. Ulus’ta, Maltepe’de adım çıktı hapçı, esrarcı bilmem ne diye. Bana kimse pek iş vermemeye başladı. E uyuşturucu kullanımını belli eden yüzümde gözümde belirtiler de olmaya başladı. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

32. Türkiye'de kadın olmak çok zor gerçekten. Başlığa da bunu at, Türkiye'de pavyonda çalışan kadın olmak çok zor. Direkt pavyon da de bence. Çünkü pavyon daha çok zor. Gerçekten normal hayattan daha çok zor pavyon. Yani tamam herkes bizim kolay kazandığımızı zannediyor da kolay falan değil ya ben sabaha kadar kaç tane manyakla uğraşıyorum bi bilsen... kaç tane sarhoşla kaç tane beni ellemeye çalışan manyakla uğraşıyorum. Herkese kolay geliyor da kolay değil. Çok zorluklar yaşıyoruz biz orada. (...) Seçemiyorsun, bilemiyorsun ki, çağıran insanın o şekilde bir insan olduğunu bilemiyorsun. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

33. Gene aynı şekilde kendisine dokundurmak istemeyen bir kadın kimse oraya zorla oturtamaz. O zaman iş ne oluyor biliyor musun? Her dükkanda vardır, ucuz meşrep bayan da vardır çalışan, elletecek masa altından parmaklatacak, benim gibisi de vardır. Bir arkadaşım vardı mesela dükkanda, konuşma konusunda iyi değil, öpüşür müşteriyile. öpüşme şeyi o öpüşme konsu. O masalarda o masaya gidip herkesle nasıl öpüşebiliyor bilmiyorum, o da onun kolayına geliyor, konuşamıyor, öpüşüyor. Ben muhabbet insanıyım, ama mesela Ankara'da öğrendiğim kelime “kaynatmak” ben kaynatan bir kadın değilim. Nasıl kaynatıldığını bilmiyorum. Bana akli başında muhabbeti sağlam, ne konuştuğunu bilen insan olacak. Şu an böyle senle konuştuğum gibi oturcam konuşcam o anlatacak ben anlatacağım normal bir muhabbet yani. Ben böyle konuşabilen biriyim, kaynatmak kakara kikiri, yapamıyorum yani seninle oturalı 15 dakika olmuş, ben seninle ne kaynatabilirim. (, konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

34. [X] Pavyonunu en son bırakma nedenim şey hani bizim X Pavyonu bozuldu dedim ya, kızlar artık masalarda sakso falan çekiyorlardı. Ve ben onu görüyorum, o manzarayı görüyorum maalesef. Yani adamın afedersin boşaldığını görüyorum. Geçen işte kız bir tane kız açık kons deriz biz onlara, hani masada her şeyi yapabilen işte, her şeyi yapar adamın şeyini eller, öpüşür, buralarını(boynunu gösteriyor.) yalattırır yani her şeyi yapar. Kızın bir tanesi yaptı yaptı ben gördüm yani gördüm sonra şeflerden biri dedi ki daha saat de şey neredeyse mekan kapanacak gel sana bir tane içki yazdırcam beş dakika otur kalk dedi hani konuşmana bile gerek yok dedi. Tamam dedim gittim bir tane büyük bira o büyük biralarda da iki tane bilezik veriyorlar, küçük millerler değil de diğeri, gittim oturdum adam kollarını açtı Tuğçe fermuarını indirdi, şeyini çıkardı hadi bana sakso çek diyo, böyle kafama sıcak sular

mı dökülmedi böyle gördüm iğrendim yani iğrenç ya benim zaten hayatımda bir insan var ve o bile gözümün önüne geldi iğrendim yani. (Ne zaman oldu bu olay?) Daha yeni geçen hafta işte, ben Y Pavyonuna geçmeden önce. Sonra ben de bira şişesini aldım, naptım, şeyinin üstüne vurdum. Kırılmadı masaya vurdum. Sonra dedim sizin de mekanınızın da dedim ben sizinle çalışmam dedim yani ben bir kadının iğrençliğini izlemek zorunda değilim. Bir müşteri bana ne münasebet ya? (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

35. Orda zorunluluk gibi bir şey yok çünkü hani ben kabul etmezsem bunu kabul edecek çok kadın var. Yalan söylemeyeyim. Herkes bir değil çünkü, kendi bedenini kullanarak hareket eden kadınlar da var burada. E zaten bu pavyon aleminin bu mekan aleminin gece aleminin bu hale getiren kadınlardır. Yani her zaman bu kadın. (Nasıl yani?) Yani bu sapıklık durumunu getiren kadınların olduğunu düşünüyorum çünkü sadece bir tane içmek için adamın üstüne çıkan kadınları tanıyorum. Evet ve bu artık adamları sapkın hale getirmeye başlıyor bu sefer diyor ki adam o yapıyor, sen niye yapmıyorsun? Haklı, anladın mı? Haklı kimi de diyo ki bak işte arkadaşına bak diyor. Hani diyemiyorsun ki arkadaşım değil biz hep aynı ortamayız haliyle hepimiz birbirimizin arkadaşımız ama diyemiyorsun. Biz arkadaş değiliz. Biz onunla aynı değiliz. ama açıklayamıyorum. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2022)

36. Hani kızlar dışarda başkalarıyla görüşüyor ya ondan dükkanın haberi olmuyor, kız kendi kafasına göre masa yapmak için gidiyor beraber oluyor adamı dükkana getiriyor, ondan bahsetmiyorum. Mesela ben çalışıyorum, düzgün bir masa buldum, oturuyorum sohbet ediyorum, Müdür bir tane kız getiriyor, abi diyor X (kendi ismi) dışarı çıkmaz, görüşmez, numara vermez, çorba içmez, öyle oturur gider diyor, ben sana bir kız getiteyim diyor sabah al çorba iç beraber, yemeğe çık ya da al otele götür. E adam onu götürüyor sonra diyor ki, X sen masaya gelme. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

37. aşkım, bak şimdi. Ankara'da şöyle bir sistem var, yemek dönüşü diye. Müşteri geldi. Ondan sonra sen müşteriyle anlaştın. Görüşeceğiz falan filan diye anlaştınız. Aslında bu hani yatacağım dalgası. Çok nadirdir gerçekten yemeğe giden. Müşteri seni alır, ondan sonra, şey, şef garsonla beraber gidersiniz otele, sizi bırakırlar. Ondan sonra otelde siz takılırsınız. Gece saat 12'ye 1'e kadar müddetin var. Ondan sonra 12'de 1'de kızla beraber mekâna gelir, kıza büyük yetmişlik açmak zorundadır

müşteri. (...) Şef garsonun görevini ne? Otelde belki dövecek karıyı, belki karıya şiddet yapacak bir şey yapacak, istemediği bir şey yapacak. Yani başka türlü beraber olmak isteyecek, bir şey olacak. Şef garson onu bekliyor. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

38. Şef garson artık ayarlayan zaten hangi masa olduğunu biliyor tamam ama bayanına göre değişiyor mesela sabah otele çıkan bir bayandır. Şef ile de anlaşır, şefine der ki bana sabah otele gitmem için ayarladığın her masada işte örnek veriyorum 1500de 500ünü sen al bini bana gibi hani o da artık bayanla o müşteriyi ayarlayacak şefin arasındaki anlaşmaya konuşmalarına ya da gönlünden ne koptuğuna göre değişir yani. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme,2023)

39. (şef)Müşteriyi tanır, (...) müşteri şefe ne istediğini söyler. Mesela şey der sabah otele gelecek bayan var mı kardeşim? Varsa çağırın kalalım. (bu oluyor değil mi diyorum) Oluyor tabii ki. Ne oldu biliyor musun? O yüzden mesela şef gelir,şef o dükkandaki bayanların hespini doğal olarak tanıyor, sabah hangi bayan otele çıkacağını, hangi bayanın çorbacıya gideceğini, hangi bayanın yalan söyleyeceğini, hangi bayanın o masayı idare edebileceğini şef biliyor. İşte masaya ona göre bayan götürüyor. O bayan da o masayı yürütüyor. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)

40. Ben sadece sanıyordum ki gideceğim içkimi içeceğim, sohbetimi edeceğim. İzmir’de meseala Birahaneler var ama ankara’da pavyon daha pavyon kültürü daha oturmuş bir şekilde olduğu için orası daha ciddi bir müessese diye düşünüyorum. Hani öyle çikalım edelim, falan filan olmayacak gibi düşündüm ama hiç öyle değilmiş. Aksine bunu mekan sahipleri resmen çok affedersin pezevenk gibi senin pazarlıyorlar, varmış orada. (konsomatris, kişisel görüşme, 2023)