GENDER AND THE CITY: MIGRATION OF WELL-EDUCATED WOMEN FROM ISTANBUL TO BERLIN

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ABSTRACT

GENDER AND THE CITY: MIGRATION OF WELL-EDUCATED WOMEN FROM ISTANBUL TO BERLIN

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CULTURAL STUDIES M.A. THESIS, JULY 2021

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Keywords: Space, Gender, City, Migration

This thesis analyzes the migration of highly educated women from Istanbul to Berlin as a case of "urban migration" shaped largely by gender-related experiences and motivations. What are the city- related push and pull factors regarding the migration of highly educated middle-class women from İstanbul to Berlin? How does gender shape both their city experience and migration motivations? Based on a feminist critique of methodological nationalism, this study takes city as its main unit of analysis and explores the gendering of cities and of migration from the perspective of an under-researched group of migrants. Based on semi-structured, open-ended in-depth interviews conducted online with 20 women who moved from Istanbul to Berlin in the past 10 years, this research reveals the significance of gendered experiences of public space as a critical factor is shaping migration.

ÖZET

CİNSİYET VE ŞEHİR: İYİ EĞİTİMLİ KADINLARIN İSTANBUL'DAN BERLIN'E GÖÇÜ

CEYDA ALTIKARDEŞ

KÜLTÜREL ÇALIŞMALAR YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, Haziran 2021

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mekan,Toplumsal cinsiyet, Şehir, Göç

Bu tez iyi eğitimli kadınların Istanbul'dan Berlin'e göçünü toplumsal cinsiyet ile alakalı deneyim ve motivasyonlarla şekillenmiş bir "şehir göçü" olarak analiz etmektedir. İyi eğitimli kadınların İstanbul'dan Berlin'e göçünde şehir kaynaklı itici ve çekici faktörler nelerdir? Toplumsal cinsiyet şehir deneyimi ve göç motivasyonlarını nasıl şekillendirir? Bu çalışma metodolojik milliyetçiliğin feminist eleştirisi temelinde şehri ana analiz birimi olarak almakta ve şehirlerin cinsiyetlendirilmesini ve yeterince çalışılmamış bu göçmen grubunun perspektifini analiz etmektedir. Son on senede İstanbul'dan Berlin'e taşınmış 20 kadınla yaptığım yarı yapılandırılmış açık uçlu çevrimiçi mülakatlara dayanarak, bu çalışma kamusal alanın cinsiyetleştirlmiş deneyimini göçü şekillendirmede ne kadar kritik bir faktör olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

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Tanıdığım en güçlü kadına, anneme
ve Berlin'in denizi özleyen tüm kadınlarına

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2018, on a late-night S-Bahn trip to my dorm room in Berlin, my father turned to me and told me to settle in Berlin. This was quite shocking to me as earlier that day we had had an argument about my decision to move in with my friends when I got back to Istanbul. He continued by pointing out the other young women on the train stating that I could be happier and freer as a woman if I were to move to Berlin permanently since the women around us seemed comfortable although it was late and we were far away from the city center. Little did he know I wasn't feeling free and safe all the time in Berlin because I found myself in many situations that I had to explain to people about Islam or Turkey and I was feeling like a 'representative' in many of my classes at Humboldt. I was feeling discriminated against and questioning whether I wanted to spend the rest of my life feeling like an outsider who has to constantly prove herself. My father knew that I wanted to migrate before but the moment he clearly articulated his opinion that I should, I started to think about what I was trying to avoid: Even if I migrate to a "better place" it will not be a fairy tale as I used to imagine, and again I will have to struggle, this time in different contexts against different social issues. Yet I decided to migrate after all, like many of my loved ones, although it was not possible then. As I write this in Spring 2021, I once again find myself dreaming of moving out of the country. My father wanted me to migrate because he thought I would have more access to public space as a woman. With this research I want to figure out why I and other women like myself decide to migrate even though we know we will have problems in the places where we end up settling. In other words, I want to inquire into what exactly pushes us from and pulls us towards certain cities. With this research, my aim is to understand how women experience their cities in general, and their relation to urban public space in particular. By interviewing single women who migrated from Istanbul to Berlin in the last 10 years, this research aims to shed light on the motivations and experiences of an under-researched group of migrants, with a particular focus on their city experiences.

1.1 Methodology

I conducted semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews with 20 women living in Berlin. Two of my interlocutors were visiting Turkey for a short while when we made the interviews. All of the interviews were conducted online on Zoom since the ongoing pandemic made it impossible for me to travel to Berlin or meet these women face to face. On that account, I could not make participant observation, either. My online research took place in the first half of April. My questions consisted of five main parts: "The research participants' lives in Istanbul", "the decision process to migrate", "their lives in Berlin in comparison to Istanbul", "their family history and future plans regarding migration". Although I had prepared 40 questions, I did not have to ask all of them since my interlocutors addressed many of these questions themselves in the course of the interview. I ended up asking approximately 30 questions in each interview. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to two hours, most of them being about an hour. I recorded all of the interviews with the permission of my interlocutors. I transcribed the interviews by myself and used coding to reveal parallel patterns in certain answers. Some of these findings through coding turned into chapters and subchapters such as "mobility in the city" and "genderless Berlin". I initially used the snowball sampling method to find my interlocutors. I asked my acquaintances to spread the word around. Some suggested that I write a short text describing my criteria so that they can post on various Facebook groups. I deliberately did not want to post on university alumni groups to prevent having a majority of graduates of the same university. Yet we did post on a Boğaziçi alumni group on Facebook that includes Daad scholarship holders in Germany. Although only two people responded from that specific post, many Boğaziçi graduates volunteered to be a part of my research. Six of my interlocutors are Boğaziçi graduates. My call for interviews was also posted in other Facebook groups called "Ötekilerin Berlin Dalgası" and "new Wave Berlin" and "Göçmen Kadınlar". 16 of my interlocutors volunteered through these Facebook posts. An important detail about my posted text is that I finished it by saying "With solidarity" and I believe it resonated with my interlocutors since two of them finished their e-mails with the same words and another stated that she wants to give support as a sign of women solidarity. In fact, all of my interlocutors were noticeably eager to help me and I believe their willingness stemmed out of a sense solidarity. They all expressed their concerns about whether the interview was helpful for me or not. To start with all of my interlocutors are ethnically Turkish [1] and secular, although I did not look specifically for it.

[1] I define "Turkish" as a national category that incorporates ethnic, religious multiplicity rather than. an ethnic category

Further I only interviewed women under 35 without children who have migrated in the last 10 years.I decided not to include parents in this research because as I read migrant accounts, I came to realize that quite many were motivated to migrate for their children's future. As my aim with this thesis is to understand the significance of city experience of women in their motivation to migrate, I choose to leave women with children out of my research so that I could eliminate children's motive as motive to migrate. Therefore, in my call for interlocutors, I specified that I want to interview women who are not parents. I also included an age limit together with a limit of 10 years in the migration period to my call because I wanted to make sure the city experiences of these women can converge. In other words, I did not want to compare the city experience of Istanbul from 25 years ago to another Istanbul experience from more recent years. I also included a note in my call wanting to interview women who either migrated for graduate education or for work, again to average out the ages and education levels. All of my interlocutors are well-educated university graduates. 12 of them are enrolled in graduate school or have finished a Master's degree, two of them are Ph.D. students. To put it differently, most of them are neither high skilled labor migrants nor students. In other words, the migration that is of concern to this research is not solely the high-skilled labor migration. Hence following Zeynep Yanaşmayan I use the term "highly educated migration" (Yanasmayan 2018), a category that binds all of my interlocutors together. In her book "The Migration of Highly Educated Turkish Citizens to Europe: From Guestworkers to Global Talent", Yanaşmayan uses "tertiary education as the main definition criteria" (Yanaşmayan 2018, 5)and refers to migration of her interlocutors as the migration of the highly educated. In this research, I adapt Yanaşmayan's approach and think of my interlocotur's migration as the migration of well-educated. Moreover, my interlocutors were all also very educated in terms of political correctness. They were careful not to use othering terms during the interviews with two exceptions. Naz and Hazal are the only ones who did not adopt a politically correct language during the interview. When asked about her gender identity Hazal stated that she is "normal" meaning that she is a heterosexual ciswoman, she referred to migrants as "insancık" (hooman). In the following section, I introduce each of my interlocutors with a pseudo name. I share their age, how long they have been living in Berlin and other cities they lived in if they have one.

Sedef

Sedef is 35 years old and has been living in Berlin for 4.5 years. She moved to Istanbul for her university education. She lived in multiple European cities before Berlin. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Başak

Başak is 34 years old, lived in Istanbul for 30 years, and moved to Berlin in 2019. Before Berlin, she used to live in another European city and from there she only applied to jobs in London and Berlin. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Derin

Derin is a 26 years old Master's student. She is born and raised in Istanbul, graduated from a German-speaking high school. She only applied to one University and moved to Berlin in 2019 when her acceptance came. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Seçil

Seçil is 27 years old Master's student. She was born in Ankara. After graduating from university she started her professional life immediately. She migrated in 2020 after her family moved to another country. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Berra

Berra was born and raised in Istanbul. She started working in a highly corporate company after she graduated. She moved to Berlin for getting her Master's degree. She works in Berlin.She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Serra

Serra is a 26 old Master's student. She was born and raised in Germany but then migrated to Turkey with her family when she was a child. She spent her adult life in Istanbul. She migrated to Berlin for graduate education. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Ezgi

Ezgi is a former lawyer. She spent all of her life in Istanbul. She moved to Berlin in 2018. She now is a Master's student. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Hale

Hale is born in Adana and lived both in Ankara and Istanbul. She completed her Master's degree in Turkey as well. She is 31 and went to Berlin as a part of an education program. She is now working in Berlin. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Beyza

Beyza is 35 years old artist. She has lived in multiple European cities for short

periods. She is married to a Turkish-German citizen. She is fluent in German. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Alara

Alara is 25 years old, she was born in İzmir and then moved to Istanbul. She learned German in high school. She spent 7 years in Istanbul and migrated to Berlin after she had conditional acceptance to a job. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Leyla

Leyla is 31 years old engineer. She moved to Berlin as her husband was offered a job. She also found a job in Berlin. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Zeynep

Zeynep is 26 years old. She was born and raised in Istanbul. She moved to Germany for her Master's degree, to a city that is close to Berlin. She moved to Berlin a few months ago. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Öykü

Öykü is a 26 years old Boğaziçi graduate. She was born and raised in Ankara. She moved to Istanbul to study at university. She migrated to Berlin to get her Master's degree right after she graduated. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Naz

Naz is 34 years old and married. She was born and raised in Istanbul. She migrated to Berlin with a Bluecard. She learned German in her high school but now is not sufficient in the language. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Ege

Ege is a Ph.D. student in Berlin. She completed her Master's degree in Istanbul. She moved to Berlin even before getting her Ph.D. acceptance. She identifies as queer.

Beliz

Beliz is a 31-year-old woman. Her family is migrated to Turkey before she was born. She was born in Istanbul and learned German in high school. She lived in Ankara in her university years. She completed her Master's degree in Istanbul. She moved to German for her second Master's education and then moved to Berlin in 2019. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Sude

Sude is a 28 years old Ph.D. student. She was born and raised in Istanbul. She studied engineering and migrated to Berlin right after graduating. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

Ilgın

Ilgın lived in multiple cities in Turkey. She first migrated to Bayern, then moved to Berlin in 2019. She identifies as pansexual.

Hazal

Hazal is 26 years old. She lived in İzmir and moved to Istanbul after graduating from University. She moved to Istanbul for work and lived in Istanbul for a year. She migrated to Berlin to get her Master's degree and after completing her education she started working there. She identifies as cis heterosexual.

1.2 My positionality

I am a woman currently living in Istanbul, with an experience of living in Berlin for about 6 months. I have experienced both cities and feel like I can be like one of my interlocutors one day. I believe that my positionality has helped me understand my interlocutors, giving them a sense of being heard. Further, because I am a woman who aims to contribute to the existing literature by emphasizing the women's experience, my interlocutors regarded our interviews as an act of solidarity. They tried to be as honest and as helpful as possible. I am most thankful for their honesty since they shared their most personal experiences with me without any hesitation I could feel. In many of my interviews, my interlocutors shared serious harassment cases they were subjected to. I believe our shared city experiences as women who are subjected to harassment often made it easier for me to understand them. Yet it was harder for me than I thought it would be since it revived the memories of my close circle and myself. I realized that although I admired my interlocutors for sharing and for being so strong, I was thinking of us, women as victims. I want to thank all of my interlocutors again for pushing me to realize our strength with their resilience and courage.

1.3 Historical Background

In this section, I briefly compile the history of the migration of women from Turkey to Germany. Since in this thesis I specifically focus on the migration of women, I choose to concentrate on the gender differences in the historical background as well. I also aim to differentiate Berlin in my narrative as much as possible since as Brettel argues "Cities differ in the depth of their history as receiving areas for immigrants. This history can, in turn, be related not only to the spatial distribution of newcomers within urban environments but also to a distinct urban identity, a self-conscious definition of being a "city of immigrants." (Brettell 2003, 168) I mainly make use of Lea Nocera's book "Manikürlü Eller Almanya'da Elektrik Bobini Saracak: Toplumsal Cinsiyet Perspektifinden Batı Almanya'ya Türk Göçü (1961-1984)" (Nocera 2018) to cover the migration period between 1960- 1980.

Nocera states that economic development in Berlin that mainly depends on the electronic and metal industries was few years late compared to the rest of Germany. In the 1960's the need for women's labor force was relatively more in West Berlin, with these industries' preference of employing women. The shortfall in women's employment could not be closed with German women, since they preferred more qualified jobs that are not piece-work or do not have night duties. Further, they would rather choose part-time jobs so that they could take care of their families as well. Therefore there was a need for young and single women who were willing to accept long work hours and, night shifts that could not be fulfilled with West German women. Especially after 1961 as the Berlin Wall was built, this employee shortage could no longer be met with East Berliners either. Until 1961, because West Berlin was not a part of the worker contract made with countries like Turkey and Italy, there were only limited numbers of employees in Berlin who were transferred from other German cities. As the need for employees peaked in this period, women from other countries especially from Turkey, Spain, and Greece, started to be called; yet until 1964 Turkey's cut in this migration is only about % 9. Turkey starts to promote the migration of women after 1964 and Berlin takes its drastic share. Abandan states that the Turkish labor population of West Berlin rose dramatically after 1967 and continued increasing, she also points out the increase of women workers from Turkey concentrated in West Berlin. (Abadan-Unat 1976, 8) Women from Turkey constitute the highest portion of migrant women in Berlin. Nocera shows that women from Turkey migrated to Berlin mostly because they wanted to experience Europe and start their own lives in a new city, whereas for men who migrated from Turkey the main motive is to earn money. But because the married

women had to provide a document showing that their husbands' approval of their migration or their parent approval if they are under 18 years old, these restrictions prevented women to migrate in some circumstances. Nocera also underlines that although the public belief that the married women migrated after their husbands, in most cases, it was the women who migrated first and then helped their husbands to migrate. It was easier for women to migrate because Germany needed more women workers. But approval documents were not the only restrictions before the migration of women. The women who wanted to or did migrate by themselves were represented as "immoral" by the Turkish media. Further, they were having problems with their husbands not only because of these media images but also because they were now the breadwinners and questioning the power of the former bread-winning men. These family reunions mark the second half of the 1970s. After 1980 the type of migration from Turkey to Germany changes. "Following the 1980 military intervention in Turkey, a massive asylum seeker flow from Turkey occurred. Thus in the first half of the decade, 105,480 asylum seekers fled abroad while about half of them arrived in Germany"(Sirkeci 2002, 14) In other words now in Germany the majority of migrants from Turkey are asylum seekers rather than workers. Although Nocera underlines that the majority of these migrants came via finding jobs or family unifications as well, their movement is differentiated from the first wave of migrants. As the armed conflict in Turkey got more violent asylum seekers to Germany increased even more in the 1990s. And after 2000's the migration from Turkey to Germany is described as "irregular." (Sirkeci, Cohen, and Yazgan 2012) It is the migration of highly educated women after 2010 that is of concern of this thesis.

1.4 Literature Review

"The current share of women in the world's population of international migrants is close to half, and available evidence suggests that migration flows and their impacts are strongly gendered." (Morrison, Schiff, and Sjöblom 2007, 1). Yet migration of women stayed under-researched for long, especially in terms of highly skilled migration Dumont, Martin and Spielvogel underline that despite the existing gender inequality, migration of highly skilled women to OECD countries is increasing: "...female migration to OECD countries has been increasing significantly in recent decades, so that migrant stocks are now more or less gender-balanced. A more surprising result is that this is also true for the highly skilled. Taking into account the fact that women still face an unequal access to tertiary education in many less developed countries, it appears that women are over-represented in the brain drain."

(Dumont, Martin, and Spielvogel 2007, 21) As more and more highly skilled women migrate to more developed countries, more research focuses on what pushes these women from their countries and pulls them towards other countries. Ruyssen and Salomone maintain that gender discrimination functions as a push factor for many women to migrate. However, it is also harder for women to migrate because of gender discrimination. (Ruyssen and Salomone 2018) Research on highly skilled migrants from Turkey shows a similar pattern as well. In their article "Hidden gender dimensions of the brain drain: the case of Turkey" Adem Yavuz Elveren and Gülay Toksöz suggest that women in Turkey tend to migrate more than men do.(Elveren and Toksöz 2019) Conforming Ruyssen and Salomone, Elveren and Toksöz claim that gender disparity in Turkey pushes highly skilled women to migrate, which at the same time puts women in more disadvantageous positions in terms of labor and education. (Elveren and Toksöz 2019) Ulaş Sunata, who analyzes IT workers from Turkey that now live in Germany in her dissertation, draws an inference that "secure streets"– is especially important for women" (Sunata 2011, 52) from her interviews, yet she does not focus on this gendered aspect further. The desire to live in a place with secure streets is prominent in other migrant accounts as well. In their book "Bu Ülkeden Gitmek" Gözde Kazaz and İlksen Mavituna state that "male gaze on the streets" and "the hardships of being a woman in Turkey" are prominent motives their women interviewees brought up as they are reflecting on the reasons for their migration. (Kazaz and Mavituna 2018) Further in Bahar Çuhadar's interviews in her book "Yeni Ülke Yeni Hayat" out of 11 interviewees 6 are women and all mentioned the difficulty of being a woman in Turkey and how much easier it is for them to be in the public space in their new homes as women.(Çuhadar 2019) Moreover when asked about a "breaking point" for them to decide on migrating many answered by referring to a public sexual harassment case. The research on the migration of highly skilled women from Turkey is scanty, as is the case whole around the world, despite the existing literature proves highly skilled migration has a gender dimension that cannot be overseen. Further even the research that concentrates on the gender dimension of migration of highly skilled, does not regard city differences. With my thesis, I aim to fill this gap in the existing literature.

Further, there are only a few articles that compare the city experiences in Istanbul and Berlin. Yet these articles either fail to include a comprehensive gender analysis or do not link the city experience with migration motivations. For instance in her article "Public Space and Social Polarization. A case study of the New Wave Turkish Migrants with a comparative analysis of Berlin, Istanbul & Ankara" Ceren Kulkul researches on the public life experiences of a" young, high-skilled, educated and now migrated group" from Istanbul and Ankara to Berlin.(Kulkul et al. 2020) She com-

pares how do highly skilled people use and relate to the public space in these cities. Although she underlines that the city experience varies in certain aspects according to gender identity, she does not investigate the issue further. Moreover, she links neither the migration experience nor the motives of migration to the urban public space experience. There is also Şule Özüekren and Ebru Ergoz-Karahan' article "Housing Experiences of Turkish (Im)migrants in Berlin and Istanbul: Internal Differentiation and Segregation" (Özüekren and Ergoz-Karahan 2010) that compares the city experiences of Turkish immigrants in Istanbul and Berlin, yet it only focuses on the housing and does not make a gender analysis.

I believe my research not only contributes to the lack of gender analysis in the literature of highly skilled migration but also enriches the current literature by incorporating city experiences of women. Drawing from migration, urban, and gender studies at the same time, I aim to understand the migration motives of women via studying their experiences of sending and receiving cities.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

In their article "Beyond the 'National Container:' Addressing Methodological Nationalism in Higher Education Research" Riyad A. Shahjahan and Adrianna J. Kezar quote Chernilo: "As researchers, our assumptions underlying society, fix how we make sense of social processes including trends in higher education; hence the assumptions underlying the idea of 'society' are important to unpack (Chernilo 2008)." (Shahjahan and Kezar 2013, 20) In other words, our writings based on our assumptions become a new tool and way of reproduction of the ideas that led us to assume in that certain way in the first place. Therefore I strongly support the idea that as researchers we should not take any idea for granted and we must skeptically approach every given concept, no matter how sedentary those concepts are. It is our job to criticize and challenge the conventional ways of thinking and categorizing. I believe this skepticism is the fountainhead of the critics of methodological nationalism. Methodological nationalism is taking the nation as the basic, primal, and even natural unit of analysis. It is widely used in migration studies and therefore results in the reproduction of the nationalistic idea of segregation of people based on their ethnic identities. This method of research has been criticized by many scholars for "subsuming society under the nation-state" (Beck 2007, 286) and "mirroring the nationalistic image of normal life" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 325). There is an important body of recent literature that is aimed at moving be-

yond methodological nationalism and introducing other units of analysis. (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) (Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006) (Brettell 2003) (Vertovec 2007)More and more researchers acknowledge that presuming the nation as the elementary basis of group formations is problematic and they challenge it; since this method might lead to the neglect of other groups and, geographical differences and create a social context that is hostile to certain nations Yet, it does not mean one should disregard nationality. Liisa Malkki, for instance, states that rather than taking the national order as given and thus making it invisible, one should contextualize their study in that national order. (Malkki 1995) In their article "Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences," Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller identify three basic variants of methodological nationalism: ignorance, naturalization, and territorial limitation. (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002)Their claim in relation to ignorance is that classical social theory is "class blind" and overlooking the relation between modernity and nationalism. Many social and political categories such as the citizen, migrant, tourist are constructed and based on national identities that most of the time these groups are taken as homogeneous, and their internal differences are overlooked. The second variant naturalizes the nation-state that results in the national discourses, agendas, and histories being taken for granted without critically analyzed and problematized. This leads to overlooking nationalism's relationships to modern state-building and democracy. The last variant is about social science limiting the research to the boundaries of the nation-state and excluding the trans-borders processes from the migration studies. This means neither that migration is not affected by the nation-states, nor it is not important. The point is that when taking nation-states into account, one should not discount the fact that nation-states are in relation with transnational forces, which might have an impact on the migration policy of the state. These modes foster and support each other as Wimmer and Schiller state. They also add that because of this nationalistic doctrine migrants are seen as foreigners since they do not belong to the "receiving" state and even as enemies and potential threat in some instances, they are seen as "antinomies" within the well-functioning society. Another disadvantage of methodological nationalism that certainly deserves more attention is that because it assumes one identity is above others, it tends to neglect other social categories people might be identifying with and forming groups upon, such as gender, religion, etc. And this is exactly what critics of methodological nationalism are all about: they invite the researcher to be open to other possibilities and not to directly assume ethnicity matters the most. Following the invitation of Wimmer and Schiller, in my thesis, I take gender and the city as my primary units of focus.

In her article “Bringing the City back in: Cities as Contexts for Immigrant Incorporation” Caroline B. Brettel suggests that “city as the primary destination for newcomers should be a key unit of analysis in immigration research, especially in anthropology” (Brettell 2003) Cities differ socially, economically and politically from each other and these differences affect the experience of migrants they receive. Brettell maintains that even the history of immigration of a city is important for migration and incorporation of migrants. For example, she states that “presence or absence of ethnic enclaves, whether or not they are residential and commercial centers, and the extent to which they are dominated by a single immigrant population are significant factors” (Brettell 2003) and my research proves her point since many of my interlocutors stated that being able to find Turkish speaking people and cultural items in Kreuzberg, the Turkish enclave in Berlin as a pull factor of Berlin. Considering that migration experiences differ according to cities and in order to avoid methodological nationalism I chose cities as my focus points in this research. If the experiences of people as migrants vary in different destination cities, their experiences in their former cities surely vary as well. Hence rather than researching on the Turkish migration to Germany, I based my research specifically on the migration from Istanbul to Berlin.

I chose these cities not only because I lived in Berlin for a while and still live in Istanbul, although this experience did shape my interests and insights into this phenomenon. Istanbul is defined as the cultural capital of Turkey, as well as having the highest population. Moreover, according to the last three reports of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUİK) (Aytaç 2018) (Aytaç 2019) (Aytaç 2020)Istanbul has been the primary sending city in Turkey. More importantly, in her dissertation, Ulaş Sunata maps out certain route patterns for highly skilled labor migration (HSLM): “If any HSL migrant was from East, they inevitably moved to Istanbul via first the West and then Ankara. If they were from the West, they necessarily move to Ankara and then Istanbul, or directly to Istanbul. If they were from Ankara, they stay there or move to Istanbul. Istanbulers were not in need of any movement before HSLM” (Sunata 2011, 233)Therefore,Istanbul functions as the last spatial movement step of the transnational migration from Turkey hence constituting a significant unit of analysis for researching migration from Turkey. On the receiving hand, I chose Berlin first of all because it has been home to many labor migrants from Turkey since the late 1960s. Further, especially since the 1980s, Berlin has been a destination for the political defiant from Turkey, and the city with its “anything goes” atmosphere” (Petzen 2004) it has been appealing to to diverse groups of migrants. Berlin is represented as a multicultural city that welcomes all, although it is also claimed that multiculturalism is not that "integrated into the city’s cultural policy". (Bloomfield

2003, 167)

Migration experiences differ according to cities and therefore I focus on one sending and one receiving city in my research. Social and political statuses like class and gender also affect both city and migration experience. Yet there is not enough research conducted on the motives of women migrants despite the fact that "the stock of high-skilled immigrants in OECD countries grew by 152 percent between 1990 and 2010. . . " (Kerr et al. 2016) Further, although there are articles and books that include comparisons of Berlin and Istanbul in terms of different aspects of public space (Özüekren and Ergoz-Karahan 2010), there are not enough analyses through the gender lens and setting migration at the center. Although the before mentioned sources (Sunata 2011) (Çuhadar 2019) (Kazaz and Mavituna 2018) touch upon how prevalent the urban space is prevalent in women migrant's accounts; they do not investigate it further. Hence in this research, I focus on the city and migration experiences of women only. I aim to bring both a critical feminist perspective and a criticism of methodological nationalism to migration studies at the same time. With this study, I aim to contribute to the existing literature by bringing the experience of women in the sending and receiving cities as a critical focus in understanding migration.

The multifaceted relationship between gender and space lies at the core of this research since I aim to understand how women experience the cities they live in and how their experiences are related to their migration. In her book Space, Place and Gender Doreen Massey states that space is significant in both the construction of gender relations and the struggles to change them. (Massey 1994, 179) However, the relationship between space and gender is not uni-directional. Gender also plays a role in the construction of space. Gender also plays a role in the construction of space. Geography/space is constructed socially and politically, hence one must first analyze the social and the, political to understand the dynamics of a given space. Massey's gender lens in spatial analysis led her to the idea that gender and geography continuously co-construct and reproduce each other. In her own words: "The intersections and mutual influences of 'geography' and 'gender' are deep and multifarious. Each is, in profound ways, implicated in the construction of the other. - geography in its various guises influences the cultural formation of particular genders and gender relations; gender has been deeply influential in the production of 'the geographical'." (Massey 1994, 177) I believe it is clear how gender constructs geography, the dominant gender dynamics in the society having their reflections on space. The patriarchal rule gives space for men and leaves little for women in the public space. But how does the reverse relationship function? "space and place, spaces and places and our sense of them (and such related things as our

degrees of mobility) are gendered through and through... And this gendering of space and place both reflects and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live." (Massey 1994, 186) In so much they are gendered they also affect the practices of gender and the way gender is understood. The basic example she uses is women's mobility: She states that the spatial limitation of women feeds their subordination. (Massey 1994, 179) According to Massey the experience of gender and space are dependent on each other as they construct each other. Hence for example the gender experience of a woman can not be the same in different spaces, and in this thesis, I show how the experience of womanhood changes within the cities as much as across cities, in this case Istanbul and Berlin.

Of course, 'woman' and 'migrant' are not the only social and political categories these women belong to. To begin with, these women are from Istanbul and are highly educated meaning that they have had a privileged socioeconomic status, but now they are migrants in another country. Furthermore, they are coming from a Muslim majority country and living in Europe, where anti-Muslim racism is "virulent and persistent today" (Lewicki and Shooman 2020) Besides being a migrant, my research participants belong to other social and political categories that may have various effects on their lives. In migration studies "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2007), refers to different variables that can affect especially migrant life. Being critical of the ethnic lens, Vertovec claims that ethnicity cannot be regarded as the only or the most prominent aspect of individual life or group formations. Vertovec states that variables such as gender, language, different legal statuses, religious tradition, regional and local identities, cultural values and practices, migration channels, etc. also contribute to the diversities of migrants. Vertovec is critical of the ethnic lens that is embraced by both the social scientists and policymakers and suggests that to understand the migration and the "nature" of the group formations, one should not limit him/herself with the ethnicity or the country of origin but should consider every single aspect that can cause a "difference" in the migrant's life. He even refers to super-diversity as "a call, or at least reminder, to social scientists and policymakers to take more sufficient account of the conjunction of ethnicity with a range of other variables when considering the nature of various 'communities', their composition, trajectories, interactions and public service needs." (Vertovec 2007, 1025) The term super-diversity brings many categories together to understand different aspects of migration, rather than only focusing on ethnicity. Feminist scholar Floya Anthias criticizes the term super-diversity since she strongly believes that the term "diversity" conceals the emphasis on "difference". She claims that this disguised difference reproduces the "normal". By marking the different by its differences to

what is taken as the norm. So, the emphasis on difference strengthens the conventional norms. Also, which differences are celebrated, and which are condemned is something political, since it is the “normal” that decides to tolerate some differences whereas names others as dangerous. (Anthias 2013) Although super-diversity brings new categories of analysis, it cannot offer an adequate theoretical framework that takes account of domination and power structures. Categories such as ethnicity, political status, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and their intersections are situated differently in power structures and referring to these categories merely as "differences" ignore the power structures embedded in them. The intersectionality concept on the other hand sprouts from the need of acknowledging different power relations and domination structures. It does not only identify different categories, but it also addresses the inequalities created by these different categories, each having its own power dynamics. (Anthias 2013). Therefore in this thesis rather than using the “super diversity" approach, I benefit from the theoretical framework of intersectionality.

1.6 Thesis Outline

With this introductory chapter, I aim to explain the purpose, methodology of this study, and the theoretical approaches I made use of. By conceptualizing my research within the already existing literature I aim to mark my contribution to the literature.

In the second chapter, I explain how women experience and relate to the city of Istanbul. I discuss the ways in which my interlocutors, feeling that they are in danger as women, come up with strategies to negotiate their gender identity in the urban space of Istanbul. Further, I explore their statements regarding Istanbul’s transformation, particularly in relation to the 2013 Gezi protests and the coup attempt.

In the third chapter, by indicating the push factors of Istanbul with the pull factors of Berlin, I claim that the migration of the highly educated women I interviewed should be understood as urban migration. I show how traffic, as a site of harassment, and the “slow violence” (Nixon 2011) my interlocutors faced daily in Istanbul pushed them from Istanbul, whereas Berlin with its established migrant population had a pull effect.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss how my interlocutors relate to Berlin, comparing it to their experiences in Istanbul. My research shows that although my interlocutors lost their "social capital" (Bourdieu 2011) and face harassment and racism in Berlin,

they feel safer than in Istanbul. Further, they present themselves both as mentally and physically healthier.

In the last chapter, I summarize my analysis and indicate the limits of my research.

2. ISTANBUL

Urban constructs gender as much as gender constructs urban. (Bondi and Rose 2003)In other words, how gender is understood and experienced is dependent on the space as much as how space is experienced is dependent on gender. My interviews were corroborative of the idea that gender and space co-construct each other since all of my interlocutors differentiated their gender experiences in Istanbul and Berlin. When asked about her experiences of being a woman in Istanbul, Seçil answers with a deep sigh:

> "It is hard to be a woman in Istanbul" [1]

For Beliz to be a woman is hard everywhere, yet in Istanbul it requires you to be on alert all the time:

> "To be a woman is a problem everywhere. To be a woman in Istanbul is always being uptight and on alert.. It is a condition of taking guard and protecting yourself all the time" [2]

So even though Beliz thinks it is hard to be a woman everywhere, she differentiates her experience based on the city. For her, living in Istanbul as a woman means to be on alert and take guard all time and she is not the only one.

In this chapter, I analyze how my interlocutors experienced the city of Istanbul. Because my interlocutors did not feel safe and at ease in the city, they created personal strategies to negotiate the gendered fear they feel in Istanbul. In the section

[1] "Istanbulda kadın olmak zor."

[2] "Kadın olmak her yerde sorun. Istanbulda kadın olmak hep tetikte olma hep gergin olmak. Gardını alma, kendimi koruma durumu hep."

"Creating Bubbles within the City" I display how my interlocutors "create their own geographies" (Gardner 1995) of the urban of Istanbul, as they limit their use of the public space mainly to the neighborhoods of Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, and Bakırköy. In the next section "Balancing the Appearance" I discuss the different strategies used by my interlocutors to arrange their appearances in the public space. In this section, I suggest that my interlocutors negotiate their socio-economical class and gender through their appearances. In the last section of the chapter " Transformation of the City" I demonstrate the common narrative of my interlocutors on the transformation of Istanbul which is often discussed through the transformation of Taksim after Gezi protests. Further, I finish the section by revealing that my interlocutors assess the coup attempt as the breaking point in their decision to migrate. One of my questions in the interviews was "Have you ever been discriminated against in Istanbul?" Out of 20 interviews, 20 women directly gave an answer regarding their gender, whereas when I asked the same question on Berlin the responses revolved around on racism. In the interviews, interlocutors shared harassment and discrimination they experienced and the ways they came up with to avoid such circumstances. Public transportation, streets, and the workplace were the most mentioned places where women faced gender discrimination. In fact, all of my interlocutors who had professional experience before migration stated that they were discriminated against in their work environment, with one exception. Naz, who works in an IT job, states that in the workplace she is made to feel her gender in Berlin, whereas in Istanbul she never had a similar experience in the workplace:

> "I was made to feel that I am a woman in Berlin more in the workplace" [3]

However, Naz was the only one amongst my interlocutors who had a more positive experience in the workplace while in Istanbul. All others shared personal experiences of subtle discrimination in the workplace. There were also stories of serious sexual harassment cases shared taking place in work environments. My interlocutors said that they were often treated as children, or too naive and sensitive to get the job done. Seçil says she was called "a princess" and assumed not to get the job done, Elvin was criticized for not being harsh enough to workers because she smiled and said "good morning," Alara was judged because she did not seem religious enough and Berra stated that she witnessed other women facing mobbing after returning from maternity leave. Public transportation was also mentioned often as a site

[3] "İşyerinde kadın olduğumu Berlin'de daha çok hissettirildim."

of harassment, many of these women stated that they were physically harassed in public transportation. In order to deal with and avoid such discrimination and harassment, my interlocutors developed strategies.

To start with, all of my interlocutors underlined that they tried to use only some parts of the city. Because their experience of space as women varies according to the neighborhoods they are in, they avoid going to certain spaces. In fact, they created their bubbles within the city, in which they feel respectively freer and safer. Further, they also felt obliged to look in a certain way, to negotiate their gender and class at the same time. On the one hand, they need to look "decent" but on the other, they should not dress in a revealing and remarkable way. Therefore, they either avoided dressing some clothes or divided their wardrobes into different segments based on places to wear them or simply fought over to wear or not to wear some items. So they had to think hard and long about what to wear on a daily basis. Furthermore, as Beliz summarizes they also felt the need to monitor and be aware of the environment. Ege's words are synoptic in reflecting these strategies:

> "It is not easy to be a woman in Istanbul. But because I lived in bubbles, and did not go to the periphery or use the public transportation I have always existed in or close to safe space." [4]

The narratives of Istanbul in the interviews were surprisingly similar. The interlocutors all referred to the transformation of Istanbul and explained this transformation through Taksim. According to my interlocutors, Taksim changed drastically after Gezi protests, when heterogeneous groups were excluded from the public space as it started to be standardized. Because my interlocutors could not find space for themselves and did not feel safe they avoided public spaces like Taksim. After Gezi protests, Taksim and hence Istanbul started to change for good as the political climate in Turkey also did. Further they regard the coup attempt in 2016 as the climax of this political attempt and many define the years of 2015 and 2016 as their breaking point in their decision to migrate. In other words, most of my interlocutors narrate the transformation of Istanbul especially after Gezi protests, bombings, and the coup attempt as their main reasons for migration.

[4] "Istanbulda kadın olmak kolay değil, ama bubblelarda yaşadığım için, çeperine gitmediğim için topluma taşıma kullanmadığım için falan hep safe space a yakın yerlerde var oldum."

2.1 Creating Bubbles within the City

Gender and space co-construct each other, meaning that space has a great impact on how we perceive and experience our gender identities. (Massey 1994) Understanding of gender in certain places might not always apply to everyone and pose a threat in some circumstances for women. In my interviews too, women remarked that they only used certain parts of the city. Gardner classifies avoidance as the most popular strategy women use in their negotiations of the urban space. She states that with avoiding places in which harassment is a big possibility, women create their own geographies of the city: "The most popular reactions were sometimes formalized into a conscious strategy to avoid a place or a situation where harassment was feared to occur or to avoid (or try to avoid) people the informant considered likely to cause it. Women also constructed, sometimes quite explicitly, their own geography of public space, especially urban public space. This geography, based on their experiences, comprised safety zones, and zones where a woman would not dare go unless accompanied." (Gardner 1995, 202) So Gardner explains this tendency to avoid certain spaces by stating that women construct their own geography of urban public space and I observed this to be the case with my interlocutors as well. In all of my interviews, certain neighborhoods were named as "comfortable" for women. My interlocutors have clear distinctions and categorizations of neighborhoods in Istanbul that are done according to how safe they are for women. Since their experiences of their gender are very much dependent on the neighborhood, my interlocutors were very clear with the spaces within the city they are present at. Hazal summarizes the dramatic difference of gendered experience in different neighborhoods with one clear statement:

> "Being a woman varies according to the neighborhood." [5]

Derin too touches upon how her appearance and behavior varied in different contexts as well. She feels like she had to know and follow the gendered rules of a neighborhood:

> "You have to know what to do where. You can do a certain movement, say something or wear some clothes in one neighborhood but cannot in

[5] "Kadın olmak mahallesine göre değişir".

> another." [6]

So my interlocutors experienced their gender identities differently in distinct spaces within the city and they categorized these spaces accordingly. Yet these neighborhood categories are not always stable, for example, although many of my interlocutors regarded Taksim as a safe space before, they do not regard it that way anymore. Seçil, who regularly spent time in Taksim before states that after Taksim and surrounding neighborhoods changed she had to go somewhere that she feels safer and more at ease, suggesting that she used to feel at ease, happy and safe in Taksim and its surrounding neighborhoods before:

> "To loose Beyoğlu with time, not being able to go to Karaköy, not feeling at ease necessitated to go somewhere else. A happier, more peaceful, more at ease and safer place." [7]

Beliz too mentioned that she used to feel safe in Taksim and implied that it changed after Gezi protests. As these women started to feel "anxious" in Seçil's words, they changed Taksim's categorization and labeled it as not safe, resulting in avoidance of going there. In other words, they removed Taksim from their own geographies of Istanbul. Zeynep was different in that sense, she was fully aware of the change in Taksim and decided to "resist" in her own words. She tried to be present at Taksim as much as possible because she thought someone has to be there not to fully let Taksim be destroyed. She considers her presence in Taksim as a resistance:

> "I resisted even people stopped going to Taksim, I did not want it to change. But it changed a lot even between the period between I started highschool and graduated from university" But I always tried to resist, thinking that some should keep going there so that it would not be destroyed. I want to remark that Taksim has a great importance to me... It was a social place in which you could meet people but then that crowd started to move to other places... I remember Taksim being a fun place, it felt like one to me I also felt at ease there. Shops changed, everything changed and became oriented to tourists." [8]

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[6] "Nerede ne yapacağınızı bilmek zorundasınız.Bir mahhallede bir hareketi yaparken başka mahallede şu hareketi yapamazsın, şunu söyleyemezsin, şunu giyemezsin gibi bir durum var."

[7] "Zamanla Beyoğlunu kaybetmek, Karaköye gidememek, kendini rahat hissetmemek, böyle daha farklı yerlere gitmeyi gerektirdi. Daha mutlu, huzurlu, rahat ve güvende"

[8] "Ben insanlar taksime gitmeyi bıraktığında da direndim yani, yani o yerin değişmesini istemedim ki liseden

But Zeynep is an exception among the other women I talked to, others stopped going to Taksim as they started to categorize it as an uneasy space. Like Taksim my interlocutors avoided going to multiple spaces within the city, in fact, many implied that they only went to specific spaces in Istanbul like Beşiktaş and Kadıköy. In point of fact, my interviews revealed that places these women avoided are much more than places they go in quantity. Hence the geographies these women created for themselves are limited to a few neighborhoods only. Maybe that is why 34-year-old Başak explicitly refers to this tendency to only use specific places within the city as creating a bubble, which is possible for a particular economic class:

> "I feel like if you are above a certain income level in Istanbul, you can create your own bubble and be happy." [9]

Although Başak was the only one that used the term bubble, all of my interlocutors mentioned that they would visit only in certain neighborhoods in Istanbul. Sude calls these neighborhoods "kurtarılmış bölge" (liberated area). And when I asked her what makes a place liberated, she answers:

> "a place in which you can wear a dress... I said to my boyfriend recently that I really missed this (referring to wearing a short dress and holding hands in public in Berlin) to be able to wear a dress of my liking a bit fancy maybe. It may sound too elitist but there are only places I know in the Antolian side that I know in which you can walk without being harassed, I do not want to wear a dress to Taksim... Hence these spaces are liberated areas, you can walk with your partner, wear shorts, hold hands and spend time as we do here." [10]

Being able to wear as one wishes, walking without being bothered, holding hands with a partner are the standards that make a space safe for Sude and she claims in the Anatolian side of Istanbul, where she lives, there are only two such places.

üniversite bitirene kadar Taksim çok değişti mesela. Ama ben hep direnmeye çalıştım mesela hep şey diye düşündüm bazı insanların gitmesi gerekiyor ki oraya bozulmasın falan ama neyse. Taksimin benim için çok büyük bir önemi var onu belirmek istedim...Sosyal bir yerdi insanlarla tanışırdın sonra o kalabalık başka yerlere dağılmaya başladı... Taksimin eğlenceli bir yer olduğunu hatırlıyorum bana öyle hissettiriyordu bana rahat hissettiriyordu.. Dükkanlar değişti her şey değişti daha turistlere yönelik oldu."

[9] "Istanbulda belli bir gelirin üstündeysen, kendi bubble ımı yaratıp mutlu olabilirsin gibi geliyor."

[10] "Elbise giyebileceğin... Erkek arkadaşıma dedim ki gerçekten bunu özlemişim, istediğimi giyebildiğin böyle hafif fancy belki çok elitist geliyor ama yürürken rahatsız edilmeyeceğin benim bildiğim yerler 2 anadolu yakasında mesela. Ben taksime giderken elbise giymek istemem çünkü... Kurtarılmış bölge o yüzden.. sevgilinle yürüyebiliyorsun, şort giyebiliyorsun, el ele burdaki gibi zaman geçirebiliyorsun"

Like Sude, in many of my interlocutors' cases, the avoidance of neighborhoods is so deep that there were only a few neighborhoods that they used frequent. Bakırköy, Kadıköy, and Beşiktaş were the ones they mentioned the most as neighborhoods where they felt relatively safe and free. For my Boğazaiçi University graduate interlocutors Hisarüstü, highly studentificated the neighborhood the university is in is also included in the safe zones. For example for Ilgın her safe zones were Beşiktaş, Kadıköy and Hisarüstü:

> "The small safe zone that you can go consists of Kadıköy, Beşiktaş and Hisarüstü." [11]

But even for some women outside that are not Boğaziçi alumni like Beliz classified Hisarüstü as a safe zone. Ege clarifies what makes Hisarüstü safe by referring that the support from the students there. She says the local people are not queer-friendly but since her community also lives in the neighborhood, she was sure that she will be supported:

> "The places in which the community that I trust to support me exists, so it is not because the storekeepers there are homo-friendly." [12]

Kurtuluş is also classified as a safe zone for my queer interlocutors. Both Ege and Ilgın mentioned that they felt safe in Tatavla (Kurtuluş), despite the increasing homophobic incidents taking place there. Yet even in these neighborhoods, my interlocutors did not feel totally safe. Leyla, who is born and lived in Istanbul all of her life until she moved to Berlin, lived in one of these neighborhoods and another one she defines as safe and where women can be comfortable.

> "In fact both neighborhoods are places that woman can go out at night and won't have much trouble."[13]

Yet she then gave examples of public harassment and fear that she experienced in

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[11] "Kadıköy Beşiktaş, Hisarüstü o küçük safe zone yani gidebileceğin"

[12] "Güvendiğim arkamda olduğunu bildiğim communitynin olduğu yerlerde yoksa esnafı homodostu olduğundan değil"

[13] "aslında iki semtte bir kadının aslında gece dışarı çıkabileceği çok sıkıntı yaşamayacağı semtler"

both neighborhoods:

> "Once I got out of my house with a little dress I usually wear at home to the market, a little stupid pink dress, a 75-year-old woman stopped on the way and looked at me. Why are you staring?" [14]

> "When I go out at night I remember running towards home with holding my phone in my hand from the dolmush stop. Of course, I experienced such things, but I accepted such things. I do not know whether one could experience such things in Berlin, most probably not as it is not that crowded here. I did not examine the crime rates. But I spent my life with running towards home, checking my surroundings constantly and having my phone at hand to use it anytime, this was something that I became accustomed to, something usual." [15]

Leyla also stated that she could never live in a house without curtains in neither of her houses in Istanbul, whereas she lived without curtains in Berlin for months. So even in their safe bubbles, these women created for themselves within the city, they did not feel totally safe and free.

In brief, my interlocutors created their own bubbles to feel safe and avoid harassment in Istanbul. They inhibited their right to certain parts of the city as a negotiation strategy. Yet even the strategy of creating their own geography and bubbles proved to be not effective enough since they continued to face harassment or lived with the fear of getting harassed in those very bubbles.

2.2 Balancing the Appearance

In her article "Gendering the City, Gendering the Nation: Contesting Urban Space in Fes, Morocco" Rachel Newcomb states that young women in Fes regulate their

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[14] "Ben bir keresinde evimden bakkala giderken küçük bir ev elbisesiyle çıktım, küçük salak bir pembe elbise, bana yolda 75 yaşındaki kadın durup baktı. Sen niye bana bakıyorsun."

[15] "Gece dışarı çıkarken koşa koşa eve döndüğümüz dolmuşun beni indirdiği yerden böyle gece karanlığında koştur koştur gittiğimi elimde telefonum olduğunu, tabiki böyle şeyler yaşadım ama bunlar benim o kadar kabul ettiğim şeyler ki hani Berlinde yaşamaz mısını bilmiyorum mesela hani muhtemelen yaşamazsın burası da çok boş. Bilmiyorum, suç oranlarını incelemedim. Ama benim hayatım şeyle geçti, gece geç saatte dönüyorsam elimde telefon en ufak bir şeyde açmak üzere ve sağıma soluma bakkarak hızlı hızlı koşmak şeklinde geçti bu benim alıştım bir şey, usualdı."

behaviors and appearance according to "the complex rules" for occupying the mixed spaces of cafés and streets involve successfully balancing appearances with actions, with the threat of being perceived as sexually promiscuous as the punishment for transgressions." (Newcomb 2006, 297) On the one hand, because these women are upper-middle-class they should be fashionable on the other hand they should not attract too much attention. Her research revealed that women in Fes needed to maintain a balance between propriety and fashionability. In my interviews, there was a similar pattern. Because my interlocutors are well-educated middle-class women they are expected to look in a certain way and if they did not they felt like they are judged. Zeynep, who is very much bothered by these expectations names it as "label" whereas Başak says that there are molds of gender:

> "I believe there are many molds for women on how you look, sit, what kind of a lover you are, there are molds for men too though." [16]

To recast, the interlocutors felt obliged to look in a "proper" way for middle-class, well-educated women. Their appearance functioned as a label for them. These rules seem to be prominent in professional life as well. Sedef who has a work experience in Istanbul explains that she was hardly criticized for not wearing high-hill shoes in her work and she had to argue over having the freedom to wear whatever shoes she wants. She classifies being to able wear sweatsuits as a perk of living in Berlin. In fact, she was not the only one, being able to wear sweatpants on the streets in Berlin was mentioned by Başak as well. Başak finds it relieving not to have to wear make-up or have properly done hair all the time in Berlin whereas it was the quite opposite in Istanbul:

> "The absurd comments you receive when you do not want to be well-kept or do not wear make-up and just wear a tracksuit with a messy hair. The fact that it creates a wow effect in people if you wear a secondhand shoes." [17]

Başak even claims that these labels have become a lifestyle for them as white collars in Istanbul. Her words prove the fact that she has to look like a well-educated

[16] "Nasıl göründüğünden, nasıl oturduğundan, konuştuğundan, nasıl bir sevgili olduğuna dair çok fazla kalıp olduğuna inanıyorum kadına dair, gerçi erkeklere de var."

[17] "Canın o gün bakımlı olmak istemiyorsa, eşofmanla, makyajsız, saçımı ordan burdan toplayıp bir yere gitmek istediğinde aa neden ne oldu diye saçma sapan yorumlar yapılmaması.Giydiğin ayakkabının ikinci el olmasının insanlar için wow olmaması."

woman all the time:

> "The lifestyle of Turkish white collars is based on personal branding and image. The life becomes an image that you create for yourself and maintaining it. The mindset at abroad which is distant from the one in Istanbul started to attract me." [18]

Zeynep, who has been living in Berlin for few months explained that she feels freer because her outfits do not matter to anyone in Berlin. She suggested that how she looks like, what she wears is not an issue in Berlin as it was in Istanbul:

> "I feel especially free in that sense, since no one cares what anyone wears, it is not a subject here." [19]

Because my interlocutors belonged to a certain socio-economical class, they were expected to present themselves in a certain way. But at the same time, they needed to dress and behave in a way that they do not attract too much attention. Hollander, too states that Women report ... modifying their clothes and other aspects of their appearance, ... thus limiting their use of public space. These strategies are simply part of daily life as a woman..." (Hollander 2001, 105) My interlocutors found these rules limiting and regard them as making concessions from who they are. As a matter of fact in most of the interviews being able to dress like they want to was a prominent subject. When I asked about what they can do in Berlin that they could not in Istanbul, almost all of the women included dressing. Berra, a current master student in Berlin answered my question in this manner, suggesting that she could not wear some of her clothes in Istanbul but she does in Berlin :

> "Clothing issue. Here I can wear the clothes that got dusty in the wardrobes in Istanbul." [20]

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[18] "Yaşayış tarzı olarak Türk beyaz yakası olarak daha personal branding ve image, hayat senin kendin için yarattığın image ve onu beslemeye dönüyor.Yurtdışında ondan uzak mindset beni birazcık daha cezbetmeye başladı."

[19] "Hani özellikle o konuda çok özgür hissediyorum kendimi çünkü gerçekten kimse kimsenin ne giydiğini ilgilenmiyor böyle bir konu yok burda.

[20] "Giyim konusu, Istanbulda dolaplarda tozlanan şeyleri burada çok daha rahat giyebiliyorum."

To be able to find a balance between looking like a proper middle-class well-educated woman, being true to oneself, and not revealing "much" requires a great deal of effort. Therefore they created different strategies. For example, Berra mentions that she distinguished two different sections in her wardrobe: one for Istanbul one for holiday destinations. She stated she could wear shorts and dresses in holiday destinations but did not use the same dressing items in Istanbul. She added that she was very much bothered of compromising from herself:

> "I was categorizing my clothes according to the city I wore them: clothes to be worn in İstanbul and clothes to be worn in holiday destinations. This was really bothering me. Why do I have to be the one making compromises?" [21]

Öykü is very bothered of arranging her outfits according to space rather than her own wishes, she says she packed jeans with herself if she planed to go somewhere she did not feel safe and wore it in the university bathroom before leaving the campus:

> "I was born into a well-educated family in a big city. I graduated from Boğaziçi University and am financially in good terms. And I still try to arrange my outfit and not wear a dress if I am planning to go Tarlabaşı that day (Tarlabaşı is given as an example of a dangerous place) whereas that girl (referring to a girl she saw during her Erasmus)can ride with her mini skirt on. I am still arranging my self according to the place I go to, not according to my own wishes. I used to pack my jeans with me to wear it in the bathroom before leaving the campus." [22]

Sude, too stated that she could wear some clothes to certain places and it was a simple clear fact:

> "You can wear certain clothes to certain places. It is a fact that is as sure as two and two is four." [23]

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[21] "Yani artık kıyafetlerimi şeye göre ayırıyordum, yazlık yerde giyilecek kıyafetler Istanbul'da giyilecek kıyafetler. O beni çok rahatsız ediyordu ben niye kendimden taviz vermek zorundayım."

[22] "Ben büyük bir şehre doğdum, iyi eğitimli bir aileye, kendim Boğaziçinde okudum, maddi durumun iyi. O kız orda kısa etekle bisiklet sürebilirken ben diyorum ki aa bugün Tarklabışna gidicem şunu giymeyeyim bunu giyeyim. Kendime göre değil de gideceğim yere göre düzenliyorum.Yanıma kot alıp gitmeden tuvalette kot giyip gidiyorum."

[23] "Belirli kıyafetleri belirli yerlerde giyebiliyorsun. 2 kere 2 4."

She further continued to explain that she discovered that he could wear make-up and shorts in Istanbul as well if you are in the right place. She said until high school she was not aware of that lifestyle, because she could not lie as she wished in her own neighborhood. She claims she thought shorts are bought only for a couple of weeks spent in holiday areas.:

> "I grew up in Maltepe, and I did not realise what kind of a place it is until I started high school. When I started spending time in Bağdat Caddesi (The most known street in Kadıköy) I realised that there is another life style possible. Can we wear make up and shorts in Istanbul? Wow. Until then I though shorts is bought only for wearing at holidays for 2 weeks." [24]

Sude, too compartmentalized her wardrobe according to neighborhoods in Istanbul and holiday areas. Ezgi mentioned another strategy, she sayid when they were going to a fancy place, or a party her friends would bring the dresses they would like to wear in a bag so that they did not have to be on the streets and in public transportation with those dresses. In other words, they would arrange two different outfits: the one they wanted to wear and one for public transportation. But she finds it exhausting to have to overthink everything:

> "You have to overthink when you are choosing your clothes and endup with arranging two different outfits: one for transit anotherfor your the place of arrival."[25]

Ilgın, who came to Istanbul for university education also said that she and her friends chose their outfits according to the public transportation they used:

> "You also know that the subject of womanhood is something that was widely discussed for us. If it is hot in the summer and I want to wear something short, I had to take the ferry. If I was to use metrobus I had

[24] "Maltepede büyüdüm ben, liseye geçene kadar nasıl bir yer olduğunu bilmiyordum. Caddede takılınca şaşırdım böyle bir hayat da mı var. Tatil yeri hariç, Istanbulda şort giyebiliyor muyuz, makyaj yapabiliyor muyuz? wow.. O zamana kadar bildiğim şey şort alırsın bir iki hafta yazın tatilde giyersindi."

[25] "Kıyafet giyeceksin çok fazla düşünüyorsun her şeyi.Transitte bunu giyerim sonra mekanda bunu giyerim diyorsun"

to check the time, I use the metrobus but with more control."[26]

For some of these women, they stopped wearing short dresses and shorts gradually. Elvin states:

> "I started not wearing my old clothes. When I look at my old photos I am suprised to the dresses I used to wear. There is this photo from 2011 in which I stand in the middle of the Istiklal Street with a tight short dress. The dress is not a sexy one, in fact it is not even that short but consider it to be short now.[27]

To sum up, my interviews revealed that the interlocutors needed to find ways of negotiating their gender and appearance by, on the one hand, being fashionable and presentable in accordance with their social class, and, on the other hand by not revealing "too much" not to draw attention as women. Some of them used strategies like dividing their wardrobe according to where they are going to wear what, or packing extra clothes to wear on the streets, some argued not to wear certain items like Sedef who did not want to wear high heels, some start to dress in a way that covers more of their body. But none of them were happy with their strategies on dressing, because they regarded them as making concessions. I believe being afraid of harassment and thus making these concessions is what Nixon calls "slow violence." (Nixon 2011) Rob Nixon describes slow violence as "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all." (Nixon 2011, 2) The slow violence my interlocutors face makes them afraid, and behave accordingly all the time. The fear of getting harassed and being have to act upon that fear creates a feeling of uneasiness in their lives.

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[26] "Sen de bilirsin kadın hikayesi bu çok konuşulan bir şeydi bizim için. , akşam kadıköye gidiyorsan ve yazın çok sıcaksa ve ben kısacık bir şey giymek istiyorsam, vapura binmem gerekiyor. Metrobüse bineceksem biraz daha saati check ediyorum, yine biniyorum ama bir kontrol şeyi oluyor yani"

[27] "Eski kıyafetlerimi gimemeye başladım mesela, eski fotoğraflarıma bakıyorum mesela 2011den minici etekle İstiklalin ortasında ya da güzel dar bir elbiseyle falan, çok seksi bi şey de değil, aslında minicik de değil şimdi öyle diyorum çünkü Istanbul için öyle , bakıyorum diyorum ben bunu nasıl giymişim."

2.3 Transformation of the City

In my interviews there emerged a chronological narrative of Istanbul. My interlocutors referred to a social change within the city and based their story on Taksim. They claimed that Taksim and hence Istanbul became more crowded and appealing to one certain group only. The transformation of Istanbul is associated intensely with the change that occurred in Taksim of which became a push factor for them to migrate in the future. However, they stated that the breaking point in deciding to migrate is the Military Coup attempt that took place in 2016. Taksim is remembered as a former "safe space" by almost all of my interlocutors. In the previous section, I demonstrate how Taksim is removed from the "bubbles" my interlocutors created in the city in order to feel safe. They underlined that they used to feel safe in Taksim and its surrounding neighborhoods. Berra says:

> "Istiklal Caddesi was very different when we were in high school. I could feel safe there even as a high school student." [28]

Naz described the change of Taksim as its death, she maintained there was harassment and rape before but as Istanbul changed she started to fear more. My interlocutors often refered to Taksim's transformation, in fact most of my interlocutors refered to Taksim as "the old Taksim" and "the new Taksim" as if they are totally different spaces. But what exactly do my interlocutors refer to when they say Taksim changed? And when did it occur? In the 20 interviews, I conducted the most common aspects named to refer to the transformation are: standardization of people and spaces and the increasing crowdedness. And although not all of my interlocutors named "Gezi" as a turning point, they indicated the year that Gezi protests happened as the time when things started to change, particularly in relation to Taksim.

On the last days of May 2013, the protests against the urban renewal project of Gezi Park grew into a huge urban protest that later spread to 79 cities in Turkey. The collective action to protect the park turned into an anti-government protest in the middle of Taksim". "It was an 'uprising for dignity' (Insel, 2013), a refusal of the upcoming middle classes 'to live under the authoritarian guidance of a self-appointed father of the country' (Keyder, 2013), and a protectionist response of culturally rich

[28] "Biz lisedeyken Istiklal cadddesi çok farklıydı. Orda kendimi güvende hissedebiliyordum lisedeyken bile."

but politically poor urban middle classes (Wacquant, 2014). Others emphasized the impoverishing consequences of the AKP's urban policies. The revolt represented a popular demand for the right to the city for all (Kuymulu, 2013; Tonak, 2013), and was a reaction to the AKP's urban transformation agenda and its neoliberal interventions in public spaces (Tuğal, 2013; see also Sönmez, 2013a). In many ways, the Gezi revolt is all of the above, yet not reducible to any single one of them." (Erensü and Karaman 2017, 20-21) The protests ended after two weeks with brutal police violence as the Gezi Commune was ruined by the police. After Gezi protests the AKP (Justice and Development Party) begun to be a stricter and more repressive regime. The most obvious change my interlocutors observe in Taksim after Gezi protests is the standardization of places and people. Sude, stated that she avoided Taksim especially after Gezi, and added after Gezi the places she could go were limited as it was never before. She was so bothered by the political climate that she feels suffocated:

> "I did not want to go Taksim after it was walked over after Gezi... I remember being suffocated. It suffocates you politically. It disheartens you. It felt like they (referring to the government) restricted us more and we were suffocated even more especially after Gezi. The places we could go within the city were so restricted." [29]

Beliz linked the transformation to Gezi as well, she states she used to feel safe in Taksim but that feeling of safety turned into tension. For her everything started to change after Gezi:

> "I realized that I used to feel safer when I walked on Taksim. That feeling of safety turned into a tension. I was not in Istanbul during Gezi, but when I came back there was a transformation into a something sorrowful. [30]

She added that she does not want to romanticize anything since it was not that great in the past as well, but she could see different people with different identities in Taksim. In her article "An uprising on the Verge of Comparison" Umut Yıldırım

[29] "Geziden sonra dümdüz yaptılar ya ondan sonra gitmek istemedim zaten... Ben artık boğulduğumu hatırlıyorum. Bir kere politik olarak da çok boğuyor seni. Hevesin kırılıyor. Özellikle geziden sonra çok daha sıkıyorlar ve çok daha boğuluyoruz gibi geldi. Şehirde gidebileceğimiz yer o kadar kısıldı ki.."

[30] "Şeyi farkettim: Ben bir kaç sene öncesinde gece Taksimde yürürken kendimi daha iyi daha güvense hissediyordum. O güvende hissi biranda gerginliğe dönüştü. Gezi sürecinde ben Istanbulda değildim, geldiğimde çok hüzünlü bir şeye dönüş vardı."

states that alongside the gentrification projects in big cities, the Akp government also “despoil already plundered non-Muslim/non-Turkish towns and buildings” and in Gezi protests, which included people from different ethnicities and religions, this plunder of non-Turkish properties was addressed. (Yıldırım 2013) Elvin, also thinks that the multicultural texture of Taksim is despoiled especially after Gezi. She stated that there were people from different cultural, religious backgrounds and that texture made Taksim special but today it is the opposite of it:

> “Back then Taksim used to be a place that embraced everyone.When you entered a passage you could see an Armenian jeweler, joyfully high school students, people holding hands, people kissing, foreigner tourists, different people; everyone was there and it felt good to see people with different styles. Nobody disturbed anyone. The texture of Istanbul already harbors different cultures and seeing that made you think that you are in a special place. You felt lucky to live in such a place." [31]

Standardization of the public space of Taksim was a shared opinion among my interlocutors. They claimed that the hangout spaces started to address to a certain group only.. Some of my interlocutors brought up the increase in Hookah hangouts in Taksim because they associate it with a certain social class. Although some underlined that it is not the hookah hangouts that bother them but decrease in the number of hangouts they like and the increase in hookah serving cafes is what annoys them. As they and people from their social class could not find places to enjoy themselves in Taksim, they started going to other places like Beşiktaş and Kadıköy, which are often referred to as safe by my interlocutors. When I enquired what group of people they refer to when they say Taksim is appealing to one group only, they mentioned the increase in the numbers of foreign people. The foreign people they refered to were “Arabs” as few of my interlocutors explicitly name or others mean by referring to hookah hangouts. For Alara, the increasing numbers of foreigners caused a crowd and that is what bothers her, although she likes foreigners:

> "Even though the number of Turkish people stayed the same there are too many foreigners. I used to visit Taksim and Beyoğlu more but it got too alienated. I can define the change as alienation. Although I like

[31] “Mesela taksim eskiden herkesi kucalayan bir yerdi. Bir pasaja girdiğinizde bir ermeni kuyumcu bulurdun, onu görürdün, lise öğrencileri her yerde şenşakrak, el ele tutuşan insanları görürdün, öpüşen insanlar, yabancı turistler, onlar bunlar herkes vardı ve bu güzel hissettirirdi her tarz insanı görmek.Hiçbiri rahatsız etmezdi, Istanbul dokusu zaten kültür barındıran bir yer, bunu görmek de insana aa özel bir yer burası ve ben burda yaşıyorum çok şanslıyım diye hissettiriyordu...”

foreigners the crowd was really disturbing me"[32]

Başak, too was bothered by the tourists in Taksim:

"For example the fact that now Taksim is filled with tourists" [33]

Derin was more explicit as she said Arabic rooted people started come more to Taksim and the Bosphorus line:

"The number of Arabic rooted people increased" [34]

Leyla was disturbed because the tourist mass changed, again referring to the increase in the numbers of people coming from the Global South.

"The crowd of people changed so suddenly, the tourists changed." [35]

Öykü said she used to go to Taksim when she first came to Istanbul but now it is way too Arab tourist and male:

"Now there are way too much men and Arabic tourists." [36]

Ege, a 30-year-old queer woman maintained that Taksim held a special place in her urban life. She defines the path between Kurtuluş and Taksim as queer. Yet again she marked Gezi protests as a turning point for Taksim. She suggested that with neo-liberalization of the public space of Taksim caused non-profit organizations to move and standardize. She, too mentioned that some groups call it "Arabization":

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[32] "Türk sayısı aynı kalmış olsa da çok yabancı var... Taksim beyoğlu daha fazla gidiyordum eskiden ama oralar da çok yabancılaştı.Değişim yabancılaşma olabilir yani, ki yabancıları severim yani ama kalabalık olması çok rahatsız ediyordu."

[33] "Taksimin mesela o kadar artık turist kaynıyor olması mesela"

[34] "Arap kökenli insanların sayısında artış oldu."

[35] "Yani biranda değişti kitle, o turistler değişti."

[36] "Şimdi çok erkek ve arap turist."

> "The fact that associations moved out of Taksim as it is neoliberalized and the the change of urban space after 2013, it is what the seculars calls Arabization...The way between Taksim-Kurtuluş was a line in which queer visibility was really high." [37]

Beliz also refered to neo-liberalization by comparing Taksim to a shopping mall. Hale, too connected the increase in the numbers of Arab people with neo-liberalization. She stated that since they are the ones that hold money, space is constructed according to their likings since the goal is to make money. But she is also very disturbed of herself for not liking Arabs. She questions why she does not like Arabs and states she was made to become a racist:

> " Suddenly the Arab population started to increase and we started to be racist. Why should I hate Arabs?" The Arab population came and they are the ones with money and places started to appeal to them, for more money." [38]

Yael Navaro states that "Taksim has been known as the hangout of Istanbul's artistic and intellectual communities, the heart of Turkey's creative sector, with cinemas, theaters, art galleries, museums, cafes, tavernas, bookshops, and publishing houses. It has been the meeting place for writers, artists, actors, academics, feminists, gays, lesbians, transvestites, leftists, environmentalists, taverngoers, and anyone who would feel ill-fit within the broader norms and values of Turkey's established politics and society." (Navaro-Yashin 2013) According to my interlocutors, with neo liberalization of Taksim, this texture of Taksim which nourishes from different cultures, and art forms is lost and now it only appeals to one group rather than to all. Although some clarified that it is not the Arabs but the crowd that bothered them, the emphasis on the Arabs continued to be strong throughout the interviews. Serra also brought up the crowd as a reason for avoiding going to Taksim. But according to her, the migrants cause that crowd, again underlining the fact that it is the crowd that bothers her:

> "The arrival of migrants changed the whole climate of Istanbul. The

[37] "Taksimin neoliberalleşmesi ile derneklerin taşınması. 2013 sonrası urban space'in değişmesi, sekülerlerin Araplaşma dediği şey...Queer görünürlüğün Taksim-Kurtuluş yolunda çok olduğu bir yer o hat."

[38] "Arap nüfusu biranda artmaya başladı ve biranda ırkçı olmaya başladık, ben niye Araplardan nefret edeyim? E Arap nüfusu geldi, onların parası var e mekanlar onlara yönelik olmaya başladı. Daha fazla para için yani"

arrival of migrants did not bother me at all but it broke Istanbul's spell."
[39]

Serra implied the refugees from Syria when she said migrants. Serra's family has a migration background, and she is also a migrant, yet she was bothered by the "crowd" migrants compose. It is clear that Taksim no longer is a place of their liking to my interlocutors. As Taksim stopped providing space for different groups, my interlocutors started to feel like they are excluded from the public space of Taksim, as they could not spend time as they used to. Elvin summarized how she felt this way:

> "I would watch a street musician for half an hour in the subway, drink coffee in Çukurcuma and drink a beer at night in a bar by myself. Now none of these have a rhythm, you can not combine such activities especially as a single woman. What kind of a discomfort was it? To be honest nothing personal happened like an insult. But yu get a vibe from all the observations,people's viewpoints and not feeling good where I sit. I canmore or less understand what makes you feel what from experience
> " [40]

But the crowd and the standardization are not the only aspects that came up in terms of the transformation of Taksim. Taksim is removed from the safe space geography of all of my interlocutors. Because my interlocutors used to feel safe in "the Old Taksim" they did not have to restrict themselves in terms of their clothes as much as they do in recent years. 30 years old Elvin stated that she can not believe what she used to wear when she looks at old photographs. She avoided wearing her old, short and tight clothes in Taksim in her last years in Istanbul:

> "I started not wearing my old clothes. When I look at my old photos I am surprised to the dresses I used to wear. There is this photo from 2011 in which I stand in the middle of the Istiklal Street with a tight short dress. The dress is not a sexy one, in fact it is not even that short

[39] "Zaten göçmenlerin gelmesi vs Istanbulun bütün havasını değiştirdi.. Göçmenlerin gelmesi beni kesinlikle rahatsız etmedi ama Istanbulun bütün büyüsü bozuldu..."

[40] "Metroya binerdim sokak müzisyeni görürdüm yarım saat izlerdim, giderdim Çukurcumada bir kahve içerdim çıkardım akşam bir barda tek başıma biramı içerdim. Şimdi hiçbir ritmi yok bunların, yapamıyorsun böyle bir kombin tek başına bir kadın olarak özellikle. Nasıl bir rahatsızlık hissettim? Dürüst olayım kişisel bir şey olmadı nebileyim hakarettir bilmeme ne. Ama zaten gözlemler, insanların bakuş açısı, ne bileyim oturduğun yerde iyi hissetmemen alıyorsun bir vibe, az çok deneyimlerimden yola çıkarak neyin ne hissetttirdiğini anlayabiliyorum"

but consider it to be short now.[41]

Sude, too clarified that she would never wear a dress when she went to Taksim and classified Taksim as an un-liberated space. As women felt more and more unsafe and excluded, they avoided going to Taksim for good. Taksim emerged as a strong reference in terms of the transformation Istanbul went through. Gezi protests set the beginning date of the transformation, yet what was the end of life in Istanbul for my interlocutors? The breaking point that made the women I interviewed leave Istanbul is the years 2015-2016 together with the coup attempt. In the years 2015 and 2016, many attacks and bombings occurred across Turkey. Suruç, Ankara, and Istanbul are some of the cities these attacks happened. In Istanbul, the bombings happened in the city centers of Beşiktaş, Vezneciler, Sultanahmet, Taksim, and in Istanbul Atatürk Airport, hundreds died. Further on the night of July 15, 2016, military tanks appeared in Istanbul among other cities in Turkey. The warplanes, soldiers occupied the city. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called on people to get out of their homes and fight back. People followed his call and faced, and fought soldiers. The coup attempt failed; hundreds died. For my interlocutors, the years 2015 and 2016 mark a breaking point, since many defined them the years they decided to migrate definitely. Except for Leyla and Derin, all women defined these years, the coup attempt, and the democracy watches after the coup attempt as their breaking point in their migration decision:

Başak:

"Going abroad was definite for me after2015." [42]

Elvin:

"Not feeling free. That was the period after 15 July."(After the coup attempt." [43]

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[41] "Eski kıyafetlerimi giymemeye başladım mesela, eski fotoğraflarıma bakıyorum mesela 2011den minici etekle İstiklalin ortasında ya da güzel dar bir elbiseyle falan, çok seksi bi şey de değil, aslında minicik de değil şimdi öyle diyorum çünkü Istanbul için öyle , bakıyorum diyorum ben bunu nasıl giymişim."

[42] "Yurtdışına çıkmam 2015ten sonra benim için netti."

[43] "Özgür hissedememek oldu.O dönem 15 Temmuz sonrasıydı"

Alara:

> "There were major terror attacks in Istanbul in the years of 2015-2016. This was the reason I went to Erasmus. My psychology was suffering and I could not go out nowhere except the university campus.I was getting news of new bombings constantly and then I decided to go. I said to my meyself I cannot keep living in this country and I am going to leave it. But I had no idea how. Therefore I decided to participate in the Erasmus program so that I can experience abroad." |[44]

Ege:

> "2016 was a year we felt emotinally stuck. I moved to Berlin at a moment's notice." [45]

The feeling of insecurity on the streets and being afraid of one's life were not the only aspects these women feared from the attacks. The main reason setting their decision upon those years was the changing "political climate" or the "political mindset" of the country. Again the ruling political climate starts after Gezi as Sude claimed, but the peak point is seen as the years of 2015-2016. Zeynep explicitly said that these bombings, referendum, and the coup pushed her away. She added it was the overall political climate that pushed her:

> "First the bombing then the coup and the referendum. These pushed me, that political climate as a whole really pushed me."[46]

These women felt that they were not wanted and not safe in the city. They all compared the coup attempt with Gezi protests, saying that Gezi was nice and had a mark on them, but the coup attempt reminded them that they were "the outsiders" to the new political climate. Carney claims that Gezi protest is seen as against

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[44] "2015-2016 yıllarında, erasmusa gitmemin sebebi de aslında buydu, çok büyük terör olayları oluyordu Istanbul'da. Gerçekten psikolojim inanılmaz bozulmuştu, kampüs dışında hiçbir yere çıkmıyordum ve hani sürekli bir yerde bomba patladığını duyuyordum. O zaman gitme kararı aldım. O zaman ben bu ülkede yaşamıycam kesin gidicem dedim. Ama nasıl gidicem,hiçbir fikrim yoktu.O zaman bir erasmusa gitme kararı aldım, gideyim bir göreyim."

[45] "Duygusal sıkışmılık hissettiğimiz bir seneydi 2016. Apar topar taşındım ben Berline."

[46] "Bomba pataldı sonra darbe oldu, referandum. Bunlar beni çok itti, o siyasi iklim beni komple itti sanırım."

Erdoğan whereas the democracy watches after the failed coup are considered as supporting Erdoğan: “If Gezi became a movement against Erdoğan, the democracy watches were very much in support of him, not least because the coup was seen as a direct attack on the President himself.” (Carney 2019, 141) Ezgi shared her memories from the next day of the coup attempt, she mentioned how lonely she felt and how afraid she was from the collective spirit as she stated that the attempt was her breaking point:

> "Most probably July 15, the coup. That year was already very bad, too many bombings... The next day I needed to take the ferry and I was wearing shorts and a t-shirt because it was very hot. I am on the ferry waiting and watching the news having a jacket covering up my legs. It is filled with men and they are discussing execution. In that moment I thought to myself if one of these men offers to rape me there is no single person to stop it and I cannot do anything about it. It was the first time I felt that I am not wanted in this country that drastically. Of course Gezi was something but the coup was literally saying that I am not wanted here. I realized how serious the situation was: People hated me and what I represent. We also witness what are discussed after a woman is attacked, people question where she was and what she was doing when. So anything happens to me I will be blamed for it." [47]

Beyza, too found that spirit dangerous and compares the attempt to Gezi:

> "Gezi did not affect me that much, but when the coup happened and I saw those scenes I told to my self this is the end. Gezi was nice, people poured to the streets but with the coup we were shrouded. I found the people claiming to take the streets to die for him(referring to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) and this whole mentality dangerous." [48]

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[47] “Büyük ihtimalle darbe, 15 temmuz. O sene zaten çok kötüydü, çok fazla bombalama... Ertesi gün vapura binmem lazım karşıya geçicem hava da çok sıcak şort giymişim tshirt giymişim. Vapura bindim bekliyorum, haberler açık, ceketimle bacaklarımı kapamışım, içerisi full erkek ve idam konuşuluyor haberlerde. Biranda şey oldum şuanda buradaki insanlardan biri hadi şu kıza tecavüz edelim dese durduracak bir kişi bile yok ve ben hiçbir şey yapamam... Ben böyle bir yerde mi yaşıyorum ya diye düşündüm, ben ilk defa bu kadar istenmediğimi hissettim ülkede. Gezi tabiki çok şeydi, ama darbe çok sen istenmiyorsun diyordu olayın ciddiyetini farkettim. İnsanlar bende ve benim temsil ettiğim şeylerden nefret ediyorlar diye düşündüm.Saldırılan kadınların arkasındaki muhabbeti de görüyorsun, nerdeymiş ne yapıyormuş ben hatalı olucam yani.”

[48] “Gezi beni şahsi olarak o kadar çok etkilemedi. Ama darbe olduğu zaman ben köprüde o manzaraları gördüğümde dedim ki this is the end. Gezi güzeldi yani insanlar sokağa döküldü ama burda kefeni giydik senin için ölmeye geldik diyenler... bu mentalite bana tehlikeli geldi.”

2.4 Conclusion

My research findings highlight the intricate and close relationship between gender and space. My interlocutors differentiated their experiences of womanhood according to the places. They are subjected to "slow violance" as they are afraid of getting harrassed and being judged therefore have to adopt strategies. In Istanbul, there are only a few areas they felt safe, thus they only used these districts within the city. Beşiktaş, Bakırköy, and Kadıköy were the neighborhoods my interlocutors narrated most commonly as being safe. In addition to these three neighborhoods Tatavla/Kurtuluş was mentioned by Ege and Ilgın, the only queer interlocutors I interviewed, as a safe space. And Hisarüstü was mentioned by Boğaziçi graduates and Beliz as a neighborhood where they felt safe. These safe geographies created by my interlocutors are not stable and vary according to other social categories my interlocutors belong to. So because my interlocutors fear getting harassed and do not feel at ease in most parts of the city, they created their own bubbles within the city as a strategy to ensure their safety. Yet they do not regard these bubbles as totally safe either. My interlocutors also mentioned that they felt obliged to look in a certain way in Istanbul. On the one hand, because my interlocutors are well-educated middle-class women they were expected to look and be dressed fashionably. On the other hand, they had to keep their appearances in a way that does not reveal "too much" femininity. To negotiate their socio-economical class and gender through their appearance, they came up with various strategies. Dressing according to which public transportation they used or according to the neighborhood, packing their clothes with them to feel safe when using public transportation, or arguing over their clothes are the strategies my interlocutors mentioned. In the last section of this chapter, I explain how my interlocutors base their narrative on Istanbul's transformation on the transformation of Taksim after the Gezi protests of 2013. My interlocutors stated that with the neo-liberalization and standardization of Taksim, they were excluded from the public space of Taksim, which used to be among their safe bubbles before. They underlined that the change started with Gezi, but peaked after the years 2015 and 2016. The coup attempt marks a breaking point in their decision to migrate.

3. AN URBAN MIGRATION?

In this chapter, I try to analyze how much the migration of my well-educated women from Istanbul to Berlin is related to their city experiences. To start with none of my interlocutors are thinking of returning back to Istanbul. Although some consider moving from Berlin in the future, going back to Istanbul is not among the options. Beyza says she would return to Istanbul if she knew that it is the Istanbul she left years ago. Even if they consider going back to Turkey they say they will move to a smaller seaside city in Turkey. Öykü is very sure of herself and says that she will never go back to Istanbul. Leyla dreams to live in Datça when she is older. Therefore I claim that for this particular group of migrants Istanbul has become a push factor.

In this chapter, I first present the difficulty of mobility for women as a push factor from Istanbul. I argue that alongside the time the traffic consumes, mobility within Istanbul is extra stressful for women as it is also a site of harassment. In the "Forced to be a woman: Slow violence" section, I first underline that my interlocutors report checking and monitoring their surroundings constantly. Then I claim that my interlocutors are subjected to "slow violence" because constantly feeling insecure because of their gender creates extra distress in their lives. In the last section, I explain the reasons behind Germany, and particularly Berlin becoming an attractive destination for migration. Berlin with it's size and education opportunities rises above in the preferences of my interlocutors among other German cities.

My interlocutors do not feel they belong to the city of Istanbul and the political climate that has shaped it, particularly in the last decade. They do not feel safe as women living in Istanbul either. Further, the crowd and the limited mobility in Istanbul strain my interlocutors more as women because public transportation is an area of harassment as well. Another push factor of Istanbul is having to monitor their surroundings all the time. Selda Tuncer states that "Women are taught and expected to control any conversation, movement, dress and bodily gestures that might put them in situations in which they may be judged as sexually loose or

immoral." (Tuncer 2014, 337). This was the case with my interlocutors as well. They feel the urge to be on top of everything constantly to be able to protect themselves. However, being a woman in Istanbul means not only being on guard all the time, avoiding certain places, or dwelling upon one's appearance but also being constantly aware of their gender. Because these women feel like they are in danger because of their gender identities they are constantly aware of that identity. Therefore, I claim that my interlocutors were subjected to what Nixon calls "slow violence". (Nixon 2011) To be able to migrate, many apply for a graduate degree or a job, sometimes accepting to be demoted in their professions. Because doing a Master's in Germany is free, my interlocutors choose to do their Master's there. They choose Berlin first because they want the opportunities big cities offer. My interviews revealed that because there is a great migrant population in Berlin, my interlocutors see Berlin as "less European" and therefore safer for a migrant. My interlocutors also choose Berlin not only because of the high migrant population but also because of the established Turkish community within that migrant population. They consider being able to reach items from Turkish culture, Turkish food, and some services in Turkish as a great perk of Berlin. On account of these reasons, I claim that the movement of my interlocutors from Istanbul to Berlin is an urban migration. My interlocutors migrate from one city to other, so their migration is from urban to urban. Further regarding their decision to migrate Istanbul pushes them as much as Berlin pulls them. In this chapter, I explain what pushes these women from Istanbul and what attracts them to Berlin in detail.

3.1 Istanbul as a Push Factor

In the interviews my interlocutors refer to an urban change in Istanbul. They suggest that Istanbul has transformed in recent years and explain this transformation via Taksim. As I explain in the previous chapter the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests of 2013 is understood as the beginning of the degrading urban transformation of Taksim and, hence, of Istanbul. However it is the years of 2015 and 2016 that are defined as a breaking point in most of the narratives, with the bombings and the coup attempt shaping the decision of my interlocutors to migrate. As my interlocutors start feeling less and less safe under the deteriorating political climate, they decide to migrate. Another push factor for Istanbul is the traffic. Traffic and public transportation are central to the daily life of Istanbulers and in my interviews too, women presented traffic as a significant push factor. On top of the time traffic consumes every day, it is also a site for harassment. Women report trying to be

aware of their surroundings all the time and being on top of everything. Therefore for women, urban life creates an extra stress factor in their daily lives. Ilse Ruyssen and Sara Salomone states that “the perceived gender discrimination is significantly and positively correlated with migration intentions” (Ruyssen and Salomone 2018, 226) and my interviews were corroborative in that sense as my interlocutors referred to fear of harassment as a push factor. In this chapter, I first explain why Istanbul pushes them away and then why Berlin is chosen as the city of migration for my interlocutors.

3.1.1 Mobility in the city

Traffic came up as an answer to what pushed them from Istanbul in almost all of the interviews. The time traffic consumes daily is surely bothering for many. But it is even extra stressful for women since it is an area of harassment as well. “The TomTom Traffic Index (2018) , which measures congestion around the world, ranked Istanbul’s traffic as the sixth worst in 2018; the city has been described as ‘immobilized’ or ‘locked’ due to such heavy congestion (Özbay 2014).” as Nuhrat successfully quoted. (Nuhrat 2020, 326)Traffic is a huge urban problem in Istanbul, and it was a particularly burning issue for those who had full-time day jobs among my interlocutors, since they had the be on the way during the busiest hours. For example, Naz states that she spent almost 6 hours every day on the way when she was a student. It took her 3 hours to arrive on campus and another 3 hours to go back to home. Many of my interlocutors mentioned traffic as an obstacle for their social lives. Ezgi, whose family lives far away from the city center and therefore had to learn how to drive when she turned 18, says that when she met with friends, her “story lasted one more hour after she leaves the meeting.” Since it takes them hours to reach their home or meeting spot after work, the lack of transportation at night also comes as a problem. Alara, who lived with her friends in the city center states that she found the traffic and her limited social life because of the traffic unbearable as she started to work. She says that the main push factor for her is the traffic and talked at length about how consuming it was. She declares that it is way better in Berlin in terms of her mobility:

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> "Those two years are engraved on my mind as unbearable.(referring to limited time because of crowd and the traffic) Now everything goes smoothly, when I want to arrive at a place I can do so quickly. Berlin i a

> big city but I do not feel that intensity. What pushed me from İstanbul? To begin with it's traffic and how backbreaking it is." [1]

For Hazal Istanbul presents many opportunities but you can not make use of them. She says that she could not even find the time to meet her best friend:

> "I could meet my best friend once in every two months. We made tons of plans but the city did not allow us to do any of them. The city shows you many opportunities but never actually gives to you." [2]

Traffic is problematized by my interlocutors not only because it takes too much time but also because they had to face discrimination and harassment in public transportation. In the interviews, many women complained about being followed when walking on the streets and being harassed on dolmuş and busses. Ezgi who usually uses her own car for transportation states that often faced stalking and harassment:

> "Of course I was stalked on the streets and there were these silly touches or attempst to touch in the dolmush." [3]

Hale says that she used to take a minibus to visit her family and would sometimes start crying because she or some other woman was harassed in that bus:

> "I used to take the minibus to my mother's place and sometimes I used to cry. To begin with it is crowded, and either me or another woman is being harrassed." [4]

In order to avoid harassment, women create strategies as I explain in the following

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[1] "Gerçekten o son iki sene çekilmezdi, aklıma kazınmış.Şuanda da çok rahat gidiyor her şey, bir yere ulaşmak istediğimde hemen ulaşabiliyorum. Büyük şehir ama o yoğunluğu hissetmiyorum. Istanbuldan seni ne uzaklaştırdı: Öncelikle trafiği. ve bu çok yıpratıcı olması."

[2] "En yakın arkadaşımla 2 ayda bir görüşebiliyorduk. Bir sürü plan yapıyorduk ama şehir bunları yapmamıza izin vermiyordu. Şehir tam gösterip vermiyor yani."

[3] "Sokakta takip edildiğim tabiki de oldu dolmuşta saçma sapan şeyler dokunmaya çalışmalar falan."

[4] "Minibüsle gidiyordum anenmlere bazen ağlamaya başlıyordum. Kalabalık bir kere, ya beni taciz ediyorlar ya başka bir kadını."

subsection. In order to be fully aware of their surroundings, not wearing headphones while walking is one of the most common strategies used by my interlocutors. Hale says she started to fully avoid going out alone. Some arrange different outfits to be worn on the bus and carry their actual clothes in their bags. Or as Ezgi indicates, when they wear shorts, they cover up their legs to reveal less so that they do not draw attention. Another strategy is to take the taxi, although it brings other concerns with it. Taxi is obviously more expensive for transportation, meaning that it is an option for the middle class, like my interlocutors. They use it especially when they are going out of their social bubbles in the city. Berra says that to visit a friend in Gaziosmanpaşa, she had to take the taxi because she was not comfortable there at night as a woman:

> "Gaziosmanpaşa is not auspicious at night and I was having a hard time to go home late. I had to take taxi. It was one of the harships of living in Istanbul."[5]

In other words, if my interlocutors feel like it is no safe to walk alone or to use public transportation, they choose to take the taxi. For example, Zeynep states that sometimes she has to fight with taxi drivers that do not want to drive in narrow streets to drop her off exactly in front of her house because she does not want to walk alone. Although taxi is chosen for feeling safe, it also does not procure full safety. Texting the taxi license plate bursts as a new strategy to feel safer yet even that might not always help. Zeynep for instance states that as homicides increased in Turkey, she felt more and more in danger even when she used took a taxi.

3.1.2 Forced to be a woman: Slow violence

The fear of harassment based on gender in Istanbul and acting upon that fear is a shared narrative in the interviews I conducted. Apart from creating bubbles within the city and balancing the outfit between class and gender according to the neighborhood, my interlocutors remarked that they monitor their surroundings all the time. They claimed to be forced to be aware of everything happening around them. However, as they are always feeling under threat based on their gender and constantly watching out for gender-based harassment; they state that they are forced to be constantly aware of their gender. To bear such an awareness all the time comes

[5] "Gaziosmanpaşada, gece oralar tekin olmuyor, gece eve gelirken zorlanıyordum ya taksiyle gelmem gerekiyordu. Istanbulda oturmanın kötü yanlarından biriydi."

with its price.

In her research, Anna Mehta found out that women fear violence related to gender much more than men do. “In response to closed questions about fear of violence and fear of sexual violence, women tended to articulate greater levels of fear in relation to sexual violence.” (Mehta 1999, 76) Women fear gender-based violence they might be subjected to and find their own ways of coping with that fear. My interlocutors were also afraid of getting harassed and did not feel safe at all. Ezgi, a current Master’s student, thinks that she is in constant danger in Istanbul because she is a woman and thinks of herself as lucky not to be physically attacked.:

> "Noone attempted against my life but I know that this is purely out of luck. Because I did everything that could lead to my homicide. To begin with I existed and that was all I needed to do." [6]

Because they feel like they might be in danger anytime, “Women report constantly monitoring their environment for signs of danger, hesitating to venture outside at night . . . ” (Hollander 2001, 105) My interlocutors reported doing the same. They stated that they check their surroundings all the time. These women lacked the insurance of security in their lives, therefore they had to become their own security. Sude states that she learned to be extra careful after she experienced harassment herself:

> "I do not know anyone that is not harassed on the minibus or bus... I was also harassed and that is how you learn that taking a public transportation in Istanbul requires you to be extra alert and extra careful." [7]

Elvin was especially clear about how she had to find ways of securing herself by herself all the time, by trying to know and hear everything:

> "You have to be your own security all the time, have your ear to the

[6] “Benim canıma kastedilmedi ama biliyorum ki bu tamamen şans.Öldürülmeme sebep olacak her şeyi yaptım çünkü bir kere varoldum zaten başka şey yapmaya gerek yok.”

[7] “Benim minibüste otobüste giderken taciz edilmeyen tanıdığım bir insan yok. . . Ben de tacize uğradım ve o zaman öğreniyorsun ekstra alert, ekstra dikkatli olman gereken bir durum Istanbulda herhangi bir yere giden toplu taşıma aracına binerken.”

> ground just in case. You have to text someone the plate of the taxi your are taking... I could walk with two headphones on 10 years ago now I do not have the feeling. (referring to the feeling of safety) One way or other I have to take care of myself, know everything more to protect myself. To be a woman is a restricting feeling." [8]

To be able to wear headphones in public is mentioned as a privilege in other interviews as well. Because women feel the urge to be aware of everything around them when they are mobile, they either wear their headphones on one ear or not at all. Ezgi too mentions not wearing a headphone as a strategy to protect herself:

> "You always have different methods to protect yourself. You cannot listen to music when travelling and are always aware of everything." [9]

As Ezgi also states being on the phone, especially when walking late at night is another strategy used by women. Zeynep, too remarked that she calls her mother when she is walking home. Sude, Leyla, Sedef, Elvin, and Zeynep also mentioned that they used to text someone the license plate of the taxis they used, just to be safe. Zeynep especially started texting the plate to her mother after the increase in the homicides in Turkey and stated that she highly doubts that her brother does the same. To feel safer in the city, my interlocutors find strategies like monitoring, being on guard, sharing taxi license plates. However, carrying out such strategies all the time every day is a hard and exhausting undertaking, as Alara attests to:

> "It was hard, I had to pay attention. There were always things that I had to check on, it was difficult." [10]

Öykü also states that it was exhausting since on the one hand, she does not want to need anyone to be safe but on the other she is afraid. She had to think about safety all the time:

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[8] "Her zaman kendi güvenliğin olmak zorundasın, kulağın ekstra açık olmak zorunda bir şey olursa diye,bildiğin taksinin plakasını atmak vs... 10 sene evvel iki kulaklık gezerken artık o hissiyatım yok. Bir şekilde hep kendime dikkat etmek zorundayım, hep bir şeyleri fazla bilmek zorundayım kendimi korumak adına. kisitlayici bir his kadin olmak."

[9] "Sürekli gereksiz yöntemlerin var kendini korumak için. Bir yerden bir yere giderken müzik dinlemezsin, telefondasındır, her şeyi farkındasındır"

[10] "Zordu, dikkat etmem gerekiyordu. Sürekli kontrol etmem gereken şeyler vardı, zorlanıyordum"

> "You cannot bring yourself to call someone to pick you up but at the same time you are simply afraid.(referring to the situations in which she calls her boyfriend to company her to home at night.) You think over and over, it was tiring."[11]

Serra too feels tired of feeling like she can be under attack all time and constantly checking her environment. In fact, she uses the word "war" to describe how she negotiates her gender in Istanbul:

> "Istanbul was nice but after those 7 years I was exhausted. On the one hand you try to survive as a woman on the other you fight with all sorts of other things surrounding you."[12]

This conceptualization of "war" in relation to women's experience of the city, made much more sense to me when Öykü, a Boğaziçi graduate, called it "mental yük" literally "mental load" in English. She says that as a woman she always had to think and worry. She says she does not want to be accompanied by her male friends for her safety but she is also too afraid to walk alone at night and even that exhausts her. She defines her experience of Istanbul as exhausting, difficult, and full of mental load. Although Öykü was the only one using the term "mental load," it resonated with all the narratives. Elvin describes it as a "thought balloon" and states that living in Berlin made that balloon go away:

> "It is something that makes one thought balloon in your mind go away. Should I worry about the work, the school or the small pressures people create on me?"|[13]

What my interlocutors describe as a mental load or thought balloon, reminds them that they are women all the time. The gender-based violence that they have to protect themselves from constantly makes their gender engraved in their minds. Therefore, they feel discriminated against and harassed constantly as women, For example, Ilgın thinks that she is forced to be a woman by society all the time in

[11] "Yediremiyorsun kendine gel beni al demeyi ama korkuyorsun da bir yandan. Sürekli düşünüyorsun, yorucuydu."

[12] "Istanbul güzeldi ama en son o 7 yılın sonunda çok yorulmuştum yani hem bir kadın olarak ayakta kalmaya çalışıyorsun hem etraftaki bir sürü şeyle savaşıyorsun"

[13] "İnsanın kafasında bir düşünce balonu yok eden şey. Bir de bunu düşünmeyeyim. İşi mi düşüneyim okulu mu düşüneyim yoksa insanların bana yarattığı küçük baskıları mı düşüneyim."

Istanbul:

> "The society was pushing me to be a woman."[14]

Seçil, too feels as a woman in Istanbul much more than in Berlin. She thinks that gender is a much greater issue in Istanbul compared to Berlin:

> "You feel that you are a women in Turkey to your bones, whereas it is not questioned, thought over and not a part of life here.(Here referring to Berlin)" [15]

Feeling under threat and danger, monitoring surroundings, avoiding going to certain places and creating your own bubble within the city, being judged upon your appearance, and balancing it out between your class and gender according to where you are going. These are the individual strategies women use in Istanbul. Thinking, evaluating these circumstances, and positioning yourself against them is a hard job, as most of my interlocutors define it. Some call it mental load, some refer to it as a thought bubble. I read what my interlocutors face daily in Istanbul because of their gender as "slow violence." Nixon states that violence is regarded as something immediate in time and space and claims that slow violence is "incremental and accretive". Apart from the obvious discriminations and harassment cases my interlocutors referred to, they implied to be exhausted from having to be aware, think on gendered aspects of the city, and behave accordingly. The incremental mental load of being a woman in Istanbul creates stress on a daily basis. They consider not having to do any of these considerations in Berlin as freedom. The freedom from the slow violence they were subjected to. In fact, it is the lack of slow violence for them gives them a sense of "freedom" in Berlin. Although many stated that it is not necessarily safe and there is discrimination against women in Berlin as well, they define the main difference as not having to think about one's gender all the time. In Seçil's words the biggest difference in her experience of her gender in the cities of Istanbul and Berlin is not feeling that she is a woman in Berlin whereas it was the opposite in Istanbul:

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[14] "Toplum beni kadın olmaya zorluyordu."

[15] "Türkiyede kadın olduğunu köküne kadar hissederken köküne kadar burada yani hiç yaşantının bir parçası olmadığı, sorgulanmadığı ve düşünülmediği"

> "You feel that you are a women in Turkey to your bones, whereas it is not questioned, thought over and not a part of life here.(Here referring to Berlin)" [16]

Elvin too states that it is hard to be a woman everywhere, but she feels the freedom to go out at night in Berlin. She feels safe and does not monitor.:

> "I did not feel any pressure, I get catcalled time to time, but it happens everywhere: Istanbul, London, Berlin. But generally I have the freedom to come back at home at 02.00 am in the morning, with my headphones on. What could happen here? Even if something happens, someone will come for help if I ask for it."[17]

It is this lack of insecurity and freedom that gradually creates thought bubbles and a mental load in my interlocutors' lives. It is the full-time monitoring and being all ears that I define as slow violence. Although not sudden, the slow violence my interlocutors are subjected to exhausted them and drive them away from Istanbul. Therefore I claim that my interlocutors use migration as a strategy to negotiate their gender identity as well. Because they feel exhausted and desire to feel safe in an urban setting, they change their cities. But of course, Istanbul has other push factors for these women, which are discussed in the following chapter. As there are push factors from Istanbul, there are also the pull factors towards Berlin.

3.2 Berlin as a Pull factor

15 out of 20 interlocutors moved to Berlin as a graduate student, whereas the remaining 5 moved directly to work. The ones who migrated for a job, underline that they did not move for money but to live in Berlin. Alara had been working in Istanbul for 2 years as an engineer and went to Berlin when she was offered conditional acceptance. She agreed to work as an intern for 6 months and then to be offered a full-time permanent job, to be able to live in Berlin. She said she targeted Berlin only. Leyla for example says that she and her husband could easily move to Dubai

[16] "Türkiyede kadın olduğunu köküne kadar hissederken köküne kadar burada yani hiç yaşantının bir parçası olmadığı, sorgulanmadığı ve düşünülmediği"

[17] "Baskı hissetmedim ara ara laf atan oluyor ama bunun Istanbulu londrası berlini yok bence, ama genel olarak şey özgürlüğüm var tabi, gece 2 de eve dönerim, kulağıma kulaklık takarım ne olacak ki. Bir güvende hissediyorum.. Başıma bir şey gelse bir bağırsam biri çıkar yani."

and make much more money than she can in Berlin. They even had job offers from Dubai, but they turned them down because it is not the money they are after but the life the city offers to them. Başak resigned from her job in Istanbul without even getting the job and spent almost a year free waiting for her formal job offer. Ege went to Berlin without even being accepted to a Ph.D. program, which is quite risky. She applied for her Ph.D. a few months after going there and got accepted. Berra applied and got accepted to a Master's program that does not fit into her carrier plans, she says she uses the Master's program as a way of entering the country. All of these women take risks or give up something to move to Berlin. Germany stands out in graduate education among other European countries because graduate programs are free for international students as well. But my interlocutors choose Berlin among other German cities or cities that are close to Berlin like Zeynep did. When I asked what drew them to Berlin the most common answers are related to its migration background.

Berlin is the biggest and most crowded city in Germany. In Berlin 21% of the total population is foreign-born coming from 190 different countries. People from Turkey constitute the majority of the foreign-born population. Many of my interlocutors declare that they choose Berlin because it houses migrants from all over the world. Especially the established Turkish diaspora in Berlin serves as a big pull factor for my interlocutors. Başak, who worked and lived in another European country before moving to Berlin states that it is important for her to be able to reach some aspects from her culture and services in Turkish:

> "Being able to find an item that belongs to your culture, it can be tea or food or simply a service that you can get in Turkish seems to ease life."[18]

Naz also gives a similar statement, according to her getting some services in Turkish is important for her. Further, because she can reach items from Turkey, she does not have to give up her routines:

> "There are many Turks which means that I do not have to give up on any of my habits. For example I can provide food from Turkish markets. I can get some services in Turkish. You can meet a Turkish person from

[18] "Kültürüne ait bir şeyi istediğinde bulabilmek, bu çay olur yemek olur vs Türk hizmeti sağlayan birini bulmak hayat kolayaştıran bir şey gibi gözüküyor"

every occupation. It could be hard to get a service in German." [19]

" Berra too shares that she likes that Turkish culture exists in Berlin:

> "Although I came here to escape from Turkey I actually like the culture of Turkish people. I do like being able to find it in Berlin." [20]

Elvin, who only applied to Berlin mentions the existence of a Turkish speaking community as a perk:

> "The Turkish environment, you look for someone that speaks your language afterall." [21]

Berra also states that because there are many people from other countries, the risk of racism is lower compared to other European cities:

> "It can be the one city that you face racism least in Europe, since there many populations from different countries here." [22]

As a matter of fact, the migrant population in Berlin differentiates it from other German cities as well as other European cities from my interlocutors' perspective. Many women I talked to referred to Berlin as less European in one way or other. For example, Leyla compares Berlin to Amsterdam since she and her husband applied to only those cities. She says they always wanted Berlin since she found Amsterdam too" white" to belong to. She states she liked how diverse Berlin is. In fact, she thinks Berlin is like Istanbul in that sense, with the difference of Berlin having the standards of a European city:

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[19] "Çok Türk var, bu ne demek oluyor. Ben hiç bir alışkanlığımdan vazgeçmek zorunda değilim. Yemek mesela, Türk market var. Türkçe hizmet alabiliyorsun. Her meslekten bir Türkle karşılaşabiliyorsun. Almanca servis alırken zor olabilir.

[20] "Her ne kadar Türkiyeden kaçma kafasıyla gelsem de Türk insanını kültürünü seviyorum, Berlinde onu bulabilmek aslında hoşuma gidiyor."

[21] "E bir de türk ortamı, insan dilini konuştuğu birini arıyor ne de olsa."

[22] "Avrupadaki diğer yerlere göre en az ırkçılık görebileceğin şehir olabilir çünk çok fazla popülasyon var her türlü ülkeden."

> "Berlin feels so much like Istanbul. It is neither too cute to belong to as it is the case with Amsterdam nor too boring like Munich. Paris is a whole different case, I do not know who would like to live there if they are not tourists. Berlin really felt like Istanbul to us, we loved the diversity...We only applied to two citites: Berlin and Amsterdam. Amsterdam, beacuse it is an expat city but it was Berlin that we wanted. Why Berlin, because yes Amsterdam is beautiful and an expat city but it is way too white, it does not have the diversity, the conflicts." [23]

Sude, defined the same diversity of Berlin as not being "sterile" and although she was offered a Ph.D. in another city she chose Berlin since Berlin is bigger and not that "sterile:"

> "They offered me another program in another city in the interview but if it was going to be Germany then I had to go to Berlin. I wanted Berlin, because I wanted a big city...I like the fact that Berlin is not sterile."[24]

Sude is not the only one who chooses Berlin because it is a big city, in fact, many of my interlocutors mentioned that they wanted to go to a big city after living in Istanbul. For example, Berra, says that even though she escaped from the urban life of Istanbul, she looks for a big city:

> "No matter how much I did not like the city life in Istanbul, I grew up in a metropolis. The fact that Berlin is a metropolis.(answering what pulled her to Berlin" [25]

Başak, Hale, Derin and Öykü also gives similar statements: Başak:

> "It was very important for me that it is a big city." [26]

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[23] "Berlin hissiyat olarak o kadar Istanbulki. Ne Amsterdam gibi çok şirin olup kendini oraya ait hissetmeme durumun yok, ne öyle münih gibi sıkıcı değil, Paris zaten apayrı bir konu turistik gitmiyorsan kim orda yaşamak ister. Bize çok Istanbul geldi, o karmaşası çok hoşumuza gitti... İki şehire başvurduk berlin ve amsterdam, amsterdam çünkü expat şehri ama asıl berlini istiyorduk. Neden berlin, amsterdam tamam çok güzel ve evpat şehri tamam ama çok beyaz, han, böyle keşmekeşlik yok o karmaşıklık"

[24] "Başka şehir önerdiler mülakatta ama açıkçası Almanya olacaksa Berline gideyim diye , Berlin istiyordum büyük şehir olsun istiyodum. . . Berlin'in steril olmamasını seviyorum."

[25] "Istanbulda şehir hayatını ne kadar sevmesem de sonuçta o metropolde büyüdüm berlinin hem metropol oluşu"

[26] "Büyük şehir olması çok önemliydi benim için".

Hale:

> "I wanted a big city, if I were to go to Germany then it was Berlin." [27]

Derin:

> "You just do not consider to move to a small city from Istanbul." [28]

Öykü:

> "I lived in a big city all my life. Even for holidays I travelled to big cities not to towns or villages. I am simply not that kind of a person. I could not have lived in Heidelberg in Germany." [29]

Because my interlocutors lived in a big city like Istanbul, they do not want to give up on the opportunities big cities offer. According to the "World Development Report 2009" "the economic output is the highest in large cities where economic activity is concentrated" (Aoyama and Horner 2010, 134), further because there is more economic activity and firms in large cities, workers are safer in terms of sector-specific risks compared to smaller cities. (Aoyama and Horner 2010, 37) Alongside the job opportunities Berlin offers, my interlocutors also mentioned being able to reach different kitchens, hobbies, and cultural items as the amenities big cities offer.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown the ways in which my interlocutors have defined traffic as consuming a notable amount of time daily and standings as an obstacle before their social live. Because public transportation is also an area of harassment, my interlocutors were remarkably bothered while using public transportation. They

[27] "E büyük şehir istiyorum, Almanyada olacaksa e zaten Berlin."

[28] "Istanbuldan küçük şehire gitmeyi düşünmüyorsun"

[29] "Ben hayatım boyunca büyük şehirde yaşadım. Tatile bile büyük şehre gittim öyle kasabaya köye değil. Ben öyle bir insan değilim. Almanyada Heidelbergde yaşayamazdım.

avoided using it in the nighttime and used taxis instead. However, using the taxi did not ensure their safety, either talking on the phone or sharing license plates of the taxi emerged as security strategies. My interlocutors feel that they are always in danger in Istanbul because they are women. As they needed to protect themselves from gender-based violence all the time, they state that they had to be aware of their genders constantly. In Ilgın's words "the city pushed them to be a woman." Feeling in danger on a daily basis creates a mental load in my interlocutors' lives which I refer to as "slow violence." (Nixon 2011) The slow violence my interlocutors experience in Istanbul as women stresses and pushes them away from Istanbul. In their article "Hidden Gender Dimensions of the Brain Drain: the case of Turkey" Elveren and Toksöz reveal that "gender inequality in Turkey serves as a major push factor for women in Turkey regarding their decisions to emigrate and not return once they are abroad." (Elveren and Toksöz 2019, 41)Hence in this chapter, I suggest that my interlocutors use migration as a strategy to negotiate their gender identity in urban space. They decide to change their city to avoid the stress of being a woman in Istanbul. Sociologist Monica Boyd states that "poverty and gender equality are powerful sources influencing female migration" (Boyd 2006, 30) But both poverty and gender inequality should not be in extreme conditions so that women can migrate. She states that as people have more sources for migration, higher education levels and hence increased knowledge of the world their chance for migration increases. Further if gender inequality is too high, women "will lack both the decision-making capacity and the resources to migrate." (Boyd 2006, 31) My interlocutors are highly educated middle class women that could afford migrating, they moved to Berlin. My interlocutors stated that they chose Berlin for multiple reasons. Since many of them are graduate students, the fact that graduate education is free in Germany resulted in prioritizing Germany among other European countries. Although there are other cities in Germany, my interlocutors specifically aimed for Berlin, or smaller cities that are close to it. Berlin is praised for being "not sterile," and "not white" by my interlocutors. The migrant population and the established Turkish diaspora in Berlin, are presented as a perk of Berlin, as my interlocutors believed that they would not meet racism in such a context. Further, being able to speak Turkish when acquiring services, to access items from Turkish culture come as advantages for my interlocutors. Further many do not prefer to live in a small city after living in Istanbul.

4. BERLIN

My interlocutors migrated hoping that they would have a better quality of life and not face discrimination. Are they living a discrimination-free life now? Did my interlocutors find what they were looking for? Is Berlin heaven on Earth? In the first section of this chapter "Berlin: 'City of dreams'?" I underline that as they leave their social capital (Bourdieu 2011)behind in Istanbul, women suffer from loneliness, particularly in their first months in Berlin. Further, I discuss the ways my interlocutors face gender-based discrimination and racism in Berlin. In the following section titled "Genderless Berlin" I discuss the ways in which my interlocutors face gender discrimination as well as racism in Berlin, as well as their claim to feel safer in Berlin. As my findings suggest the reason behind this feeling of security is their trust in the system, people and the police. Since they feel like they have the insurance of a system that they believe will protect them, they do not feel themselves to be in as much in danger as they used to. In other words my interlocutors seem to have developed both their social trust and trust in the police as they moved to Berlin. Silvia Staubli states that not only social trust but trust in the further governmental institutions lead more trust to police in people. (Staubli 2017)Possessing such a trust, seems to have taken some weight off of my interlocutors'shoulders. Therefore, some claim that their mental health is recovered. In the last section of the chapter titled "Healthier Lifestyles," I outline the claims of my interlocutors that their physical health has improved because of the lifestyle Berlin offers them.

4.1 Berlin: 'City of dreams'?

> "If we were to bring my same friends in Berlin I would not have any more problems." [1]

These are the words that came out of Öykü's mouth. Although Öykü is the one who said it, I believe this sentence represents how if not all, most of my interlocutors feel. When I asked them whether there are things that they can not do in Berlin but could in Istanbul, the answer was clear and the same for all: their friends. Missing family and friends seems to affect most of these women in such a negative way that their migration experience in the first few months is directly affected by it. Many of my interlocutors indicate that they experienced depression and questioned their decision to move away in the first months. Berra, who lived in Berlin before for few months and applied to a Master program that does not really fit her career goals just to move to Berlin affirms that she questioned whether living in Berlin is worthy of being alone:

> "In the very beginning, in my first or second month, I asked myself whether I made the wrong decision and though was it really worth to be all alone here." [2]

Naz also stated that she wanted to go back to Istanbul every single day in her first months. She adds she did not know anyone:

> "In the first four months I wanted to go back every single day, I did not know anyone." [3]

Ezgi, who states that she left her social life in Istanbul at its peak, also experienced similar depression and questioned herself. Serra, too who now thinks she made

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[1] "Aynı arkadaşlarımı Berlin'e koysak hiçbir sıkıntım olmazdı."

[2] "Başta şey demiştim 1.,2. ayımda filan acaba yanlış mı karar verdim değer miydi buna burda yalnız olmaya falan diye düşünmüştüm."

[3] "Başlardaki dört ay ben her gün geri dönmek istiyordum, kimseyi tanımıyordum."

the best decision of her life and underlines that she is proud of herself for making such a decision remembered that she asked herself the very same questions. She was afraid that she had made the wrong decision. It is particularly harder for the women, who moved during the Coronavirus pandemic. As the epidemic made it dangerous and harder to socialize many of my interlocutors do not find their social circles satisfactory. However, as they spend more time in the city and get to know more people their self-questioning ends. Nevertheless, these women miss their loved ones, friends and fear that they will never form such intense relationships in Berlin. But even if they go back, many states that they will not find the same friends back in Istanbul. In fact in the interviews, it was almost shocking to learn how many from the social circles of these women were also migrants in other countries. In fact Leyla and Beyza had a hard time remembering if they had any friends left in Istanbul. In fact, some of my interlocutors stated that their migration decision was also prompted as their close friends started to migrate. They felt like they were left behind. Seçil, for instance, expresses that with her family migrating as well she questioned what she was doing there in Istanbul, she had no one to stay for. Leyla, too says that all of their friends were migrating and they felt like they were left behind. Nazlı states that she left at a time that everyone was leaving Istanbul. Nazlı's expression is significant since she refers to her queer friends. She says that from her queer social circle everyone was leaving one by one, if not other countries they were leaving Istanbul for other cities in Turkey. And when she came to Berlin, she says that she found herself in Neukölln in a queer social circle of people who migrated from Turkey and many of whom she already knew:

> "I moved out in a period everyone was falling apart and moving away from Istanbul. I moved into Neukölln to a place filled with people I knew from Istanbul." [4]

Losing friends both in Istanbul and Berlin clearly upset my interlocutors, in Berlin, it is even harder since they have to form a new social network from the beginning, although they might know people from before who have migrated like them. Further, one's social circle is not only constituted of friends. These well-educated women are all middle class and have access to services via people they know. Hazal, who finished her Master's degree and started working full-time in a well-established firm says that she feels an ambiguity in Berlin because if she needs something she does not know the right people who can help or support her:

[4] "Ben taşınırken Istanbuldakilerin dağıldığı herkesin bir yere taşındığı dönemdi. Ben Neukölne Istanbuldan tanıdığım insanların dolu olduğu bir ortama taşındım."

> "There is an ambiguity in Berlin, like not having enough people to have a strong community behind you." [5]

Ecem too feels the same ambiguity and calls it discrimination. She is looking for an office and in Berlin's busy and competitive real estate industry; she states that because she is new in the city and does not know anyone that can help her, she is struggling to find a place for herself. Some of my interlocutors mentioned that they help people from Turkey to migrate to Berlin. Since filling the paperwork, finding a program, funding or a job is a hard task, they say that they do whatever they can to help people because they do not want anyone to feel as lonely and as desperate as they felt. Ilgın for example says that she had helped so many people that she can actually start doing it professionally. Again, not knowing the right people when they were trying to migrate or afterward is presented as a problem. One can argue that what my interlocutors lose when they migrate, whether it is their friends or simply people they know who could help them when needed, is their social capital which is defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition... which provided each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital" (Bourdieu 2011, 86). Bourdieu states that social capital can be instituted socially through class, family, etc. I maintain that as middle-class women that are educated in well-known universities a great deal of my interlocutors' social capital is instituted through these channels. And as they move away geographically, they leave their social capitals behind in Istanbul. It is the mostly downsizing of their social capital that makes my interlocutors question their decision to migrate. Losing the former social capital is not the only downside of living in Berlin for my interlocutors. They also experience a new kind of discrimination, racism. Since all of my interlocutors were born into Sunni, Turkish-speaking families, they had never experienced racism back in Istanbul. When I asked them whether they were ever discriminated against in Istanbul they first gave answers regarding their gender and then some underlined that they are middle-class white Turks, meaning that they did not meet any racism. However, when I asked the very same question regarding Berlin, all answers were about racism. In Berlin, they are migrants coming from a Muslim majority country Turkey. Although my interlocutors expressed that they are not discriminated against in Berlin, as they continued talking there emerged similar patterns of racism they were subjected to. My interviews reveal that there are two types of racism they encounter: language-based and being compared to former migrants coming from Turkey. To start with many of my

[5] "Berlinde biraz belirsizlik var, arkanın yeterince güçlü olmaması yeterince insanı tanımamak gibi."

interlocutors said that they do not experience racism because of their looks. Having a fair complexion and light hair color seem to help them blend in. Seçil, for example, states that since she looks more German than Turkish, in stereotypical terms, she has not been attacked or discriminated against for her looks, but she adds that she expects to eventually experience discrimination:

> "I am not discriminated against because I look like a German, but I will meet discrimination eventually." [6]

Berra, too, states that in the first instance she was not subjected to racism because people do not think that she looks Turkish, but later with their comments that are supposedly meant as a joke they were racist against Berra:

> "Because they do not liken me to a Turk in the first instance, I did not meet verbal racism. But when we talk they think they are making jokes by asking questions like "do you ride camles in Turkey'. They are making fun." [7]

It should be noted that since not many of my interlocutors have a command of the German language, they might be missing some racist comments. Yet Sude explains that although she is not discriminated against because of her looks she senses some passive-aggressive behavior, but she cannot understand it because she cannot speak the language:

> "Definitely not because of how I look. I can not speak German. I can not understand what they are telling me but I do sense that people approach me in a passive aggressive manner." [8]

Naz, too states that a few times people shouted at her but because she could not understand what they were saying she does not know whether they were racists

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[6] "Ayrımcılığa uğramadım burda çünkü Alman gibi gözüküyorum, ama mutaka bir yerde denk geleceğimdir"

[7] "Beni ilk bakışta Türke benzetmedikleri için çok fazla sözlü bir ırkçılığa uğramadım. Ama mesela konuşurken hani istemeseler de şaka yaptıklarını zannetseler de hani Türkiye'"de yok deveye mi biniyosunuz dalga geçer gibi sorular."

[8] "Kesinlikle görünüşümden değil. Almanca konuşamıyorum. Bana söylediklerini anlamıyorum ama insanların bana pasif agresif yaklaştıklarını hissediyorum."

comments or not. However, she knows for sure that because she cannot speak the language, she draws attention. In fact, language came up in many of the interviews as a significant factor in shaping their lives in Berlin. My interlocutors state that other people are bothered when they cannot speak German. Elvin says people answer her in German although she cannot speak the language:

> "I never experienced racism. But sometimes the fact that I can not speak German annoys people, they answer you in German to spite."[9]

Berra, too makes a similar statement. She was harassed in the subway for not talking German:

> "We were verbally abused in the subway few times. They asked why we could not speak German and told that we had to know the language if we are in Germany. Except for that we did not experience anything big, though this is also not small." [10]

Zeynep, who was physically chased by a neo-Nazi in another German city, also brought up the language issue when she answers whether she was discriminated against in Berlin. She explained that she tried to speak German with the doctor's assistant and the assistant was simply impatient with her German and she felt helpless:

> "Two days ago the doctor's assistant was not patient with my German." [11]

Yet Berlin being a cosmopolitan city, many claim that they do not even have to speak German in Berlin. For example, Hazal says that she first started learning German but now as she does not need it both in her daily and work life, she does not try as hard. Leyla, too only speaks English and she finds it just enough. Yet, except

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[9] "Ben ırkçılığa uğramadım hiç. Ama bazen almanca konuşmamam insanları sinir edebiliyor, sana inatla almanca cevap veriyorlar"

[10] "Almanca bilmiyorsun ne işin var burda Almanyadaysan Almanca bilmek zorundasın gibi bir kaç kere metroda birkaç kişinin sözlü tacizine uğramıştık, onun dışında çok da büyük gerçi bunlar da çok küçük sayılmaz ama"

[11] "İki gün önce doktorda asistanı Almancama sabır göstermedi bence"

for Merve who is bilingual and speaks both Turkish and German as a native; my interlocutors hinted that their lack of the language is a reason for them to experience racism. Language-based racism is not the only racism these women are subjected to. Comparing them to the first generation of migrants that came to Germany is another kind. Many of my interlocutors meet such comments that are meant to be a compliment. Berra, underlines that When she hears comments about not looking Turkish, she does not know whether the person is complimenting or humiliating:

> "'We did not know there are Turks like this. Turks here are not like you.' I can not tel whether these comments are praising or humiliating." [12]

Ezgi received even more racist comment:

> "Oh then you are one the good Turks." [13]

The assumption that Turkish women are religious or simply oppressed manifests itself in my interlocutor's social circles and they are quite bothered by them. Gülay Türkmen claims that these assumptions regarding how a Turkish person looks like is more about class, and religion: "It is about socio-economic status. It is about religion. It is about rural/urban background." (Türkmen 2019)Because my interlocutors are well-educated people coming from Istanbul who are not visibly Muslim, they do not match the expectations of German people. And when my interlocutors' lifestyles are not conforming to these expectations, they receive racist comments. Elvin for example receives attention for drinking:

> "Oh are you drinking? Does your family know? Is your boyfriend a foreigner?" [14]

Elvin stated that she is sure nobody would be surprised and ask the same questions to a woman coming from a northern or Western European country. She states she receives these comments because she is from Turkey and she is very much bothered

[12] "Yok biz Türkleri hiç böyle bilmiyorduk işte burdaki türkler size hiç benzemiyor. Övüyor mu sövüyor mu belli değil"

[13] "Aa o zaman sen iyi Türklerdensin."

[14] "Aa içiyor musun ailen biliyor mu aa sevgilin yabancı mı?"

by them. The assumptions are not always negative. For instance, Hale lives with a family in Berlin. The family was happy to accept her because they thought as a Turkish woman, she would be very clean. It is not the comparison to former migrants that bother these women, it is the racist assumptions. These women are expected to fulfill the expectations people have over Turkish people and when they do not fit those expectations, they meet comments that are often offered as a compliment. Ezgi says that she does not know what to do with such comments, she once asked her professor what to say in such circumstances. Except for Hazal, none of the interlocutors stated to be bothered by being compared to older migrants. And even Hazal stated that the former migrants were not given any chance to learn the language and get an education. So she was aware that they did not share the same circumstances of migration.

In short my interlocutors express being discriminated against in Berlin for not speaking German and not meeting the expectations of what "Turkish" looks like. In most interviews, my interlocutors also raised their concerns regarding racism against women wearing headscarves and darker-skinned men. Leyla for example stated that she knew some Turkish men who were openly discriminated against because they look Turkish. According to Leyla having dark hair and a beard is what makes men more open to racism. Also my interlocutors confidently claimed that they would face more discrimination if they wore headscarves. So being visibly Muslim would change their experience of their gender totally. Apart from the racism they also experience gender-based discrimination in Berlin. Ege for example states that she has been harassed many times because of her gender identity, and that she and her partner experienced many instances of discrimination together. Hazal was physically attacked by a man in the street, and she was stalked. Beliz was also physically attacked in a club in Berlin. Many of my interlocutors expressed that catcalling also takes place. Beliz, states that one can wear anything she wants, feel freer and stronger but if she knows that if she wants to get an abortion she needs to go through a psychological assessment, or has to see a doctor every time she needs to buy birth-control pills. She refers to the biopolitics of the state on the bodies of women and states that there is more subtle sexism in Berlin. So if migrating to Berlin means losing social capital, facing racism, and not being able to totally avoid gender-based discrimination, why do my interlocutors stay there rather than going back to Istanbul? They do not feel like Berlin is totally safe, yet they stay there. Maybe Ezgi's words come most handy to answer this question:

"For example of course there is mansplaining here, but it is a matter of

> life and death. But here if I meet such a situation I am not afraid to say something." [15]

Despite their acknowledgment of Berlin as a city that is not always safe, my interlocutors also express that they feel safe in Berlin. Although it may seem paradoxical in the first instance, what my interlocutors refer to is trusting the system and the people, hence the political atmosphere. Öykü, who works and studies at the same time says that there is discrimination, racism, and sexism but she does not feel insecure, because she can call the police or other people:

> "There is catcalling here as well, but I can report you or invite other people to stand with me and call the police. There is catcalling but I can answer shouting back, I could not do so in Istanbul though. Being able to trust this is a different story. There is racism here yet I still do not feel insecure." [16]

Ezgi also says she can shout back to a catcalling because she trusts that if she calls the police, they will protect her, or people who hear will back her up. Trusting the police to help came up in other interviews as well, but it only made sense as my interlocutors shared stories of harassment by the police in Istanbul. For example, Ezgi, who frequently drove in Istanbul since her parents lived away from the city center shares that at traffic policeman added her on her social media after he checked her driving license and got her name. When Naz explains why she lived with her parents until she went to Berlin, she explains her friend, who lived by herself would say that she would not call the police even a thief breaks into her house. When I asked for the reason, she told me that their common friend called the police after someone broke in and as one of police learned that she lives alone, he started stalking her. Their friend avoided going to her own house for two weeks because the police officer was waiting for her in front of her building. Ilgın too made the exact same comment on the police. She said she had problems with the police many times, when they needed help with a situation regarding their house, the police judged them by asking why they are living with men. Like Naz she also joked about not calling the police even if someone breaks in. She said that she cannot call the police when she is in trouble:

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[15] "Mansplaining mesela yani tabiki var ama, Istanbulda ölüm kalım meselesi. Ama burda karşılaştığım anda bir şey söylemekten korkmadığım bir durum.

[16] "Catcalling olmuyor mu oluyor. Ama şey var ben seni report edebilirim ben burda insan toplayıp yanıma polisi arayabilirim. Catcalling oluyor ben ona bağırıp devam edebiliyorum, Istanbulda asla yapamazdım. Buna güvenebilmek farklı ... Burda ırkçılık var ama kendimi güvensiz hissetmiyorum"

> "When we went to the police after my friend was harrassed we had to face those serious problems. If I am at the station for a subject concerning housing, they ask why I am staying with men. I not only can not but also would not go to the police even if something happened to me. We used to make jokes on whether we would call the police if someone broke in." [17]

Ege, too states that she and her partner have been harassed many times, but since homophobia is seen and acknowledged as a hate crime in Berlin, they feel stronger. Trusting the system is what makes the difference for my interlocutors. They trust that they will not be alone if something happens to them. While talking about the harassment she experienced in the street, Elvin added that it happens everywhere in the world. But she trusts that she will be supported and therefore does not feel the need to use strategies to guard for a possible attack:

> "I did not feel any pressure, I get catcalled time to time, but it happens everywhere: Istanbul, London, Berlin. But generally I have the freedom to come back at home at 02.00 am in the morning, with my headphones on. What could happen here? Even if something happens, someone will come for help if I ask for it."[18]

Beliz also continued her harassment story by stating that she immediately acted and informed the bodyguards and they told her that they will find the harasser and get him out as soon as possible so she can continue to enjoy herself and they did so. Beliz said that everyone around her supported her at that moment and they made the harasser leave. She adds that she wishes everyone that holds security responsibility could be this educated:

> "I wish the police, security guards and everyone that holds responsibility could get such an awareness and education." [19]

Having people and a system supporting them, my interlocutors can use the public

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[17] "Arkadaşım tacize uğradığında polise gittiğimizde klasik o ciddi sorunları yaşadım. Atıyorum ev mevzusu için gittiğimde neden erkeklerle kalıyorsunuz. Başıma bir şey gelse polise gidememiyorum, polise gitmem hatta. Evime hırsız girse polis çağırır mıyım diye dalga geçiyorduk, böyle geyik dönüyordu"

[18] "Baskı hissetmedim ara ara laf atan oluyor ama bunun Istanbulu londrası berlini yok bence, ama genel olarak şey özgürlüğüm var tabi, gece 2 de eve dönerim, kulağıma kulaklık takarım ne olacak ki. Bir güvende hissediyorum.. Başıma bir şey gelse bir bağırsam biri çıkar yani."

[19] "Keşke bir çok yerde sorumlu olan kişiler, polis, güvenlik gibi bu tür eğitim ve farkındalık alsa keşke."

space without keeping their guards on for possible attacks. As they know they are not alone, they use the city more confidently. Further, although gender-based discrimination takes place in Berlin, my interlocutors also underline that they are not expected to look in a certain way because of their gender.

4.2 Genderless Berlin

In the Istanbul chapter, I explain how my interlocutors are constantly aware of their gender identity because they need to be aware of their surroundings to protect themselves from the possibility of gender-based violence. As women feel they are in danger in the city, they monitor their surroundings and develop other strategies. These strategies remind them that they are women all the time. Further, they also feel judged because of their appearances, they stated that as middle-class women they are expected to look in a certain way but also they have other regulations on their appearances because they are women. However, for my interlocutors, this is not the case in Berlin. Many of my interlocutors defined Berlin with exactly the same wording: Cinsiyetsiz (Genderless). My interlocutors think that Berlin is genderless because no one expects them to act and look in a certain way because of their genders. In the interviews, it was clear that not feeling under surveillance and not being judged is a critical difference between the experience of Istanbul and Berlin for these women. Leyla defines it as freedom. Freedom from being judged upon appearance and existence as a woman:

> "I feel freer and am not judged. I am free from the feeling of being judged... Not being observed creates such a feeling.No one judges you for the way you talk, dress or etc. You are free. I will take a sunbath at the park and we are okay with it. The feeling of freedom because no one looks at and observes you." [20]

Not being observed is presented as the greatest perk of living in Berlin. Derin, Ezgi, Leyla, and Naz these women all used the same sentence to describe their city experience as women:

[20] "Daha özgür hissediyorum kendimi ve yargılanmıyorum, yargılanma hissinden kurtuldum.. O bakılmaması sende öyle bir his yaratıyor bir şekilde, kimse seni ne giyiminden ne konuşmandan kimse seni bi şeyinden yargılamıyor. Özgürsün, parkta güneşlenicem parkta ve biz buna okayiz. Burdaki kimsenin sana bakmaması ve onun verdiği özgürlük hissi."

"Nobody looks even if you were to walk around naked." [21]

Derin continues:

> "Nobody cares about you. Especailly in Berlin they would not even look at you if you were naked. It is interesting to move to a city nobody cares what you do after living in Istanbul where the slightest you do draws so much attention and people stare at you. I am at ease here because I know that I won't attract attention. I can wear anything I want and still no one cares, that is why it is comfortable here." [22]

Yet, my interlocutors also stated that they would most probably meet more racism if they looked more "Turkish" or wore headscarves. As I discussed in the previous section, sociologist Türkmen, states that looking Turkish is about class and religiosity more than it is about ethnicity. (Türkmen 2019) So because my interlocutors are not visibly Muslim and are middle-class, they are not regarded as looking Turkish and therefore face less racism. Therefore I believe my interlocutor's argument regarding no one looking at them even if they are naked has exceptions, one of them being headcover. When I asked my interlocutors about their gender experience in Berlin, they tumbled for a while in the first instance as they could not find an answer. Beyza, an artist who is married now states that she does not ponder on the fact that she is a woman when she is in Berlin. She states that being a woman is an issue when in Turkey.

> "I never think that I am a woman in Berlin, I am not aware of my gender. Being a woman makes you think that you are a woman only in Turkey. I literally have no thoughts on being a woman here." [23]

Seçil, Serra, Alara, Zeynep and Leyla too make similar comments:

Seçil:

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[21] "Çıplak gezsen bakan olmaz"

[22] "Kimsenin umrunda değilsin. Özellikle bu şehirde, Berlin için söylüyorum,hani çıplak gezsen dönüp bakmazlar. Istanbulda en ufacık şeyin bile dikkat çektiği böyle insanların gözlerini diktiği bir ortamdan çıkıp kimsenin seni sallamadığı bir yere gelmek biraz ilginç yani. o yüzden rahat yani, ne yapsam garip karşılanmayacağını biliyorum.Her kılıkta çıkabilirim. Hiçbir şekilde dikkat çekmeyeceğimi biliyorum o şekilde bir rahatlık var aslında"

[23] "Berlinde kadın olduğumu düşünmüyorum ki ben cinsiyetimi çok farkında yaşamıyorum açıkçası. Kadın olmak dediğin galiba Türkiyede olunca aa ben kadınım diye düşündürtüyor seni. Gerçekten hiçbir düşüncem olmuyor bu konu için (Berlin'de kadın olmak üzerine)"

"You do not feel that you are a woman, man, small or old in Berlin. It is as if no body cares if I am a woman, man, gay or queer. So I do not have a feeling of safety and happiness in Berlin that is related to me being a woman, because here people exist with their characters and who they are. If you are not your true self and original it is hard to live here." [24]

Serra:

"It is not an issue to be a man, woman, lesbian, gay or LGBT here in Berlin. It does not matter whether you a woman or man, I never had to declare that I am a woman here. Maybe it is because it has been a short time since I got here but I do not feel obligated to express myself." [25]

Alara:

"In Turkey to be a woman is a widely discussed theme... I do not feel that way here. I am not favored for being a woman and 5 guys do not stare at me for it. There is no special attention."[26]

Zeynep:

"I believe there is no such a subject here." [27]

Leyla:

"As a woman you are genderless here. No body contacts you if you do

[24] "Berlinde kadın erkek büyük küçük yaşlı hissetmiyorsun bence. Yani kadın mıyım erkek miyim gay miyim queer miyim kimsenin umrunda değilmiş gibi hissediyorum. Berlinde kadın olarak çok mutluyum güvendeyim gibi bir şey hissetmiyorum açıkçası berline karşı, burda çünkü insanlar kendi kişilikleri ve oldukları hallerle varlar. Kendin değilsen ve özgün değilsen burda yaşamak zor."

[25] "Berlinde kadın olmak erkek olmak diye bir şey yok lezbiyen gay veya herhangi bir lgbt üyesi burda öyle bir şey yok. Kadın erkek bir şey farketmiyor burda ben özellikle kadınım ben demek zorunda kalmadım. Belki daha kısa bir süre burda olduğum içindir ama her açıdan kendimi ifade etmek zorunda kalmıyorum."

[26] "Türkiyede kadın bir tema, gerçekten çok tartışmalı bir tema... Burda bunu hisetmiyorum. Kadınım diye hemen 5 tane erkeğin gözü üstümde ayrıcalıklı bir davranış görmüyorum. Özellikle bana ilgi olmuyor."

[27] "Burda böyle bir konu yok gibi geliyor bana."

not contact them. It is the exact opposite of Istanbul." [28]

As women stop being constantly aware of their gender identity in Berlin, they report feeling better about themselves. Alara mentions that the biggest difference between Istanbul and Berlin is her mental state. Because she is not that afraid of harassment and discrimination all the time she does not have to think long and hard about her actions:

> "My mental state. In Turkey I used to be afraid of stuff. Here I am not afraid. I am not afraid to go out at night, in Turkey I would think whether I should avoid doing some stuff as a woman. Sometimes I can not go running during the day at I run at 11 p.m. In could not do it ın Turkey. Here I do not have to be carefull about what to wear. I am really comfortable with those stuff." [29]

For Beliz it is fighting less:

> "I fight less." [30]

For Ezgi, the biggest difference is to live in a carefree manner:

> "To live careless." [31]

The interviews display that the stress that living in Istanbul as women create is much more intense than living in Berlin as an educated, white-looking migrant. Although it does not necessarily mean that my interlocutors do not come across racism or sexism, it is clear that discrimination does not affect their daily lives as much as it does in Istanbul. Sociologist Peggy Thoits claim that people that are discriminated

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[28] "Kadın olarak gerçekten cinsiyetsizsin burda, sen kimseyle temas kurmuyorsan kimse senle temas kurmuyor bu tam opposite Istanbulla."

[29] "Benim psikolojik durumum. Bir şeylerden korma durumu oluyordu Türkiyede. Burda korkmuyorum, gece dışarı çıkmaktan korkmuyorum ya da kadın olarak Türkiyede aman onu yapmasam mı şimdi iyi insan var kötü insan var diye düşünüyorum. Bazen koşuya çıkamıyorum gece çıkıyorum gece 11de. Türkiyede çıkamıyordum. Ne giyeceğime hiçbir şekilde dikkat etmeme gerek yok zaten. O tür şeylerde çok rahatım."

[30] "Daha az savaşıyorum."

[31] "Careless yaşamak."

against suffer from poor health caused by the stress: "... discriminatory experiences are significantly associated with self-rated poor health, chronic health conditions, disabilities, high blood pressure, psychological distress, anxiety disorder, and major depressive disorder, among other conditions, even when other life stressors are controlled." (Thoits 2010, S45) For example, Hazal says she could not tolerate the tension in Istanbul for long, it pushed her away from the city:

> "To be honest I used to feel stressed out, unhappy and suppressed in Istanbul. What pushed me away from Istanbul was the tension and the stress." [32]

Since discrimination was a part of everyday life in Istanbul for my interlocutors, moving to Berlin resulted in the improvement of their mental health, despite facing discrimination in Berlin as well. They all state that they are more at peace and feel freer in Berlin. Further, although they are migrants, they claim that they are free to be themselves in Berlin. Leyla states that because she is free of judgment in Berlin she can be herself:

> "To be able to walk freely on the streets. I feel freer and am not judged. I am free of the feeling of being judged." [33]

Derin, too thinks that women can be themselves in Berlin. Although there might be harassment cases, in Berlin women can be "themselves" and experience their sexualities freer:

> "It is a crystal-clear fact that here woman can live their individuality's much more comfortably compared to Istanbul. Of course minor occurrences happen alongside some insecurities but when we compare it generally your individuality, all lifestyles, passions are easy to live and experience as the sexuality is also openly experienced in Berlin." [34]

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[32] "Ben Istanbulda kendimi daralmış, stresli ve mutsuz hissediyordum açıkçası... Beni Istanbuldan iten gerginlik stresti."

[33] "Özgürce yürüyebilmek sokaklarda. Daha özgür hissediyorum kendimi ve yargılanmıyorum, yargılanma hissinden kurtuldum"

[34] "Kadınların benliklerini çok daha rahat yaşayabildiği bir yer Istanbula kıyasla bu su götürmez bir gerçek.Tabiki yine bazen gvensizlikler, işte ne bileyim ufak tefek şeyler yaşanıyor olabilir ama geneline baktığımızda çok rahat bir şekilde bireyselliğin, işte özellikle berlinin cinselliği de çok açık yaşamasından ötürü her konunun, arzunun yaşam stilinin çok rahat yaşandığı bir yer yani.

4.3 Healthier Lifestyles

According to the TomTom traffic index, Istanbul is the sixth city with the highest congestion. In former chapters, I explain that traffic is a great obstacle in the social lives of my interlocutors. Especially those who work day-jobs spent hours in traffic. Many of my interlocutors were complaining of not having enough time in Istanbul. Moreover, traffic is also a site for sexual harassment for women, therefore my interlocutors tried to avoid using it as much as possible, especially at night. My interlocutors also avoided getting out of the house at night which is the only time they have for socializing, especially for those who work. Because of the time they spend in traffic after work, most do not have time to socialize or to do sports. Even if they had time, they have to pay for the opportunity to do sports since Istanbul does not have many parks in the city center. Whereas in Berlin physical activity is integrated into urban life. More than half of my interlocutors affirmed that they started cycling as their main transportation method. Alara, explains that she wanted to exercise for a long time and she had to make effort to do it, but now physical activity is a part of her life:

> "I go walking everyday... I constantly do sports, and I wanted to do so for a long time. I used to try it in Istanbul too but I was overwhelmed with people and could not do any of the outdoor activities. Here I run everyday. I have both the time and the space for it...I used to go somewhere to bike, now it is a part of my life. I cycle to the market even to walking." [35]

Seçil, too cycles, and says that she discovers the city by walking. She states that she is engaged in more physical activity in Berlin. Cansu says that she first started walking to discover the city but now she walks regularly to take air and engage in physical activity. She considers it as a major change in her lifestyle. Zeynep claims that she first started walking in the park that is 5 minutes away from her house, but as she saw other people running, she also started to do so slowly. Now she runs 5 kilometers every day, and she is quite satisfied with herself. My interlocutors stated that they have easier access to outdoor activities since the city is full of parks. As women I interviewed are engaged in more physical activity, they feel they are

[35] "Her gün yürüyüş yapıyorum... Devamlı spor yapıyorum, bu bayadır istediğim bir şeydi. Istanbulda çok yapmaya çalışıyordum ama bunaldığım için insanlardan outdoor aktivitelerin hiçbirini yapamıyorum. Burda her gün koşuya çıkıyorum... Hep içimde kalan bir şeydi burda hem yeri buldum hem zamanı buldum... Bisiklet sürmeye özel bir yere gidiyordum. Şimdi hayatımın bir parçası haline geldi. Markete onunla gidiyorum, yürüyüşe bile onla gidiyorum."

healthier. Hazal says she can manage her time in Berlin better because mobility does not take much time. She also says she started exercising in Berlin. She also underlines that she started eating healthy too. She states there has been a great shift in her health:

> "I did not do sports at all. No yoga, meditation or running. I was eating in a more unhealthy way. I experienced a great shift in terms of my health. Further, I can make better use of my time here. In Istanbul I had no time for anything. I can just divide my time in the weekend and make different programs here. You can not even travel within Istanbul. (She refers to the impossibility of doing multiple programs in a day in İstanbul because of the traffic.) Here it is only a 20 minutes of cycling." [36]

But cycling, walking and having parks nearby are not the only reasons they engage in more physical activities. Alara and Berra say that they can try new sports because they can simply afford them. In fact, 20 out of 20 interlocutors stated that their purchasing power has increased. Although some indicated that they are paid less because they are migrants, they are okay with it since they are still paid better than in Turkey. Although they used to work full-time in Istanbul, they neither had the time nor the purchasing power to live as they wanted. Elvin states she used to work in two different part-time jobs in Istanbul and was having financial problems:

> "I work at two different jobs, live with my parent and do not pay rent. I do not buy luxurious clothes. I sometimes buy 2 packets of cigarettes, take the dolmush and meet up with friends and drink two beers. This is the understanding of luxury. And I also eat. And my money is gone." [37]

Now with one part-time job she can afford healthier foods, can do sports, and pays her rent. She declares that she buys much healthier foods and takes care of herself. She gives the example of coconut oil saying that she could not afford it back in Istanbul but in Berlin, she uses it regularly. Berra too says that she has access to

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[36] "Hiç spor yapmıyordum böyle yoga meditasyon koşu falan. Daha sağlıksız besleniyordum. Sağlık konusunda büyük shift yaşadım. Bir de zamanımı burda iyi değerlendirebiliyorum. Istanbulda hiçbir şeye zamanım yoktu. Burda haftasonunu bölüp program yapabiliyorum. Bir kere bir yerden yere gidemezsin ki. Burda bisikletle 20 dk."

[37] "İki işte çalışıyorum, ailemle yaşıyorum kiram yok. Lüksü olan biri kıyafet alan biri değilim. Arada aldığım bir paket sigara ve dolmuşa biniyorum, iki bira arkadaşlar, lüks kavramı bunlar. Ve bir de yemek yiyorum. Bir bakıyorsun cebinde para kalmıyor."

better food. She used to work full-time in Istanbul and works part-time in Berlin alongside her Master's. Yet her purchasing power increased:

> "I eat healthier because I can afford them. My purchasing power in Istanbul with a full-time job was lower than my purchasing power in Berlin with a part-time job." [38]

Öykü summarizes why Berlin allows becoming physically healthier with these words:

> "I started doing sports, it was not a part of my life back then. It is affordable here. The sports clothes, the place to run, they are within reach. There are lots of parks and gardens. I can afford sports equipment." [39]

Having easy access to parks, having time, cycling and walking in daily life, and being able to afford new things and healthy food, women I interviewed claimed that they are living a healthier life in Berlin. But what about accessing the healthcare system when needed? Zeynep, Sedef, Beliz, and Ege were the ones that shared anecdotes on visiting a doctor. Sedef says all of her friends from Turkey go to the same dentist who is also of Turkish background. She states that now it is easy for her. Zeynep told me that she only tried to change her appointment date few days before our interview, but the assistant was impatient with her German. Even this limited information suggests that language is critical for getting health care and considering that not many of my interlocutors spoke the language, they might encounter some problems unless they look for a Turkish-speaking doctor like Sedef and her friends do. Beliz said that, during her gynecology examination there was not a nurse present Because in gynecological examinations a second person should be present in Turkey, she was confused. She did not know whether there is a regulation on the matter and asked her co-worker if she was supposed to demand someone. She received a racist comment, suggesting that Turkish men cannot leave their wives alone with the doctor. Her unfamiliarity with the system made her feel insecure and question whether she was deprived of her rights or not. Sally Hargreaves and Jon S. Friedland state not knowing the health care system and not being able to speak the host language are some of the major barriers in accessing health care by migrants. (Hargreaves and

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[38] "Daha sağlıklı besleniyorum çünkü sağlıklı besinlere daha ucuza ulaşabiliyorum. Istanbul'da full time çalışırkenki alımgücüm burdaki partime'dan daha az."

[39] "Spor yapmaya başladım, eskiden hayatımda yoktu. Affordable çünkü giyeceğim kıyafetten, çıkıp koşabileceğim yere kadar. Parkı bahçesi bol. Ekipman almak istesem alabiliyorum para yetiyor"

Friedland 2013, 36) My interviews revealed a similar pattern, as understanding the system and the language is important in the case of my interlocutors as well. Ege on the other hand maintains that her access to politically correct healthcare was possible in Berlin. Ege's experience with doctors in Berlin as a migrant has been quite positive. She said that in her gender transition period her doctor had the right attitude towards her:

> "In my transition phase the doctor's approach was really right and sensitive." [40]

In short, my interlocutors claim that in Berlin they adopted healthier lifestyles as they could access outdoor spaces easier, do not waste time on the way, and could afford to try new sports and healthier food. However, if they experience any health problems the lack of language and unfamiliarity with the health care system seem to emerge as a challenge, except for Ege. However, in Ege's experience, her queer gender identity is more prominent than her ethnicity or political status as a migrant.

4.4 Conclusion

As my interlocutors migrated to Berlin they found themselves feeling depressed in the very first months. Because they have left their friends, family, all social relations behind in Istanbul, they feel alone and question their decision to migrate. Further, they stated that they have been subjected to racism, mostly when they speak Turkish. My interlocutors also mentioned that they are compared to the former migrants from Turkey and expected to behave and look like them. In short my interviews have revealed that my interlocutors face both gender and race-based discrimination in Berlin. Yet, because my interlocutors do not feel they are judged upon their appearances as it was the case in Istanbul, they state that they do not feel their gender identity in Berlin. Yet I believe it should be noted that none of my interlocutors are visibly Muslim, and indeed, some of them stated that their experience of racism might have been different if they wore headscarves. I claim that my interlocutors do not feel judged based on their appearances because they do not look "Turkish," and pass as middle-class and not Muslim. They face harassment in Berlin as well, yet because they trust that that the police and other people

[40] "Transition döneminde doktora gittiğimde bana çok doğru ve hassas yaklaştı."

will support them in the case of a crisis, they do not feel the need to take their guards up against gender-based violence. In other words as my interlocutors' social trust and trust in the police have increased, they do not feel the need to take personal precautions as much as before. My interlocutors have expressed that the lack of stress and fear led to the improvement of their mental health. In the last section, I show that my interlocutors regard their physical health as having improved after migrating to Berlin. As cycling and walking are integrated into the urban life in Berlin, and parks within the city allow outdoor training, my interlocutors are physically more active. Further, as their purchasing power increased, they can try out new sports and have access to healthier food. Therefore my interlocutors regard the improvement of their physical health as a big difference that migrating to Berlin has created. Yet although they did not have much experience with the health care system in Berlin, language comes out as a potential difficulty they have to deal with when accessing health care.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, I explore the migration motives of highly- educated women who migrated from Istanbul to Berlin in the last ten years, in relation to their city experiences of Istanbul and Berlin.

First I scrutinize how my interlocutors relate to the city of Istanbul in the second chapter. My interviews revealed that my interlocutors fear getting harassed and come up with strategies to avoid the dangers they perceive in the city, therefore I claim that they are subjected to what Nixon calls "slow violence." (Nixon 2011) First of all, they only use certain parts of the city where they feel respectively safer. Beşiktaş, Bakırköy, and Kadıköy are neighborhoods that are typically referred to as safe by my interlocutors. Hisarüstü is also mentioned as safe by Boğaziçi graduates, and Tatavla by my queer interlocutors. Another strategy my interlocutors use is arranging their outfits according to the neighborhoods and the public transportation they use. My interviews reveal that they have to negotiate their socio-economic class and gender identities through their appearances. Also, my interlocutors relay a transformation narrative of Istanbul which they base on the transformation of Taksim after the 2013 Gezi protests initially, and then the coup attempt in 2016. My interlocutors observe neo-liberalization and standardization of Istanbul especially after the Gezi protests of 2013 and feel excluded from the public space. They evaluate the coup attempt in 2016 as the peak of this transformation and many state that it has been the breaking point in their decision to migrate.

In the third chapter, I analyze my interlocutors' migration as an urban migration as Istanbul became an extra push factor and they specifically chose Berlin to migrate to. I first explain how living in Istanbul is a push factor in their migration journey, with two issues coming to the fore: traffic and gender-based discrimination. First, because my interlocutors spent too much time in traffic, they did not have enough time for their personal and social lives. Further, because traffic and public transportation are also sites of harassment, my interlocutors avoided using public transportation as much as possible. Secondly, as my interlocutors feared that they could be subjected

to harassment at any time, they monitored and controlled their surroundings all the time. Because they experienced such "slow violence" (Nixon 2011) based on their gender identity, they expressed being constantly aware of their gender identity. I claim that the gender inequality they experienced in Istanbul pushed them away from the city and because they are highly educated middle-class women they could afford to migrate to a city that attracts them. On the other hand, my interlocutors migrated to Berlin because they wanted to migrate to a big city in Germany, where graduate education is free. Further, because the migrant population in Berlin is high, especially the Turkish migrants, my interlocutors think that they will not face racism and can easily access Turkish items and food.

In the fourth chapter, I analyze how my interlocutors relate to the city of Berlin, by comparing it to their experiences of Istanbul. First of all my interviews reveal that my interlocutors lose their social capital and face racism, as well as experiencing gender-based discrimination in Berlin. However, because their levels of social trust and trust in the police increased in Berlin, they feel less in danger, therefore report that their mental health has improved. Also because my interlocutors have more time and more access to parks and exercise is integrated into the city life, they do more sports. Further, as their purchasing power increased, they can afford both healthier foods and trying out new sports, they state that they are physically healthier.

Unfortunately, my research lacks participant observation, due to the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic. With participant observation, I could see how my interlocutors experience Berlin firsthand. Further, although I did not look for a particular profile to interview with, all of my interlocutors were ethnically Turkish and secular. In other words, my study lacks the experiences of women from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Further, my interlocutors are all highly educated middle-class Turkish women; therefore, they are coming from a privileged class in Turkey. Their experiences of the city of Istanbul as women and their strategies such as creating bubbles and using the taxi cannot be differentiated from their socio-economical class. Further, they could migrate because they are highly educated and could afford migration as middle-class women. Moreover, their socio-economic class and "secularity" also affect their experience in Berlin, since they face less racism because they do not look "Turkish". (Türkmen 2019) In short, the city and migration experiences of my interlocutors are highly dependent both on their socio-economic class and gender. I believe this research can be extended with including women from different socioeconomic classes and religious, ethnic backgrounds.

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