

LIVING AN UNCERTAIN LIFE ON THE MARGINS OF ANKARA

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## **ABSTRACT**

LIVING AN UNCERTAIN LIFE ON THE MARGINS OF ANKARA

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M.S., Department of Political Science and Public Administration

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This thesis aims to analyze how poor Syrian refugees navigate their lives concerning the structural violence of neoliberal economic policies and temporary protection status which set the stage for further exploitation, securitization and precarization for Syrian refugees in Turkey. Although the studies associated with refugees have been mostly dominated by the humanitarian, criminalizing and tolerating narratives and have had a strong tendency to portray Syrian refugees' experience as a reproducing cycle of exclusion, this thesis suggests that refugees are not only passive objects of temporary protection regime and neoliberal policies but also relatively active agents of their own life, particularly in creating their own tactics to evade state control, social hostility and the effects of the temporary legal status. In this context, this thesis focuses on Syrian refugees' subjective experiences on the basis of everyday life and the way they respond to these experiences by creating their own tactics.

**Keywords:** Syrian Refugees, Everyday Life Experiences, Structural Violence, Everyday Resistance, Ankara

## ÖZ

### ANKARA’NIN KIYISINDA BELİRSİZLİK İÇİNDE YAŞAMAK

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Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tez ile, Ankara'da bulunan Önder mahallesi ve çevresindeki Suriyeli mültecilerin neoliberalizmin ve geçici koruma rejiminin ürettiği yapısal şiddete karşı geliştirdikleri sessiz direniş biçimlerini analiz edebilmek amaçlanmıştır. Suriyeli mültecilerin egemen olanın alan ve kurallarını kendi faydasına kullanma deneyimlerini anlamak için Michael De Certeau’dan ödünç alınan ‘idare etme sanatı’ kavramsallaştırması kullanılmıştır. Mültecilere dair yapılan çalışmaların sayısı her geçen gün artsa da bu çalışmaların bir çoğunda mülteciler edilgen aktörler olarak konumlandırılmaktadır, bu tez ‘edilgen mülteci’ yaklaşımının umutsuzluk, kadercilik, bağımlılık gibi karşılıkları olduğu noktasından hareket ederek Suriyeli mültecileri yalnızca geçici koruma rejimi ve neoliberal politikaların pasif nesnelere olarak ele almamış, aynı zamanda toplumun aktif özneleri de oldukları yaklaşımından hareket etmiştir. Bu bağlamda da tez boyunca ilk önce Suriyeli mültecilerin yaşadıkları yapısal şiddetin boyutları ele alınmış, ardından bu şiddetin temelini oluşturan devlet kontrolünden, yabancı düşmanlığından ve geçici yasal statünün etkisinden kaçmak için nasıl kendi taktiklerini ürettikleri analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Suriyeli Mülteciler, Gündelik Hayat Sosyolojisi, Yapısal Şiddet, Gündelik Hayat Direnişi, Ankara

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Question

To understand the case of Syrian refugees in Önder neighborhood and its surroundings located in Ankara, this thesis aims to analyze how poor Syrian refugees navigate their lives concerning the structural violence of neoliberal economic policies and temporary protection status which set the stage for further exploitation, securitization and precarization for Syrian refugees in Turkey. Although the studies associated with refugees have been mostly dominated by the humanitarian, criminalizing and tolerating narratives and have had a strong tendency to portray Syrian refugees' experience as a reproducing cycle of exclusion, this thesis suggests that refugees are not only passive objects of temporary protection regime and neoliberal policies but also relatively active agents of their own life, particularly in creating their own tactics to evade state control, social hostility and the effects of the temporary legal status. In this context, this thesis focuses on Syrian refugees' subjective experiences on the basis of everyday life and the way they respond to these experiences by creating their own tactics. Thus, the thesis also aims to show that refugeeness is not a passive object of the structural adjustments in asylum regime in Turkey as well as it is not a homogenous unit which contains resistance as it's an essential part. In parallel with that aim, it focuses on the resistance dynamics of the Syrian refugees in Ankara without universalizing these resistance dynamics to refugeeness in order to discover certain kind of resistance dynamics.

For exploring Syrian refugees' resistance dynamics, De Certeau's (1984) drew theoretical distinction between the strategies of the powerful and the tactics of the subordinate is used but this thesis also reveals that Syrian refugees' resistance methods are not only linked to the tactics of the powerful, but are also a reaction to the rivalry of other subordinates in host society.

This thesis will not, furthermore, suggest that these refugees are consciously aiming for a social change with their response to their hidden injuries, but they are not, either,

absorbing totally and systematically existing power relations as they are. Therefore, in the long run, the possibility to influence the pre-existing composition of power relations is worth examining.

Reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR Public Press, 2019) indicates that since March of 2011, the violence in Syria has led to the deaths of a quarter of a million people, 6.6 million people have been internally displaced, and more than 5 million have fled across the border into Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (Geneva UNHCR, 2019). More than 7 million people seek safety far away from their homes because they fear persecution. In this period, European Countries take a position which prioritizes securitization and ‘outsourcing’ migrants to other countries. (Betts & Milner, 2007).

During this period, Turkey received the most significant number of Syrian refugees as a consequence of its open border policy. According to the figures from the Turkish Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), as of 2019, there were 3,614,108 Syrian refugees granted with the temporary protection status in Turkey, and only 8% of them are living inside of formal refugee camps. After all, with the massive increase in the number of refugees, it could be said that Turkey's urban poverty has currently arrived at a new degree, and Turkey's migration and asylum regime have struggled to come to terms with this ‘not only political but also social’ new reality.

So how does the Turkish state has responded to this new situation and regulated the influx of Syrian refugees? Although Turkey has maintained an open border policy, it accommodates Syrian refugees from a humanitarian responsibility to a guest hood’ traditions such as ‘Turkish hospitality’ and ‘Muslim fraternity’ (Erdemir, 2016). This approach has its basis on the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1968 Protocol, in which Turkey has reserved the right to establish a geographical limitation on refugees.

In this context, it can be said that Turkey is managing with the non-European asylum seekers situation without being bound by international conventions by producing the policy and legislation on the basis of “temporality.” In other words, Turkish authorities do not give refugee status to asylum seekers who are coming from outside Europe but grant the status of conditional refugee which enable them to reside in Turkey

temporarily. On the other hand, the High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations has the power to grant refugee status to non-European asylum seekers, ensuring the right to seek resettlement in a third country willing to receive them. (Kirişçi 1991, İçduygu & Yüksek 2010) This situation created an asylum regime which is shaped by multiple actors with unpredictable policies. Even after being granted refugee status by UNCHR, refugees might not be eligible for resettlement into a third country if the Turkish authorities do not give exit permit. To qualify for an “exit permit” UNHCR must recognize the applicant as a “refugee” and the DGMM must recognize him as a conditional refugee. (Sarı & Dinçer, 2017)

Although the new asylum law<sup>1</sup> came into force in 2014, there was no change in the temporality of the asylum seekers. While refugees who were not previously included in the legal system were included in the legal system by this law, but the status of the temporary subject of the asylum seekers remained unchanged.<sup>2</sup> In other words, asylum seekers from outside Europe were included in the legal system on the premise that they would not stay in Turkey, but anyway that Syrian refugees can acquire continuous privileges in this circumstance but their status is still a legal system dilemma, furthermore, it has not annulled the dual application process or extended asylum to non-European refugees, but has expanded some protection that grants beneficiaries access to fundamental services, such as healthcare, education, employment, etc.

At present, there are three categories of displaced persons eligible for the asylum protection system of Turkey. The first group is the refugees for whom Turkey assumes full responsibility (those who come from the countries which are members of the Council of Europe), the second group is the conditional refugees (those who stay

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<sup>1</sup>Until April 2014, there was no comprehensive law on asylum seekers from outside Europe in the field of asylum. Until then, the official asylum and refugee policy has been governed by the following legal provisions: 1934 Settlement Law, 1951 Refugee Convention, 1967 Additional Protocol on refugee status and 1994 Asylum Regulation, 2006 Regulation

<sup>2</sup>With this law, the ongoing dual structure of asylum law since 1994 has not been abolished. Turkey despite the new law, in Turkey’s asylum system, there are still a large number of state and non-state actors who are operating at the same time through mechanisms that are involved in different degrees. For example, when Turkey state authorities approved an application of refugee by Syrian migrants, it grants temporary protection while UNHCR gives refugee status. However, the fact that the UNHCR has justified the applicant's request for asylum and granted him refugee status does not mean that he has the right to settle in a third country. Although an asylum seeker is accepted by a third country, she/he is initially required to get exit permission from government of Turkey.

temporarily in Turkey until they are resettled in a third country), and the last group is the people who receive temporary protection.

Approximately 3 million Syrian refugees currently live in Turkey fall under this last category, and this category is mostly based on a European Union Directive of 2001 which outlines EU member states' obligations in responding to a mass influx of displaced individuals. Unfortunately, as Agamben states, temporary protection is the most common strategy which narrows the living spaces of refugees and serves as an oppressive strategy to govern the "bare lives" of the refugees in the current urban areas. (Agamben, 1998) So it is not a surprise that, in the case of Turkey, there is still ambiguity and lack of clarification in the essential rights of Syrian refugees in Turkey because the temporary protection status falls short of promising a secure, long-term solution to refugees from Syria seeking safety in Turkey. The details of the temporary protection system will be discussed in the next part of the thesis but it could be said that solely addressing short-term protection leaves Syrian refugees' lives open to multifaceted violence that intersects with social discrimination and other challenges stemming from lack of financial means and lack of legal protection regulations for their essential rights in Turkey. In other words, while in 2014 the Turkish government adopted the Foreigners and International Protection Law (LFIP), which specifies processes for foreigners, refugees, and individuals in need of international protection, Syrian refugees are still living in limbo. Furthermore, the framing of Syrian refugees as "guests" has also boosted racist and xenophobic attitudes in the host society towards refugees.

As a result, Turkish society has witnessed several lynching attempts and stereotypes performed against Syrians (Gökay, 2015). In turn, such experiences have much influence on the refugees' world of meaning. In this context, for a comprehensive understanding of Syrian refugees' experiences, this thesis will try to grasp the issue solely not as a cultural problem or an issue of prejudice. It needs to be understood in systemic terms of the political economy and temporary nature of asylum regime that encompasses all aspects of Syrian refugees' experiences in Turkey.

After all, because of their lack of bargaining power stemming through unregulated legal protection, they have to sell their labor for a meager price in unsecured labor-intensive industries. These exploitative working conditions are also restricting their

spatial opportunities; they are compelled to live in insufficient residential circumstances that are overcrowded and overpriced, pay in cash without contracts that could safeguard them from sudden eviction. At the same time, they continue their lives in isolation from the rest of society due to material limitations. In the view of these experiences, this thesis aims to capture the information of the microlevel subjectivity of Syrian refugees in the context of macrolevel policies that drive their experience of poverty and their responses to these bare life conditions they have in the margins of the urban space.

At this point, it should be noted that this thesis's representativeness is limited solely to refugees who live as urban poor in Altındağ, Önder Mahallesi in Turkey. Therefore, it will deal with only urban poor Syrian refugees. While doing this, it will ask the following questions: Are Syrian refugees active agents in creating their place or do they totally obey the law of the place where they have no choice but to live? How do Syrian refugees respond to structural violence they experience in these hegemonic spaces? Do refugees have tactics to manipulate these places? Would they ever be able to appropriate the places where they live in any meaningful way? How do power dynamics affect refugee participants in creating a sense of home, and are refugee's active agents in this process?

When searching answers to these questions, first, I will explore how refugees face downward mobility (as a result of forced migration) and the patterns of their new experiences interacting with the city and the hidden injuries<sup>3</sup> they carry in these experiences. Second, I will discuss their responses regarding their injuries and will trace their tactics of creative expression and everyday resistance mechanisms against their injuries.

At this point, caution needs to be inserted here; this thesis does not claim that Syrian refugees are a counter force or a collective force, but they can be, without intending to be so. As Bayat (2000) argues, everyday social dynamics are altering societies in ways that are usually unacknowledged by onlookers. Instead of seeking areas of movement,

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<sup>3</sup>The conceptualization of "hidden injuries" refers to Richard Sennett's definition, who utilizes it to comprehend the American working class how they define themselves and how they feel when they experience class confrontations based on "daily realities of inequality" and how these procedures generate certain values, emotions and private experiences concealed in their daily lives.

organizations with acknowledged leaders, resources and ideologies, academics must be alert to nonmovements practicing the art of presence, the “bravery and creativity to assert collective will, in spite of all odds, circumvent limitations, exploit what is accessible and discover new spaces within which to be heard, seen, felt and realized.” (Bayat, 2010, s.26) In this regard, this thesis' primary concern is the search for the field of possibilities that Syrian refugees can move within.

## **1.2 Methodology**

Utilizing a mixed qualitative method, the empirical material came from interviews with 21 Syrian refugees (8 of the woman, 13 of the man), observations, and archival data and the expert interviews supported this data. The primary method used in this thesis is the analysis of the personal narratives of refugees; these narratives were collected by semistructured interviews (some of them are from focus group discussions) conducted in the neighborhood of Önder.

Önder neighborhood was selected for its total refugee population and its historical diversity, but mainly for the possibility, it provides for Syrians to manipulate the established order of the Ankara where they are living. No specific data on Önder Mahallesi exists according to the municipality. Hence, limited data was acquired from the neighborhood Mukhtar, Nuri Aygül.

The neighborhood is located right next to the Ankara Siteler Industrial Zone in Altındağ district and hosts 40,000 inhabitants, of which 20,000 are Syrian inhabitants, according to Nuri Aygül.

The fieldwork was conducted over twelve months from December 2015 through November 2016. The first interviews that were conducted in December 2015 with a professional translator were not sufficient enough for this study because of the difficulty in translating the different dialects and the refugees' delicate position that restrict their answers when speaking with outsiders. To overcome this problem, I visited the neighborhood for four months with an independent solidarity cooperative called the Migrant Solidarity Network that deals with migrants' problems and makes refugees its agenda, based on the idea of solidarity with migrants themselves. This network provided an entry point as they facilitated a point of the first contact with the field. However, I identified myself as an outsider, rather than a member of this network



during the interviews. While I was visiting the neighborhood, I met with Syrian Turkmen refugees who have a command of the Turkish language, and I conducted the subsequent interviews with these Turkmen translators.

The interviews were based on the snowball sampling method; one informant led to another. Only three of the interviewees were previously personally known by the translators. During the interviews, questions regarding employment, social aid, and the accommodation situation and the link between all these daily aspects with their refugee situation were asked to scrutinize the experience of uncertainty of the refugees, but the questions focused on the survival tactic of the Syrian refugee as an alternative form of resistance were generally avoided to be asked directly, because of that, generally their tactics came to light in the advanced phases of the interviews.

In addition to interviews, I also visited various markets and restaurants where refugees have worked and interviewed with charity organizations such as Önder Foundation and Kızılay, which are active non-governmental organizations in that area. The insights gathered from interviews enabled a deeper understanding of the social dynamics that structured the networks and resources mentioned by the interviewees.

Interviews, which ranged in length from fifteen minutes to four hours, were recorded when consent was given by the participants; conversations were typed in detail if no consent was given.

First, the language barrier made the field research difficult. To overcome this problem, I received help from both a professional translator and Syrian Turkmen translators. By comparing the interviewees' reactions to the translating experiences, it was observed that they acted differently with an outsider translator than with a translator from their neighborhood. Therefore, for practical reasons, I chose to work with local translators.

Second, because of cultural barriers and the interviewees' vulnerable position, they were not open to communication easily. This situation made it harder to enter the field and to get into contact with refugees, however, after I started my interviews and started to establish a connection with the neighborhood, it began to become more accessible to communicate. As Neuman states, "entering a field site requires having a flexible strategy or plan of action, negotiating access and relations with members, and deciding how much to disclose about the research to field members or gatekeepers" (Neuman,

2015, p. 282). After these connections were established, informants become more open. In the beginning, they were just describing their injuries, and no one was willing to mention in his or her responses about these injuries. After I had started to spend time with them, they began to mention their daily tactics in passing.

### **1.3 Cautions and Limitations**

As noted earlier, this thesis' representativeness is limited to only refugees who live as urban poor in Altındağ; Önder Mahallesi. However, this does not give a general profile of all urban poor Syrian refugees in Ankara.

This thesis cannot claim that all Syrian refugees experience the same struggles, but it may suggest that they find themselves in a comparable predicament, despite their varied experiences and cultures, of an unstable situation with a substantial weight on the informal local economy.

Most of the interviewees had unsecured jobs, but it should be mentioned that this is mostly due to the proximity of Önder to Sıteler, which is known for furniture manufacture. As a matter of fact, small- and medium-sized enterprises in Sıteler is the main reason why Syrian refugees had chosen Önder in the first place. That is why most of the interviewees were not entirely destitute. Overall, this thesis does not deal with the poorest of the poor refugees who are visible in the center of the city as beggars or homeless, but instead deals with a group of working poor, characterized by quasi-regular informal employment. Thus, the peripheral poverty of Önder is significantly different from the inner-city poverty of other areas such as Dikmen or Mamak. On this basis, it could be said that Önder is not a jobless environment. And so, this thesis cannot speak upon all underclass Syrian refugees in general.

Another important caution is that this thesis takes a broad definition of "refugee," including but also moving beyond the legal definition of those who seek asylum from persecution outside their country. I have taken a solid understanding that is wider than the recognition given by states and the UNHCR because the categorization of migration asylum nexus is bureaucratically helpful to governments but does not necessarily reflect the reality of people's lives, motivations, and experiences. (Castles & Miller, 2003) The vast majority of individuals interviewed for this study did not have international statutory as refugees identified by UNHCR. According to the

United Nations Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 1951, p. X), a (statutory) refugee is someone who

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

There were not any statutory refugees who are granted with this status from UNHCR partners, where I conducted my research. Upon ratifying the Geneva Convention, states determine their regulations for granting asylum that may or may not depart from international practices. In October 2011, the Turkish government declared that Syrian refugees would be granted temporary protection. The statement made by Turkish authorities in 2011 was influenced by a Directive of the European Union outlining the commitments of EU Member States to respond to a mass influx of displaced persons

It is argued that the asylum system could not regularly process such large numbers. Due to these reasons, Syrians in Turkey who defined as temporary protectionists are identified throughout this study as refugees. This thesis claims that no state or international judicial definitions are sufficient to preclude recognizing one as a refugee, although it may be necessary. (Koser & Khalid, 2007)

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

Society is a very mysterious animal with many faces and hidden potentialities, and [...] it is extremely shortsighted to believe that the face society happens to be presenting to you at a given moment is its only true face. None of us knows all the potentialities that slumber in the spirit of the population. (Havel, 1990)

In accordance with the aim of examining the relationship of urban poor Syrian refugees with uncertainty of exile, this thesis asserts that although one cannot see any open or organized resistance for establishing a potential end to the uncertainty of exile, this does not mean that the only possible position refugees could have total submission or obedience to existing arbitrary power. That's why this thesis examines both refugees' struggles stemming from the experience of uncertainty and their resistance to these vulnerabilities stemming from their uncertain position by revealing the contradictions and possibilities behind the existing power relations. So, what is this thesis' theoretical framework composed of?

This thesis considers refugees as active agents of their own lives who give responses to the uncertainty of the exile by participating in urban living with diverting and manipulating the established order. In such a perspective, De Certeau's (1988) conceptualization of "art of making do with" is used to evaluate this resistance of refugees in their everyday practice. "Art of making do" refers to the subordinated people's acts of "escaping without leaving," which means using the field and rules of the dominant by turning it to their benefits. Within that context, this thesis argues that Syrian refugees develop certain tactics as open up possibilities to overcome their vulnerable position to poverty, racism, crime and violence which are created by their "bare life"<sup>4</sup> conditions.

De Certeau's (1988) well-known concepts, "strategies" and "tactics," are also important for one to see less visible everyday resistance actions that manipulate the mechanisms of power and conform to it only in order to evade it. De Certeau (1988, s. 30) calls a "strategy" as a devised plan of action, which refers to all hegemonic structures, in locations of power. Tactics, on the other hand, lack a specific place, they just leak into strategies between the gaps and slips into the patterns of everyday life to mobilize resistance against domination of strategies (De Certeau, 1984, p. 54). Briefly, it can be said that "strategy" is an impulse of rational ordering, while "tactics" are the creative subversion of the rational order. In this context, the urban public space is contested by dominant ideologies; it may be pressured by the tactics of ordinary inhabitants that enable them to acquire their right to the city. In a nutshell, every society produces its own space, but it should not be forgotten that they do it in accordance with power geometry. Struggles over space take hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forms. According to this thesis findings, Syrian refugee's acts do not take counter-hegemonic form in the current situation, they generally act for acquiring the basic necessities of their lives, but it is apparent that they create their own possibilities through everyday spatial practices that can result in the appropriation of the spaces they live.

Taking into account that the experience of refugees is not a single, vital, transhistoric situation but an analytical category, this thesis will depict the layered everyday

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<sup>4</sup>Agamben (1998) suggests that in the case of refugees his or her political and legal status is considered as temporary state of bare life where they are humans as animals in nature without political freedom.

experiences of Syrian refugees on scales of personal honor rather than economic interest alone, as Swartz claimed regarding class differences (Swartz, 1997). However, while doing this, this thesis will not neglect the political, economic context either. As Zolberg (2001) suggests, the national order of things is exactly where the international refugee regime and refugee experiences are set. Therefore, the concepts of “art of making do,” “tactics,” and “strategies” will be used in the context of neoliberal economic policies that have created flexible, insecure, and temporary working conditions for workers.

Settled on that ground, this thesis argues that refugees’ experiences are context-dependent because refugees have extraordinarily diverse historical and political causes and different socioeconomic statuses. They tend to reflect a broader representation of the refugees’ home country’s heterogenic class positions. Economically wealthy migrants in home countries are often the first ones to settle in host country’ cities (Agamben, 1998). They have the opportunity to choose how to go, where to go in which they could use their knowledge and skills.

These are individuals who may be more resourceful in pursuing self-sustainability than individuals in camps or rural regions who may need to be on humanitarian assistance locations. These class differences are reflected among the profile of refugees who try to go to Europe and those who cannot do in Syrian refugees’ case. In Turkey’s Syrian refugee case, there are many Syrians who have the opportunity to cover the expenses of this journey, prefer not to stay in Turkey and try to move to Europe. However, it is obvious that there is a considerable tendency for most Syrian refugees, towards downward occupational mobility, social devaluation, and a loss of dignity process. At this point, it is meaningful to look at refugees’ daily lives, without neglecting their socioeconomic situation, which has been negatively impacted upon by dispossession process as a consequence of forced migration.

In this regard, this thesis aims to associate socio-economic, racial/ethnic, and gender inequalities by considering how these three axes of inequality intersect to determine Syrian refugees’ experiences. Basing on this, the concept of “class” taken as Thompson (1978) states;

class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as

between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. (p.1)<sup>5</sup>

A class experience that is formed and reconstituted through encounters in that sense is a matter of cultural experience. By taking the class as a relationship, as Thompson suggests, this thesis suggested highlighting the importance of acknowledging the heterogeneity of the population of contemporary society where refugee experiences are set. Ultimately, the refugee is a figure of extreme vulnerability, who suffers from multiple forms of violence stems from the uncertainty of their experiences in the host society. In this direction, the thesis will examine the category of Syrian refugees living in the slum areas of the city through perspectives of class, ethnicity, and gender and how they relate to the Syrian refugees' everyday resistance acts. It will do so by focusing on how refugees define themselves and how they feel about their daily experiences in the city regarding unequal relations and power asymmetry, and, in response to these unequal relations, what resistance mechanisms they establish.

In accordance with that aim, the thesis sees refugees as not passive objects of hegemonic processes; if one listens to them, she/he can hear their responses and their tactics against dominant power relations. However, the thesis is not claiming that their responses establish a counter power or other emancipatory forms of power but asserts that these ordinary and quiet practices by ordinary people can engender significant social changes. So, what is significant about their activities, and thus of interest to one here, is precisely their seemingly mundane, ordinary, and daily nature. A crucial point should be emphasized here, this thesis does not find satisfaction in small daily acts not dedicated to meaningful change but asserts that these small daily acts have the possibility of paving the way for social change, but it depends on the balance of the power relations. As Gramsci (1971) states that in his famous note of Q25,

Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should be of incalculable value for the integral historian. Consequently, this kind of history can only be dealt with monographically, and each monograph requires an immense quantity of material, which is often hard to collect. (p.207)

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<sup>5</sup>The great strength of Thompson's conception of class is that it is capable of recognizing, and giving an account of, the operations of class in the absence of class consciousness; while those who adopt the kind of structural definition his critics seem to have in mind have no effective way of demonstrating the efficacy of class in the absence of clearly visible self-conscious class formations, and no effective response to the claim that class is nothing more than an ideologically motivated theoretical construct imposed on historical evidence from without" (Wood, 2000, p. 79).

Overall, by these concepts and context, all of which stated above, this thesis aims to analyze the patterns of subaltern Syrian refugees' new position that they experience as hidden injuries<sup>6</sup> in their encounters with power and their daily resistance strategies against their hidden injuries.

### **1.5 Everyday Resistance Literature**

Resistance is a prominent topic in social science. Although there is increasing scholarly attention to resistance, widespread studies on the acceptance of resistance, as Sidney Tarrow (1994) asserts, is confined to a narrow range of conventional protest activities. This tendency limits resistance to collective and public acts such as riots, demonstrations, revolutions, union agitation, anti-imperialist protests and assumes that there is no piece of oppositional acts when there are no public ones (Goldstone, 1991; Skocpol, 1979; Rubin, 1996). If this assumption holds true, there should be total obedience to dominant ideology when there are no visible resistance acts. Is it true? This question has already generated a substantial body of scholarship, and some answers were given by anthropologists who focused on ordinary people's daily hidden oppositional acts instead of collective, organized, systematic, and public acts, particularly in peasant communities in developing countries (Scott 1985; Scott, 1989; O'Brien & Li, 2006; Adnan, 2007; Guttman, 1993; Gupta, 2010; Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013).

By virtue of the increasing attention to the issue of resistance, there has been a wide variety of definitions of resistance in social sciences. One could, then, ask what counts as resistance? Chin and Mittelman (1997) suggest a categorization for this question based on three main forms: First, the Gramscian resistance that positions themselves against the state, second, Polanyian counter-movements against market forces, and lastly Scott's infra-political resistance acts against everyday domination.

Given this variation and loose usage of the "resistance" within resistance studies, defining this term still remains an issue. As suggested above, this thesis will be

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<sup>6</sup>The conceptualization of "hidden injuries" refers to Richard Sennett's definition, who utilizes it to comprehend the American working class how they define themselves and how they feel when they experience class confrontations based on "daily realities of inequality" and how these procedures generate certain values, emotions and private experiences concealed in their daily lives.

contextualized on Syrian refugees' daily life practices, particularly on their daily acts of resistance. Therefore, the concept of "everyday resistance" which was first introduced by James C. Scott (1985), will be our standing point within the theoretical framework. Bearing in mind that, if the term resistance remained loosely defined, it would be allowed some scholars to see it almost everywhere and others almost nowhere. (Weitz, 2001, p. 669)

As mentioned above, one of the most well-known studies of everyday resistance is the "Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance" (Scott, 1985) where Scott challenged the narrow conceptualization of resistance and drew attention to the everyday resistance acts.

According to Scott, with this medium, he seizes the opportunity to display the voices and practices of powerless individuals such as "footdragging, dissimulation, fake compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, incendiary, sabotage", etc. (Scott, 1989, s. 29) He illustrates all these acts as weapons of relatively powerless groups, the weapons which are utilized by subordinates in their class struggle to resist, to survive, and obtain relatively better living conditions for themselves and their families. In this regard, Scott asserts that when there is no open outbreak in situations of subjection, there are still "everyday forms of resistance," which protects the powerless without noticed by the powerful:

Just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, so do thousands upon thousands of individual acts of insubordination and evasion create a political or economic barrier reef of their own. There is rarely any dramatic confrontation, any moment that is particularly newsworthy. Moreover, whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs a ground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck itself and not to the vast aggregation of petty acts that made it possible (Scott, 1985, p. 36).

In *Weapons of the Weak*, Scott (1985) interprets this "vast aggregation of petty acts" by focusing on a rice-farming village in Malaysia during the 1970s "green revolution" time. Through the so-called progress that took place in agricultural technology, Malaysian peasants were forced to accept inferior work conditions because of the decrease in employment opportunities. Despite these economic changes that negatively altered the peasants' lifestyle, the peasants did not form an overt or collective resistance against these changes. However, Scott (1985) asserts that their



response was still resistance, not an open or collective resistance but an everyday form of resistance.

Scott, by explaining these everyday forms resistance acts, proposed an approach based on two main forms, “the public transcripts” and “the hidden transcripts.” Public transcripts are defined as “the open interactions between the subordinates and those who dominates” (Scott,1990, p. 2) like rituals of hierarchy, deference, speech, penalty and humiliation, and their processes of justification, and the religious, political, and managerial worldviews of the dominant elites (Scott, 1990). However, these public transcripts are not telling the whole story about power relations because the calm surface of political life in subordinate situations cannot be read just as a harmony of classes, rather it means that we are looking in the wrong place for political conflict. In this regard, a hidden transcript is a declaration that carries the force of a symbolic declaration of war.

Of course, rulers who aspire to hegemony must make out an ideological case and take consent from subordinates, but every hegemony has its cracks, and with Malaysian peasants during the green revolution, these cracks were presented in subordinate’s “hidden transcripts” (Scott, 1990, p.18). On the other hand, there is always the possibility of open, public resistance but, it depends on the balance of power relations. Briefly, as mentioned above, Scott uses the term “hidden transcript” to reveal existing forms of resistance beneath the strong hegemonic “public transcripts” and suggests that if one “interpret the rumors, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theater of the powerless as vehicles by which, among other things, he/she insinuates a critique of power while hiding behind anonymity or innocuous understanding of their conduct ” ( Scott, 1990, p. xiii).

One of the key characteristics that describe:

“everyday forms of resistance is that they require little coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid and direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms” (Scott, 1989, p. 29).

There is no monopoly on these ordinary people’s “weapons”; anyone can use them at any time. Furthermore, these weapons of the weak can be used without causing critical damage to users because of its anonymity.

Another crucial characteristic of the everyday forms of resistance is the pervasive use of disguise by concealing the act itself. “Instead of a clear message delivered by a disguised messenger, an ambiguous message is delivered by messengers” (Scott, 1989, p. 54). Even seemingly self-interested acts, for instance, criminal acts like petty theft or pilfering, can be seen as a rejection of ideologies that ensure the necessity for consent. As Scott (1985, p. 296) argues, “Petty thefts of grain or pilfering on the threshing floor may seem like trivial ‘coping’ mechanisms from one vantage point, but, from a broader view of class relations, how the harvest is divided belongs at the center.” Besides, there are less visible “weapons”; verbal attacks are also seen “purely symbolic resistance” by Scott (1985). One can find, in the folk culture of subordinate groups, these anonymity acts that have a double meaning such as rumor, gossip, folktales, jokes, songs, rituals, codes, and euphemisms are deliberately hidden from view but may still have the power to manipulate dominant place.

With all these analyses of everyday acts of resistance, Scott grasped the cultural values and historical practices as an opportunity to powerless people who do not have the source to resist openly and open a new way in resistance literature. After Scott’s argument, the focus on daily acts has received increasing attention from scholars on resistance. On the other hand, there have also been scholars who criticized Scott for not recognizing unintended resistance; which have the possibility to undermine power relations through its consequences. In other words, Scott takes the agents of daily resistance as conscious political acts and be criticized for not taking power and resistance in a dialectical way but as a dichotomous phenomenon.<sup>7</sup>

While Scott argues that everyday resistance acts need conscious actors, Asef Bayat (1997, p. 57-58) suggests that “people on the margins” should be approached as not

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<sup>7</sup>For instance, another daily resistance observer, Witz (2001), similarly affirms the power of non-hegemonic voices over dominant ones, studying hair as a means of exploring everyday acts of resistance by women who with cultural ideas about the female body, using the Scott’s (1990) concepts and asserts that individual choices about the body can become a hidden transcript which is laden with political meanings. Witz, on the other hand, suggests that resistance is not done with one type of specific intent, it could be a political intent but on the other hand, it could be also to survive, to satisfy immediate needs, or to gain improved living conditions for yourself. However, according to Witz (2001), these differently motivated resistances should challenge the ideologies of subordination regardless of the actor’s intention but regarding the act itself. After all, Witz explores the limitations and possibilities of the power available to women through their hairstyles; if hairstyles can or cannot challenge the norms of appearance (Witz, 2001). Within this study, she takes actor’s conscious intent not as necessary for everyday resistance but searches for the particular effect that challenges the ideologies of subordination.

“conscious political actors but rather driven by the force of necessity to survive and to live a dignified life”. In his analyses, Bayat (2000) prefers the term “quiet encroachment.” Through using the concept such as “quiet encroachment”, he attempts to cover “the silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives [...] marked by quiet, largely atomized and prolonged mobilization with episodic collective action” (Bayat, 2000, p. 545–546). The prevailing actors depicted in Asaf Bayat’s approach tend not to overlook the complexity of motives behind the acts of everyday resistance, which are formed by moral elements depending on not just rational calculations but also contradictory norms and values. Without neglecting the role of agency, certain structural patterns that affect the mass consciousness should be considered. To understand urban poor acts of daily resistance in this context, Bayat (1997, p. 57) gives voice to a crucial point: “in a metaphorical sense, everyday encroachments may be seen as representing a “movement for itself”, becoming a social movement per se only if and when the actors become conscious of their doing by articulating their aims, methods, and justifications.” Can we assume this feature as a “movement for itself” for the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary?” Bayat answers this question with “no,” saying that if we assume this feature for them, they will lose their quiet encroachment character.

In *Street Politics* (2000), the sort of resistance described by Bayat is defined by quiet, atomized, and continuous mobilization with episodic collective action without clear governance, ideology, or organized organization, which makes important profits for the performers. Apart from the molecular changes, the poor, in the long run, have the chance to influence the pre-existing composition of power relations by his “quiet encroachment.” However, unlike Scott’s approach, Asaf Bayat portrays the acts of daily resistance by the poor not as conscious political acts that aim to undermine state power but as a necessity (economic hardship, war or natural disaster) to survive and live a dignified life against those who threaten their gains.

The agents in movements of quiet encroachment, generally keep away from publicity and collectivity. They generally do not act with solidarity because of the absence of the “class for itself” position. Squatters, for example, sometimes discourage other newcomers from joining their fields, and discourage their counterparts from settling

in the same area. Many hesitate to share data with these newcomers about their tactics in order to survive in that neighborhood. On the other hand, while acquisitions are, in the first place, made unnoticeably, individually, and gradually, the defense for these gains might become collective and audible. In contrast to the organized workers or students, this complicated mixture of individual and collective action outcomes from the actors' fluctuating social position. Bayat (1997) portrays these social clusters as structurally atomized, as "migrants, refugees, unemployed, squatters, street vendors, and other marginalized groups." They, therefore, lack structural capacities to mobilize for collective demand. However, their daily resistance, be it collective or individual, disguised or open, in the long run, might affect power relations. Although what brings these groups into this mode of struggle is not the initial urge for an alternative mode of life or they have the capacity to form a basis for the collective resistance (Bayat, 1997).

Another perspective on everyday resistance that could help us to overcome the limitations of Scott's insight is De Certeau's understanding of everyday resistance. To understand domination and resistance, De Certeau explores "commodity semiotics in search for the moments when dominant strategies fail and resistance rises". (Bleiker, 2000, p. 201)<sup>8</sup>

If it is true that the grid of "discipline" is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also "minuscule" and quotidian") manipulate the mechanism of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally what "ways of operating" from the counterpart, on the consumer's side, of the mute processes that organize the establishment of socioeconomic order. (De Certeau, 1984, p. xiv)

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<sup>8</sup>Like Bayat, Anna Johansson (as cited in Sørensen, 2015) thinks that daily acts of resistance have a contradictory characteristic; they both strengthen established power relations and resist them. She argues that humor among Nicaraguan women living in a workers' area of the city of Leon, has this contradictory potential to affect power relations. The humor among women about men's sexual relations with other women as revenge strengthens existing stereotypes of how men are but at the same time establish a break in the existing power relations to overcome the fear that makes men's domination seem less efficient (Sørensen, 2015, p. 71). David Butz and Michael Ripmesster (1999: 1), similarly affirm the ambiguous characteristic of everyday acts of resistance not being autonomous from power, which they call "off-kilter resistance"; "these practices productively circumvent power, rather than actively opposing it". This is due to the Foucauldian approach that assumes that "power and resistance are ontologically inseparable, they exist as conditions of possibility each for the other" (Foucault, 1999, p.1). They are "not a binary structure with dominators on one side and dominated on the other, but rather a multiform production of relations which are partially susceptible to integration in overall strategies" (Foucault, 1980, p. 142).

In order to explain these "ways of operating", De Certeau requires a starting point in linguistic studies, especially Wittgenstein's model of ordinary language, as a manner of reading and speaking, as a manner of using a system when he develops his daily view of opposition. (as cited in Stellan, 2014, p. 15) In linguistics, the act of speaking is not reducible to a knowledge of the language, rather it is affected by its speakers, and it depends on a contract with the others in a network of places and relations. These speaking acts are innumerable and infinitesimal transformative and can be found in many other practices such as walking, cooking. (De Certeau, 1984).

In this regard, Michel De Certeau, in his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), emphasizes the prepotency of ordinary men rather than the weakness of them. He was constantly aware of the pressures created for consumption by the dominant cultural economy, but at the same time offered a dynamic view of consumption and based his theory on the assumption that ordinary people, consumers, could find a way to resist the dominant cultural economy by manipulating them while consuming them. In his words "to assume that, the public is molded by the products imposed on it, is to misunderstand the act of "consumption." This misunderstanding assumes that 'assimilating' necessarily means 'becoming similar to' what one absorbs, and not 'making something similar' to what one is, making it one's own, appropriating or reappropriating it. By manipulating products, one cannot totally escape from the dominant cultural economy but can adapt these products of the dominant culture to their own will. This "manipulating" is a hidden production since it expands over the areas occupied by dominant cultural productions. Those expansions of dominant cultural productions that are rationalized and centralized correspond to another production called "consumption", that has its own rules since it shows itself not in its products but in the creative consumption process (De Certeau, 1984).<sup>9</sup>

By taking into consideration the power relations, De Certeau (1984) suggests a categorization of the logic of action that builds on two main forms: the strategies of the powerful and the tactics of the subordinate. He calls a "strategy" that which is able to produce, tabulate, and impose spaces, where this strategy takes place (De

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<sup>9</sup>Of course, these consumption practices are not similar because of their bond with the social situation and power relations they exercise in it. The immigrant worker and average citizen, for instance, do not use similar consumption methods to confront images on television (De Certeau, 1984).

Certeau, 1984, p.36). On the other hand, tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces because tactics belong to the space of powerful and remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by the circumstances of the powerful' place (De Certeau, 1984, p. 37). Therefore, in the case of the Syrians refugees, while the state and the capital impose strategies to refugees' places, Syrian refugees manipulate established the order of the cities where they are living and subvert these places into their own advantage without leaving the law of the place. However, this does not mean that Syrian refugees' tactics obey the law of the place, contrarily, without leaving the place, by the art of being inbetween, they draw unexpected results from this situation. Within this context, this thesis will use the conceptualization of De Certeau (1984) in order to show that refugees are not the passive objects of the structural adjustments in power relations.

The link between De Certeau and Scott is obvious. When Scott (1990) speaks of the "weapons of the weak" as hidden transcripts, infra-politics, and everyday resistance, De Certeau (1984, p. 37) speaks about how "a tactic is an art of the weak" "determined by the absence of a proper locus" as "a maneuver 'within the enemy's field vision' [...] and within enemy territory [...] that operates in isolated actions, blow by blow". For both of them, a matter of less noticeable and tiny behavior by subalterns is everyday resistance. On the other side, De Certeau does not infer upon the definitional trait of everyday resistance a certain kind of awareness, purpose, or class motivation. Instead, he emphasizes the act of resistance itself or the way of acting, not the intention or the consciousness of the actor. That is why this thesis based on De Certeau' conceptualization. However, even if De Certeau claims that he recognizes everyday resistance as connected to realms of power, many have criticized De Certeau for not being clear about the relationship between acts and the potential to affect power relations. In his conceptualization, he counts so many acts, such as those not using products according to the imposed way, as daily resistance, even if they do not have the potential to affect the existing power balance. Any word that covers everything loses its cutting edge and transforms into an empty sound. Given the loose nature of this term, using this term could make power disappear. Thus, this thesis will try to not to take a stand against for too much space for resistance.

## **1.6 The Notion of Refugee in International Literature**

Even if the people have been experiencing being obliged to head for safe zones since ancient times because of several reasons as due to conflict, violence, and persecution, putting this subject under the microscope by the international community is a situation which can be considered new. The first systematic organization related to the protection of refugees was based on the attempts made in the first half of the twentieth century. The first step in this point was taken by The League of Nations in order to find a comprehensive solution in an international context but with the restrictive laws. Through the Great Depression of 1930s more people started to flee because of the persecutions of Nazi regime in Germany, fascist regimes in Italy and Austria, and from Spanish Civil War right after World War I. In the later years, even humanitarian aid was given to the people who are submitted to persecutions, it is not reached sufficient level.

Although passing of year and growing of refugee problem, instead of agreeing in a universal definition of “refugee,” countries have continued to define certain ethnic groups as refugee and the rights of refugees are determined by removing the ambiguity in refugee definition with Geneva Convention promulgated by United Nations in the year 1951.

According to this Convention, “a refugee is a person away from his/her country and who is terrified because of valid reasons such as being oppressed about his race, religion, nationality, affiliation to a certain social group or his political opinion and who cannot benefit from the protection of his country.” (UNCHR, 2014, p. 242) The purpose of the Convention has put under protection the refugees in Europe after World War II. The definition of refugee in Convention was also limited to specific geographies as a result of events before the year 1st January 1951 Convention formed a legal basis still maintaining its importance by providing rights and obligations to the refugees as well as the countries of asylum. Especially the “principle of non-refoulement” of refugees taking part of Article 33 of the Convention, later on, have become a universal rule of law by also taking part in traditional universal law beyond member states of Convention. Against displacements occurred in new regions, the definition of refugee not containing these new situations in a temporal and spatial context is drawing the attention as a significant insufficiency. Although the historical

and geographical limitation in the definition of a refugee is removed with the Protocol signed in 1967, the content of refugee definition has remained the same. Thus, the member countries of African Union which were thinking that the definition of refugee in Refugee Convention in 1951 is important but insufficient against the situations of displacement occurred in their own regions, decided on a wider definition with African Convention organized by them in the year 1969. Apart from five criteria taken part in the 1951 Convention, it argued that:

Refugee shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part [or] the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality (1969 Convention).

### **1.7 Refugee's Legal Status in Turkey**

Turkey is a party to Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 with geographical limitation and only giving the refugee status to the refugees coming from Europe. Because of this limitation, refugees coming from Europe and refugees coming from Non-Europe countries are subjected to two separate regime and legal system.

Up to 1994 Regulation, UNHCR was the only actor who was responsible with evaluating asylum claims and resettling them into third countries but with 1994 Regulation dual asylum system has created in Turkey, which includes not only a double asylum-seeking procedure, but also a double terminology. While Turkish authorities might grant non-European applicants asylum seeker status who can only stay in Turkey until they resettled in a third country, UNHCR might grant them refugee status. (Biner, 2014) Until the period Law on Foreigners and International Protection come into force in April 2014, refugees coming from Non-Europe countries were subjected to this Regulation dated 1994.

With the European Union accession negotiations, Turkey started to implement new asylum laws and policies, in 2005, Turkey introduced a National Action Plan for Adoption of Acquis on Asylum and Migration, took European Union (EU) Directives as a reference for the national legal system (Biner, 2014).

With the Syrian refugee flows, Turkey took a concrete step for establishing a standardized asylum regime with the new asylum law and have brought temporary



legal status to agenda with an indirect reference to a directive of European Union which does not define exactly the rights and obligations of Syrian refugees and left them in ambiguity. While Syrian refugees whose number is exceeding 3 million in Turkey are were in darkness and in-betweenness, “Law on Foreigners and International Protection” Turkey’s long-awaited first law in the field of immigration and asylum come into force in 14 April 2014 and subjected Syrian refugees to a separate asylum procedure referred to as “temporary protection.”<sup>10</sup> (Sarı & Dinçer, 2017)

According to the European Union’s Guideline duration of temporary protection must be one year. It can be prolonged to a second year with six-month periods. In case if there is the maintenance of reasons related to temporary protection, the Council can prolong temporary protection to a third one year. Furthermore, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles underlines the exception of this temporary protection.

On the other hand, the duration of temporary protection in Law on Foreigners and International Protection is not indicated neither in general rules nor in temporary Article 1, which is regulating Syrians status in Temporary Protection Guideline. On this topic, the decision is made by the Council of Ministers. This situation is posing several problems regarding Syrian refugees’ rights. First of all, the question appeared is whether temporary protection is about humanitarian character or political character. According to UNHCR Guidelines on Temporary Protection, the decision of temporary protection should be about the humanitarian character and not political. (UNHCR, Guidelines on Temporary Protection) Despite the fact that Syrians’ duration of stay in Turkey is prolonged, the fact that being subjected to “temporary protection” regime by being excluded from general legal framework relevant to refugees coming from Non-Europe countries in legislation. In this case, Syrian refugees are kept on staying

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<sup>10</sup>The international documents regulating “Temporary protection regime” are Council of Europe’s “Temporary Protection Regulation” numbered 2001/55/EC and dated 20.06.2001 and UNHCR’s “Guidelines on Temporary Protection” about temporary protection made in February 2014. These two documents refer to some joint principles related to temporary protection. According to UNHCR’s “Guidelines on Temporary Protection”, temporary protection is an exceptional method in accordance with situations in which individual refugee status evaluation can’t be made in global refugee influx. Principles of UNHCR along with not being able to predict an exact duration for temporary protection, state that this regime is not fit to situations in which the duration of stay is prolonged and the standards provided should be improved progressively.

in Turkey, and thus, it creates the perception as if it is the decision of the government. Local people, as well as Syrians, think any temporary protection status won't be demanded in the case the current government changes.

Furthermore, as long as Syrian refugees stay on temporary protection regime, they will not be considered as obtained any of international protection status. During the period, the temporary protection is implemented, foreigners' individual international protection demands in the context of this Regulation, don't be put in operation in order to implement temporary protection precautions efficiently and as mentioned above, termination of temporary protection is up to Council of Ministers' decision. Also, according to Article 14 of Regulation, with the end of temporary protection, those who are protected temporarily should go out from Turkey. However, according to international regulations mentioned above, temporary protection is an exceptional and time-limited status and when the expired transition of persons to international protection should be provided.

There is a tight relationship between the policies and legal mechanisms that states produce in the field of asylum. This relationship gives important clues as to how the state approaches the issue and what kind of attitude and strategy it develops. From this point of view, why the asylum policy in Turkey is based on temporary solutions is an important question to understand the Turkish state position in asylum regulations, especially in the Syrian refugees' case. Back to Önder case: it could be said that Syrian refugees' precarious statuses and conditions of livings operate in the realm of strategy, which is dominated by the state and other powerful agents<sup>11</sup>. This realm of strategy is

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<sup>11</sup>Right to Health: Access to medical institutions is established in 10 province where is camps for Syrians situated with a notice posted in January 2013 and after six months, the access opportunity of Syrians to the rights to health in every province in Turkey provided by another notice. According to the mentioned notice, "Patient share should not be taken from treatment and medications in primary and emergency health services. Present health service price is paid by AFAD in a way not to surpass the price determined by Social Security Institution for those who have general health insurance. Those who are under temporary protection cannot directly apply to private health organizations, excluding emergency and forced situations." The most important problem faced in the healthcare field is the problem of language. Translation service is provided with teleconference method in English, Deutsch, Arabic, Russian, Persian and French languages seven days 24 hours, in order to establish the communication between the patients who cannot speak Turkish and medical personnel with the notice, numbered 2011/41 implemented in 2011 by Ministry of Health. However, we observed during the studies we made in the field that, in hospitals where Syrians go to, a large amount of health personnel is not aware of this service, so they continue to meet their need for translation with general neighbors brought along with them or help of persons they meet by chance. Right to Education: According to Temporary Protection Regulations, "right to education" is formed under the title "Education services" and while giving the

complicated by the shifting and ambivalent nature of the Turkish government's approach to Syrian refugees, but it is also being answered by refugees themselves with the complex tactical practices to subvert the constraints of their limbo position. It is important, in this regard, briefly to highlight what temporary protection regime provides Syrian refugees and what it does not provide.

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inspection authority to the government as a follow-up of service perspective, didn't give the obligation to fulfill it. In accordance with Article 28 of Regulation, training activities of foreigners within the scope of regulation should be carried out in or out of Temporary refugee centers, under the inspection and responsibility of Ministry of National Education. Procedures and principles of an associate degree, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate education of those who temporarily protected are determined by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). The notice posted in 2014 about Syrian kids receiving education, made possible for kids to continue to public schools or Temporary Education Centers where is mostly paid because of source insufficiency and the Syrian school curricula is in Arabic. However, as of the date, September 2015, 60% of Syrian kids cannot access to education despite this notice. So, Syrian kids involved in the educational system face so many problems, and it begins with enrollment period. A study made by Bilgi University Child Study Department shows that because of lack of foundation and lack of support mechanisms, even Syrian kids who have access to education do not benefit from the right to education in real terms. Even the law which permits Syrian kids to go to public schools is accepted, Human Rights Watch report on this subject indicate that main obstacles such as language barrier, compliance problems to society and economic difficulties violate kids right to education. "In the year of 2016, a regulation is made about the right to work of Syrians in temporary protection. According to Article 5 of "Regulation on work permit of foreigners on temporary protection" published in Official Journal in January 2016, foreigners on temporary protection can apply after six months from their registration date to Ministry of Labor and Social Security in order to obtain a work permit. Those who will work at seasonal agriculture and animal breeding sector are exempted from work permit. However, for foreigners who will work in these sectors can get a province and quota limitation. Different employment quotas can be implemented in work sites. However, it must remain loyal to third sub-article. Accordingly, the number of foreigner under temporary protection workers cannot surpass 10% of the number of Turkish citizen workers at a job in which they applied for a work permit. The fact that foreigners who are working under temporary protection will not get paid under minimum wage is also in the regulation (GKSY). The increasing percentages of unemployment in regions where Syrians are concentrated create perception of Syrians taking the jobs of local people away from them. The percentage of "Syrians taking away our job from us" sentence supporters is %56,1 in research made

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HIDDEN INJURIES OF URBAN REFUGEES IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE**

In this study, the significance of refugees' struggles will be considered on the basis of the strategy of the state and capital and of other powerful agents in the host society which are shaping Syrian refugees as powerless and precariat guests. While the state presents no clear plan for Syrian refugees, this policy of neglect creates a more complex and ambiguous environment as a continuation of a long history of vulnerability to poverty, racism, crime, and violence.

Before beginning to analyze the accounts of Syrian refugees, it has to be clarified that through the field research it is seen that Syrian refugees have not explained their new hidden injuries of the refugee experience only based on cultural problems, on the contrary, as we listened to their experiences, the complexity of their experience gained more clarity. That is why, as mentioned earlier, this thesis does not grasp the hidden injuries of Syrian refugees as a solely cultural problem or an issue of prejudice; but also, as an economic issue and suggests that it needs to be understood in systemic terms of political economy. In other words, this thesis suggests that if one concerns to understand Syrian refugees hidden injuries occurred in Turkey, one needs to look beyond the inaccurate perspectives that viewed refugee experience as temporary and unique and considers how refugees experiences are situated in a wider socio-economic context.

In terms of material circumstances such as their working circumstances, housing, and access to education and health facilities, the interviewees have common ground, according to information collected in field research. For this research, I conducted 25 semi structured interviews with Syrian refugees; 13 of were with men, 8 were women. All respondents were living with their family in the same slum neighborhood called Önder. During the interviews, 16 interviewees were employed, and five were unemployed. The interviewees' working history involved many months of unemployment and compulsory job switching narratives. The textile worker, construction

worker, furniture worker, paper collector, hairdresser, and waiter were some of the common employment for the Syrian refugees. Of course, none of them had insurance, and all of them had unsecured jobs. Generally, they worked for the minimum wage whose range differs from around 400TL to 900TL per month.

Of course, as Sassen (1996) states, “the opportunity to find formal, stable, well-paid, and secure jobs has lessened” for all working-class members due to global developments in the economic structure that correlatively has created new hidden emotional injuries for the ones whose life conditions get worse. When I asked the refugees to tell about their employment stories, they told me about very touching moments of their lives; stories about how they are desperately dependent on the money their little children earned or the illnesses and bodily injuries they suffer. All these experiences designate how refugees define themselves and how they feel in particular about the socio-economic inequalities stemming from their in-between position. When I asked them about problems at the workplace, the first and foremost mentioned the humiliating treatments they faced with their boss and the lack of respect local workers showed to them. Experiences of economic exploitation, poverty, and inequality were interwoven with individual and collective suffering, vulnerability, misrecognition, and resentment felt in the infinitesimal vessels of everyday life in these stories.

In addition to the field observation, with exploring current media coverage on Syrian refugees, one could easily conclude that Syrian refugees are systematically discriminated by the host society and deemed as security, economic, and a hygienic threat to the majority groups and this representation have been persuasively justified and legitimated to media recipients.<sup>12</sup> As stated by the report by the Hrant Dink Foundation (2017), the most common metaphor found to be used is that of the criminal metaphor. It is so common to position refugees as someone to be fearful of and illustrate them in connection with the murder, theft, and sexual harassment. Furthermore, Syrian refugees have been depicted as being responsible for the deteriorating economic situation and growing joblessness in Turkey. They are also linked to security and terrorism problems as well.

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<sup>12</sup>To see an example of negative connotations in newspapers; Hürriyet Newspaper, 27 July 2012: Ertuğrul Özkök: “Friend, Know Your Place if you are a Guest!”; <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/21077508.asp>.

On the other hand, the second most common metaphor was found to be used is that of the ‘tragic refugee’. This repertoire constructed refugee as a tragic person, in need of assistance, but also serving as a reminder of the unwanted invader. By using such repertoires, the media were constructing an account of the “other” as a refugee who is different from local people and contributing a strong message that these refugees will never belong in Turkey. At this point, the main concern is on the question of what impact do these repertoires have for those who seek asylum in Turkey and their sense of belonging in the country?

To be represented by certain media discourses and public perception as ‘unwanted invaders’ who steal local’s job, Syrian refugees are not just facing economic obstacles; they are also confronting with gnawing doubts about self-worth and the meaning of existence. From this point of view, this chapter seeks to capture the details of Syrian refugee’s subjectivity at the micro level within the context of macro-level policies driving their poverty experience.

## **2.1 From Precarious Work to Hyper-Precarious Lives**

In a widely held perspective, the concepts of precarity and temporality are taken as a way of understanding intensifying and insecure neoliberal economic policies which have gone hand in hand with globalization. As Harvey (2005) indicated, neoliberal globalization surrendered the post-war commitment to full employment and opened the door to the dominant statement of worldwide neoliberal concepts and policies directed at insecure labor markets and restoring circumstances for profitable growth.

It should be noted at this stage that the concept precariousness has frequently been used to refer to financial circumstances, but latest studies also refer to political and social circumstances more widely (Butler, 2009; Banki, 2013); which include forms of vulnerability that stems from political, social and ,cultural processes.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>There is a growing precarity literature offers to expand the meaning of the conception of precarity from the traditional understanding as chronic underemployed ( too see more information, Branch and Hanle ( 2011)to those who are in risk of not being qualified as a subject of recognition by the dominant social order. See Banki (2013) and Butler (2009); both of them use the term as encompasses all those who experience precarity regarding economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Briefly, neoliberal economic restructuring has contributed to the erosion of worker protection and has made workers more vulnerable and unprotected. This vulnerability has been seen twice as much in migrant/refugee cases of those who both experienced insecurity in the workplace and also "in other areas of day to day, including access to legal documentation, housing, debt, and the ability to build effective social relations." (Neilson & Rossiter, 2005)

First of all, they have banded with the employer's mercy because of the lack of legal protection regulations. While the state recognizes that refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to work, this right to work is mostly not enforced by state authorities. Therefore, refugees constitute a considerable amount of potential cheap labor in the new reserved army labor. They are seen as harder workers, more devoted and more reliable, and who are willing to work longer hours because of their absence of choice, and this being trapped in forced labor provides employers the capacity to select the ' best ' migrant workers.(MacKenzie and Forde, 2009).

Secondly, refugees are facing precarity of residence. If they are expelled from one country and not allowed to enter another, where would the refugee go? This is, of course, the dilemma of stateless refugees that an estimated ten million individuals are experiencing. (UNHCR, 2014). Although this dilemma still continues its existence, in the light of our empirical findings, this thesis asserts that Syrian refugees in Turkey did not have a sense of the impossibility of being oriented to the Turkish society; their life becomes integrated to the present society but in an informal<sup>14</sup> way because of the asylum regime that locates asylum seekers in an in-between position.

While precariousness is often seen in the life of those who experience it as a disabled phenomenon, some scholars indicate that it can play a beneficial part in immigrants ' labor market inclusion and could provide an organizational force, particularly for those treated as disposable by the state or capital, because their shared condition can bring them together for collective action. This debate is going beyond our scope, but it has been explored by the fieldwork that Syrian refugees interviewed are not totally excluded from the labor market or from the host society. They have found their own

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<sup>14</sup>Although the informal economy notion is commonly used, there does not seem to be a conventional concept definition. In accordance with these definitions, I take precarious work as an unrecognized, unrecorded, unsafe job that is also unprotected by government laws.

ways to participate in them. However, while trying to find their own way, of course, they encounter lots of barriers. Danso (2002), who focused on Ethiopian and Somali refugees' daily lives in Toronto, classified these major barriers in refugees' experience while they were adapting themselves to their new physical and social environments. According to his classification, these are; difficulties in gaining entry into the labor market and inadequate income, accessing affordable housing, experiencing racism and language barriers (Danso, 2002). This thesis will attempt to evaluate these blocks based on the classification of Danson and then examine how these circumstances influence the world of meaning for these Syrian refugees, which this thesis argues has a very important role in their daily lives. Then, in the following chapter, the thesis will attempt to answer the question of whether these blocks can or cannot absolutely hold off refugees from creating their own space by diverting the established order.

## **2.2 Conditions Of The Labor Market and The Difficulty In Gaining Entry Into It**

As mentioned before, Önder is not a jobless urban area because of its proximity to Siteler Industrial Zone. There are many small and middle scale furniture production units with showrooms and raw material dealers which provides informal employment opportunities for Syrian refugees. However, Syrians working conditions have been distinctly less favorable than other workers in terms of wages, bargaining power, and job security. On the other hand, it should be noted that experience of refugeeness also serves as a key idiom for Syrian workers to form relations of cooperation and solidarity among themselves, which will be mentioned as Syrian refugees' tactics against state's and market's strategies in the following chapter.

Most common problems experienced by the Syrian workers are the shortage of jobs, not getting wages, getting the lowest wage, heavy working conditions, negative results of prejudices in the workplace and lack of job security. The majority of the refugees interviewed in these working conditions say that they only work for peanuts. This is really a painful picture of their experiences.

In January 2016, Turkey's Law on Foreigners and International Protection instituted major changes in the country's asylum system, affording Syrian refugees who have been in Turkey for six months the right to seek employment, but subject to certain



residency criteria and only if they can find an employer willing to sponsor them, they will have the chance to formal way. As a consequence, although Turkey allowed Syrian refugees access to its labor market through work permission in 2016, still high legal barriers keep employers recruiting refugees in formal way. The Temporary Protection Work Permit Regulation published in January 2016 lists the requirements for Syria's access to the labor market as follows:(1)the applicant should have a temporary ID card and a valid ID number beginning with "99"; (2) the applicant should have been temporarily protected for at least 6 months before the date of submission of the application (3) the amount of foreigners to be employed in business under temporary protection can not exceed 10% of the number of Turkish citizens (except civil society organisations) ; (4) temporary protection foreigners can only operate in their Temporary Protection Province registration. In the event of jobs in another town, DGMM should authorize relocation of individuals under temporary protection; (5) applications must be submitted online by employers on behalf of staff through "edevlet." If the applicant starts a company and works separately, the foreigner should apply for temporary protection.;(6)if the applicant wishes to work in the agricultural or stockbreeding industry, the Provincial Labor Directorate in the province in which he / she is enrolled should apply for a work permit exemption; and (7) before applying for a work permit, foreigners wishing to job in the health or education industries should contact the appropriate ministry.” (İçduygu & Diker 2017, p. 21) Although these legislative adjustments that facilitate access to formal job opportunities, formal work permits numbers are still low. There are more than 1.7 million (61 percent of the total) working-age Syrians (between 15 and 65) in Turkey, according to the recent DGMM statistics. However, since 2011, a total of 20,981 Syrian refugees have been granted work permits, representing only 1% of the total working-age population, according to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (DGMM, 2017).

Due to the dependence on the employer's willingness, this implementation opens the avenue for abuses and increases the stratification by nationality and race, which leads to different conditions and payments. Hammoudi (39, Male) depicted his experience with employers as follows:

Frankly, I do not know what to do or where to apply in order to work insured. I do not think anyone does. Also, I do not know any Syrian who works insured. The bosses would not do it. They pay us less than minimum

wage, and in case we were insured, they would be forced to pay us the minimum wage. They would not want that.<sup>15</sup>

The major reason why employers prefer hiring Syrian refugees as informal workers are relatively the higher cost of formally hiring Syrians. If an employer applies for getting a work permit for its employee, he/she has to pay the monthly minimum wage plus social security contributions and taxes. In parallel with this situation, according to Hammoudi' statement, employers mostly give lower payment than the minimum wage by using the fear of refugees of losing the source of income. While trying to find a sponsoring employer, Syrian refugees are also subjected to employer' goodwill and exposed to their abuse, required lots of documentation, mostly grant no adequate public assistance for implementing this process.

Furthermore, Hamit mentioned that they had received limited or no information about work permission law. Even though applying to Syrian refugees' network is helpful for getting information, it may also generate issues for refugees who fail to fulfill their community obligation. Being a member of a network emerges with dedication, and once the duties of the network are not fulfilled, it can lead people to be excluded from the networks (Tilly, 2007). This dependency often subjected refugees to their community. As a consequence of these reasons, refugees are forced to pursue all income-generating opportunities, whether formal or informal.

Another issue of vital importance is finding a job which includes fair wages and decent working hours. Needless, to say that Syrians have had their share from dispossession process regarding their particular situation and this process results with the congregation of the Syrian refugees at the bottom of the urban labor market and creating a substantial amount of Syrian labor which had to rely on government 's aid or finding illegal jobs.

Because of this inaccessible situation of legal employment for refugees in Turkey, many of them have given consent to the lowest wages and hard-working conditions as a last resort and experience precarity over extended periods because of their temporary protection status. For example, Jihan, a furniture upholsterer from Aleppo, first

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<sup>15</sup>Açıkcası sigortalı çalışmak için ne yapmak lazım ben bilmiyorum, nereye başvurmak lazım. Bilen de pek yok bence. Zaten sigortalı çalışan Suriyeli hiç tanımiyorum. Yapmazlar yani. Hem bize asgari ücretten az veriyorlar, eğer sigortalı olursak asgari ücret vermeleri lazım. Patronlar bunu istemez.

worked as a construction worker after coming to Turkey for six months. Then, he searched for a job where he could use his job experience and obtained a job in Siteler, but he only worked there for two or three months then forced to find another one. At the time of the interview, he was working in his new job in Siteler for three months.

Jihan, 34 years old, speaks about his experience of ambiguous work life in this way:

There are jobs; it is not that there is not. We are working, but it is not regular. I have experience in the furniture sector, I was working at a place like this in the bazaar of Aleppo, but we are foreigners here. First to fire is always one of us. Turkish workers do not want us. They talk to the boss. It is 'them or us.' That is why we have to work harder. We can never say we are tired, so the boss cannot send us. I am working seven days a week. I am coming at seven in the morning, leave at night whenever the work is finished.<sup>16</sup>

A similar reaction comes from Cahid (23, Male) who is a waitress:

It was good for me that I can speak Turkish. They cannot say I am Syrian if I do not tell, but it comes out sooner or later. Frankly, I do not want to be mentioned as coming from Syria, asylee. Then also wages decrease, we Syrians cannot get the salaries that locals get. That is why I say it nobody where I come from and they think I am from here<sup>17</sup>.

Of course, it has to be taken into consideration that the intersection between ethnicity and class in Turkey did not start with the flow of Syrian refugees. For instance, as Yörük (2009) states, "Kurdish people who were sent to the cities by forced migration, also, increased the amount of labor incapable of bargaining power, ready to work in every job, dispossessed as laborer supply, that flexible capital accumulation needs." (Yörük, 2009, p. 13) Thus, similar to Kurds forced migrants who have settled in industrial districts of cities, Syrians also have become sources of cheap labor in the manufacture of garments...while others who live far from job opportunities are even unable to do that (Yükseker, 2005). As a consequence, many Syrian refugees have joined the informal economy in Turkey and are at danger of becoming trapped in precarious job and receiving the lowest salary, eventhough their skill levels are similar

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<sup>16</sup> "İş var yok değil, çalışıyoruz aslında ama düzenli olmuyor. Benim mobilya sektöründe deneyimimde var, Halep'te de çarşıda böyle bir yerde çalışıyordum ama yabancıyız buralara haliyle ilk işten giden hep biz oluyoruz. Türkiyeli işçiler istemiyor bizi. Patrona söylüyorlar. Ya onlar ya biz. O yüzden biz daha çok çalışmak zorundayız. Asla yorulduk diyemiyoruz ki, patron bizi göndermesin. Haftanın yedi günü çalışıyorum. Sabah yedide geliyorum akşam ne zaman iş biterse."

<sup>17</sup> Türkçe biliyor olmam benim için çok iyi oldu, söylemezsem anlamıyorlar Suriyeli olduğumu ama işte er ya da geç ortaya çıkıyor tabi. Açıkcası ben istemiyorum Suriye'den geldi, sığınmacı diye anılmak. O zaman maaşlar da düşüyor, biz Suriyeliler sizlerin aldığı maaşı alamıyoruz. O yüzden kimse bilmesin beni buralı sansınlar diyorum ben de.

to other local workers. Within that context, It is obvious that regardless of the reasons for migration, migrants are often considered as less skilled by default, refugees even more so. (Danso, 2002) In the case of Syrians, they do not experience explicit state violence of the host country as much as internally displaced person experience, but it is obvious that they are open to overt forms of structural violence such as poverty and social exclusion.

Another issue considering the difficulties in the labor market is the precarious structure of the working permits of refugees. As mentioned above, although Turkey's Law on Foreigners and International Protection affords refugees the right to seek formal employment, they still cannot use this right properly because of the long delays in the process of work permit and the situation of leaving refugees subject to the desire of employers, which causes them to be unable to be continuously employed and to engage with their place in the working class. Thereby, particularly in the case of skilled refugees, employers are often more hesitant to employ them formally, even they have the proper documentation and qualifications. Hosein (28, Male) who has an engineering degree shared his experience with searching for a job as follows:

I am lucky to have a job. I did not apply for engineer jobs, but frankly, I do not think it is such a possibility anyway. You do not know whom to go to, which way to follow, especially at first. Then I learned from my friends that it is not so easy. The necessary documents are hard, convincing your employer... I have friends who tried it, but they could not find a formal job either. There is no one I know who is working legally.<sup>18</sup>

Like most of the respondents, who form the majority of the interviewees, Hosein (28, Male), who were experiencing a loss of status, has had an image for himself as a refugee who accepts low-skill jobs as a more rational choice. He, like many other refugees, turns to the informal sector in attempting to solve a state of unemployment and created fundamental emotions of incompetence. On the other hand, Ziad, who was a shoe manufacturer in his homeland (28, Male) expresses different kind of mentality which prioritizes his capability and the self-confidence:

If I had money, I would have loved to have my own workplace here. It's really bothering to work for someone for almost 14 hours a day, 8 AM to 10 PM, not being able to use your knowledge or abilities. Not to be

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<sup>18</sup>İş bulduğum için şanslıyım ben. Kendi alanımda başvuru yapmadım açıkçası ama zaten böyle bir imkan olduğunu da sanmıyorum. Kime gidilir, hangi yol izlenir tabi bilemiyorsun başta. Sonra araştırdım öyle kolay değil o iş. Gereklili evraklar, iş vereni ikna etme falan zor yani. Deneyen arkadaşlarım oldu, yok yani iş bulamadı onlar da.

ungrateful, but we became inhuman. If we could get through these days, I would very much like to have my own business. I feel like I forgot what I knew already.<sup>19</sup>

As Malkki states the term “refugee” has analytical usefulness not as a label for a total generalizable type of person because of their different backgrounds regarding their socioeconomic background, personal histories, and psychological situations but in thesis, we are concentrating Syrian refugees with current low-income position in the host country considering their diverse situations as well. In this situation, Hosein and Ziad may have different responses to underemployment, but both of them had the experience of being underemployed or unemployed which undermine their self-esteem<sup>20</sup>, probably forced them to feel like a misfit. According to the principle of “reflected appraisal” suggested by the theories of Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934), we learn about ourselves in large part by seeing ourselves through the eyes of others. So, it can be said that in addition to refugees downward occupational status and social status, they are also have effected by the host society’s opinions about them. If underemployed refugees and underpaid refugees as a group, face stigma from the society as a whole, then, viewing themselves from the perspective of the broader society, they would be expected to develop negative selfattitudes which lead to a vicious cycle where it is very difficult to escape. Almost all of the respondents of the interviews complained of a lack of acceptance by the host society.

According to the fieldwork findings, this thesis asserts that in addition, the powerful agencies such as state, market strategies, pressures and attitudes of host society’s groups exercise strategies against Syrian refugees. For example, pregnant Syrian women do not want to go to a hospital because of the judgmental attitude of the doctors, although they have the right to access health services (Freedman & Kivilcim, 2017, p. 55). As mentioned before, the same hostile attitude also has shown itself in the job market. Although employees use the situation of Syrian flow as a competition

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<sup>19</sup>Param olsa ben de burda kendi yerim olsun isterdim tabi. Başkasının yanında 8-22.00 nerdeyse 14 saat çalışıp, bilgini, yeteneğini kullanamamak insanın canını sıkıyor. Nankörlük gibi olmasın tabi de insanlıktan çıktık biz. Şu günleri atlatabilirsek kendi yerimi açmak istiyorum gene. Böyle bildiğimi de unuttum gibi geliyor.

<sup>20</sup>In this dissertation, on the basis of the social-psychological formalization of Epstein, I will use self-phenomena such as self-awareness, elf-esteem, self-consciousness, self-image, etc. Epstein indicates that it is best to view the self-concept as a concept that a individual maintains about himself as an experience that works in communication with the world.

among low-skilled workers in the informal markets, which gives the opportunity to employees to hire workers for lower wages, local workers are still blaming newcomer Syrian workers for the declining wages and are asserting that they negatively influence local workers' working conditions.

This perception goes hand in hand with racist views about Syrian refugees 'greediness,' and 'opportunism' which have appeared in public discourse and have created tension between local workers and Syrian workers and also have caused a lot of trauma and frustration among Syrian workers and their families. One of the respondents Jihan (34, Male), who works in furniture manufacturing in Siteker, said to us that he had no Turkish friends although he was working with seven of them:

Bosses pay us less than everyone else. When we do not get paid, they hold us accountable for all this. Thank god there was no argument or such at my workplace but we hear stuff. People think that Syrians came and took their jobs. We did not want to live like this or start a life somewhere we did not know. However, we were forced to. We are not to blame. We don't ask them to pay us less than the minimum wage.<sup>21</sup>

Like many refugees, Syrian workers are often blamed for unfair wages. When we add to the picture small scale Syrian entrepreneurs, who operate in an unregulated market, a market which is not inspected by municipal authorities, host society' attitudes against Syrian refugees can be seen more clearly. In this regard, it can be said that Turkish state toleration regarding suspension of norms and rules functions as a containment strategy gave rise to the racism and xenophobia and consequently segregates refugees from the host society, whether they share the same social class or not.

Gender-differentiated roles are another dimension which is also central in their income generating activities. These gender-differentiated roles are important but cannot be generalized. So, the question is how a person's gendered differences shape the experience of being a refugee worker?

Respondents reported that some Syrian women have taken on new responsibilities to their traditional gendered social roles; a more active economic position which is

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<sup>21</sup>Patronlar bize herkesten daha düşük ücret veriyor. Zaman zaman ücretimizi de alamadığımız oluyor. Tüm bunlardan da bizi sorumlu görüyorlar yine. Benim iş yerimde çok şükür bir tartışma olmadı ama duyuyoruz tabi hep. Suriyeliler geldi işlerimizi aldı diye düşünüyorlar. Biz ister miydik böyle yaşayalım. Bilmediğimiz bir yerde hayat kuralım. Zorunda kaldık. Suçlu biz değil ki, biz demiyoruz bize düşük ücret verin diye.

supported by their family, because of their families' economic downturns, in contrast to Syrian women past life in their origin country. Mobility in Syria before the conflict was very limited for many of the women respondents, most of whom were only allowed to leave the house with male family permission. They now have the relative chance, according to their stories, to improve their family's situation by going to the market, making errands, making daily choices, and working on the informal market. It could be stated that this has created an increased sense of empowerment. However, in practice, it is seen that they are still subjected to men in their households. According to Giles, such changes in gender dynamics can help Syrian women to build their own capacities and self-confidence, but at the same time, this situation changes the men's self-esteem and cause frustration which might increase women's exposure to domestic violence in the households (Giles, 2004).

Moreover, because of the structural violence of temporary protection which forms the basis for the reproduction of gendered relations, Syrian refugee women are left without any legal protection to defend their rights both in private and public spaces. Women refugees, in particular, are mostly unable to access formal Turkish labor market because of their less social capital and fewer connections regarding their gender dynamics in their family. These restrictions leave to female refugee's little scope other than gendered informal work. As a result, now they have the opportunity to involve informal jobs but earn the disproportionately small amount of money in comparison to their husbands.

At this point, it is also important to state that Syrian refugee women are generally perceived as cheap labor, but they are also considered as not qualify enough even for the basic housework. Regarding this, it can be said that they are at the bottom of the workforce of low-skilled foreign workers. According to Yasemin's statements, who was one of the respondents, while a Syrian assisted woman receives a maximum of 600 TL, other assisted women from abroad (Georgia, Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, etc.) receive an average of 1400 TL per month. Although both of them are exploited by dominant classes when they receive 1400 TL or 600TL per month, it is obvious that Syrian refugee women bargaining power is quite lower than other low-skilled foreign women workers. Yasemin (33, Female) has stated that she had looked for a house assisted job, but she could not find one although she knows Turkish fluently.

When I first decided to start working, I asked around, and my friends said I could clean houses, but I could not find such work. Of course, I would not go somewhere where I do not feel safe, but I could not find any work. Later on, I learned that we were not wanted because we were Syrian; they didn't trust us to clean properly. How ridiculous. Besides, when looking for a job, one really shouldn't say that he/she is Syrian. They pay you less if you are so. If other employees get 1400, a Syrian employee gets 600 tops. It is the same at a hair saloon, but it is way better than being unemployed.<sup>22</sup>

Because of host societies' cultural stigma against migrants and patriarchal attitudes based on religious beliefs considering home as a best convenient space for women, there is not still high engagement percentage of Syrian women in paid work. Before the war, female employment in Syria constituted less than 14% of the labor force; currently, it is estimated that only 7% of Syrian women between the ages 30-44 are employed in Turkey (Rohwerder, 2018). In this context, most of the women, who involved in economic activities, in our respondents were working from home. The hair salon where Yasemin worked was one of them.<sup>23</sup>

Despite all these obstacles, both private and public, it is seen that working life has changed the way how Syrian women looked themselves. For instance, when I asked Yasemin (33, Female) that did working change something in her life, she expressed her feelings about employment in this way:

Surely it changed. I think my fears became smaller when I started working. Both the fear of my husband and what is outside. There are also new fears. Lots of things happen outside, at work. For instance, it is really clean here, right? However, I hear so many complaints since I started working here. I know it's because I'm Syrian. I know Turkish. I don't want them to know that I am Syrian so I speak Turkish, but their behavior changes when they notice it. Despite everything working, which was really good for me. Before, I would have felt really sad that I was insulted. I don't mind it that much anymore.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Çalışmaya ilk karar verdiğimde sordum soruşturdum, ev temizliği yapabilirsin dedi buradaki arkadaşlar ama yok bulamadım öyle bir iş. Tabi ben de güvenmediğim yere gitmezdim ama bulamadım da iş. Sonradan öğrendim ki Suriyeliyiz diye istemiyorlarmış bizi, temizliğimize güvenmiyorlar diye anladım ben. Ne kadar saçma. Zaten Suriyeliyim dememek lazım iş ararken. Suriyeliysen çok daha az maaş veriyorlar. Diğer çalışanlar 1400 alıyorsa Suriyeli bir yardımcı 600 maksimum alıyor. Kuaförde de durum böyle tabi işinin olmamasından iyidir tabiki.”

<sup>23</sup> The owner of the hair saloon was also another Syrian woman but we could not have made any interview with her.

<sup>24</sup> Değiştirdi tabi. Bence çalışınca korkularım azaldı. Kocaya duyulan korku da dışarıdakilere duyulan



As a response to this discursive violence, escaping from racialized workplaces appears as a desirable goal. Syrian women refugees who have the chance try to use cultural resources, networks, and skills to enter into self-employment directed towards services (hairdressing, food production, dressmaking, etc.) within their own home.

The above answers are indicative of the dire condition in which refugees are not just the recipients of donations, but also their active agency in wanting to be gainfully employed. A twenty-eight years old Syrian interviewee, Sahara, who was a history teacher in her home country, had the following to say:

Most of the stuff in this house came from the Önder Foundation, and our neighbors shared with us. Nonetheless, it is really hard to get by. I know they blame us because we receive some help. We really are not lazy; we simply needed the help. We received help, but we also work very hard. It is much harder for women to find a job. My husband did not interfere with me having a job. We work together here, at a buffet. We have no kids, but we need to keep working. Rents are not low here; we barely earn enough.<sup>25</sup>

As seen from Sahara's statements, the tolerated temporary protection regime constructs Syrian women as victims, ungrateful guests and vulnerable persons in the eyes of the host society, and also force them to live under the tolerance of the males. Consequently, both women and men refugees are exposed to physical and verbal violence in their workplace and forced to remain socially and economically dependent actors in society, and in the women's case, this structural violence affects women twice as much. As a result, the precarious status, they gained with temporary protection regime, causes them to be unable to hold a permanent job, but, it does not mean that refugees will be silence and wait for the charity organizations or state institutions to rescue them. Actually, refugees are already responding to this structural violence in their own and different ways which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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korku da. Ama yeni korkular da var. Bir sürü şey yaşanıyor evin dışında, iş yerlerinde. Mesela bak burası nasıl temiz bir yer di mi? Ama bir sürü kişiden hakaret duydum ben çalışmaya başladığımdan beri. Suriyeliyim diye diyorlar bak biliyorum. Benim Türkçem var. Anlamasınlar istiyorum çoğunlukla Türkçe konuşuyorum ama anladıklarında hareketleri değişiyor. Ama bana sorarsan ne olursan olsun çalışmak bana iyi geldi. Eskiden olsa belki çok üzülürdüm hakaret duyduğuma şimdi de üzülüyorum ama eskisi kadar aldırış da etmiyorum.

<sup>25</sup>Bu evdeki eşyaların çoğunu Önder Vakfından aldık, komşularımız paylaştı bizimle. Ama geçinmek hiç de kolay değil. Bizi suçluyorlar biliyorum, bize yardım yapıyor diye. Ama gerçekten tembel değiliz, zordaydık. Yardım aldık, ama çok da çalışıyoruz. Kadınlar için iş bulmak daha zor. Benim kocam çalışmama karışmadı ama. Burada (bir büfe) beraber çalışıyoruz. Biz iki kişiyiz, çocuğumuz yok ama çalışmak lazım. Kiralar hiç de düşük değil burada. Anca yetiyor.

### 2.3 Mental State of Uncertainty

Since many refugees are experiencing enhanced rates of fear, stress, and anxiety, they are also dealing with emotional issues. It would not be right to overlook the fact that displacement causes many types of trouble, but thesis informants, actually, did not base their anxiety only on the mere fact of changing their place but linked their anxiety with the fear of having no stable life, having no future. Because of the administrative reproduction of poverty through the discriminatory registration procedure, many refugees enter the informal economy and take the risk of becoming trapped in precarious lives, experience the loss of skills and social status. Also, they experienced poor physical health due to stressful and strenuous working conditions and received a lack of necessary medical treatment mostly because they cannot afford it. Besides many refugees do not know where to go to get help.

On the other hand, the fear of repatriation is a really significant fear which is inherent in being “refugee.” But in Önder’ case, many respondents stated that they were dealing with depression, especially because of the structural inconsistency; the uncertainty in their lives, but at the same time they have been thinking that having depression is a lux for them. Yasemin (33, Female) who was a part-time coiffeur depicts her feelings as follows:

I am feeling bad, but I know I should not be. Thank god we are saved from the war; we are alive. However, I have stayed without a hometown. I am struggling for my children, of course. However, my head never stops; I am always worried. If you ask what is making me worried, I would say to survive, to earn our food. Actually, I do not have any expectations, but you said future, I cannot think of any future of us. Because my life is not in my hands. But I know I am worried about nothing. From now on, it will be destiny.<sup>26</sup>

Syrian refugees have been considered as “guests” and have been presented as if they are “welcome” by the Turkish state and the host Turkish society on the basis of ‘Turkish hospitality’ and ‘Muslim fraternity’ traditions (Erdoğan and Kaya, 2015), this attitude also shaped the host society opinion as well as refugees’ own opinion about

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<sup>26</sup>Kendimi kötü hissediyorum ama aslında hissetmemeliyim biliyorum. Çok şükür savaştan kurtulduk, yaşıyoruz işte. Ama zor memleketsiz kalmak. Çocuklarım için mücadele ediyorum tabi. Ama kafam durmuyor, sürekli endişeliyim. Ne için endişeleniyorsun dersin, hayatta kalmak, ekmeğimizi kazanmak derim. Bir beklentim yok aslında ama sen gelecek dedin ya, geleceğimize dair hiçbir şey düşünemiyorum. Çünkü benim elimde değil artık hayatım, ama boşuna endişeleniyorum biliyorum. Bundan sonrası kader.

themselves and their boundaries whether they can demand something or not. At the beginning of the interview, the most frequent word Yasemin had used was the “gratitude” (şükür), but in the following questions, her contradictory feelings became much clearer. In the most part of the interview Yasemin was so active and had an attitude that she knows what to do in her life but when I actually asked her what she hoped for the future, her gestures suddenly changed for a moment and started talked about her worries about the vagueness she lives in with a more serious voice tone. However, right after she talked about her worries, she felt shame and guilt and tried to explain to herself that she was grateful for everything to us. (to the host society and Turkish state) It is obvious that Yasemin felt shame because she took the perspective of host society when she expressed her complaints and thought that she did not have the right to complain as a “guest.”

Casualization, as Bourdieu states, “makes the whole future uncertain and avoids rational expectation and fundamental belief and hope in the future” that are required to withstand current circumstances (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 84). Grounded primarily on the temporary protection, Syrian refugees have an uncertain and transitory life, this makes it more difficult to predict their own destiny and to gain control of their own life. As such, precarious working conditions do not just refer to the structure of the new labor market practices; they are also referring to not having control over your life, time, and future. These different uncertainties define post-ford economy that converts relationships from being vital links to opening up to temporary and contingent relationships. Precariousness is more than the composition of labor market procedures in this context. It also impacts their positions, moods and circumstances. (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005) The pressing problem facing refugees in most of the interviews was the immediate need for a sense of psychological security and material stability to plan for the future.

A Syrian refugee man; Hammoudi, 39 years old, works in a timber merchant, expressed his thoughts about his future in this way;

I am praying to god that we are alive, but I do not know what is going to happen after this. I have three children, 2 of them are girl. We said let's send small and middle one to school; they said there is a line. We are waiting. However, we do not know what we are waiting for. School is a Syrian school. Esat finished our home, city. What children will do if they go to Syrian school? There is no place there for them to go. There is no

place in here yet too. I cannot think for myself, but I want them to have a place.<sup>27</sup>

Similar with Hammoudi (39, Male) who was concerning about their future in Turkey because of the lack of refugee status, Sahara (28, Female) was working in the falafel restaurant with her husband for four months portrayed her feelings as follows:

Some of my husband's friends are accepted as a refugee to Germany. It is different when you are a refugee. We can work in here, but we cannot be hired in several fields. Even if we are educated or not, we are working unsecured. I was a history teacher at Aleppo. I am working at a restaurant here, but I looked for many jobs since I came here. We are thinking about applying to Europe.<sup>28</sup>

As mentioned in this daily survival routine, it's no surprise they can not imagine their future. Therefore, it could be said that it is so difficult to nourish any hope either. Their material conditions have deepened hopelessness and anxiety. Jihan (Male,34) works in Siteler explained his feelings in this way:

When I came first came to Ankara, I could not find a job for three months then my niece helped me, he was working in a furniture manufacturer. I also started to work there, tried to maintain our lives in here, but the salary was not enough to survive. Anyway, they fired me because of the uneasiness between local neighbors and us. Now I found another job, fortunately. Me and my two son work for more than 12 hours, from 8 am to 10 pm, we are working very hard, but still, we do need social aid. However, if you ask me what do you care about, I could say that having a job is the most important thing. Without a job, we cannot have a future or life in Turkey too.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Çok şükür yaşıyoruz diye dua ediyorum hep ama bundan sonra ne olacağını hiç bilmiyorum. 3 çocuğum var; 2 si kız. Ufak olanla ortancayı okula göndereyim dedik, sıra var dediler. Bekliyoruz. Ama neyi bekliyoruz bilmiyoruz da. Okul Suriye okulu. Esat evimizi, şehrimizi bitirmiş artık. Çocuklar Suriye okuluna gitse ne yapacak ki. Gidecek yerleri yok artık orada. Burada da yok daha. Kendimi düşünmüyorum ama onların bir yeri olsun istiyorum.

<sup>28</sup>Eşimin arkadaşlarından bazıları Almanya'ya mülteci olarak kabul edildiler. Mülteci olduğunda daha farklı oluyor. Biz burada çalışabiliyoruz ama birçok alanda da işe giremiyoruz. Eğitim alanımızda almayanımızda güvencesiz çalışıyoruz. Ben Tarih öğretmeniydim Halep'te. Burada bu restaurant'ta çalışıyorum ama geldiğimden beri çok iş aradım. Biz de Avrupa'ya başvurulum diyoruz, kendimiz için değil de daha çok çocuklar var, onlar için.

<sup>29</sup>Ankara'ya ilk geldiğimde üç ay iş bulamadım, yeğenim bana yardım etti, bir mobilya üreticisinde çalışıyordu. Ben de orada çalışmaya başladım, burada hayatımızı sürdürmeye çalıştım ama aldığım maaş yetmiyordu. Bir de üstüne Türkiyeli komşularla Suriyeliler arasında bir gerginlik çıktı diye beni işten çıkardılar. Şimdi neyse ki başka bir iş buldum. Ben ve iki oğlum sabah 8'den akşam 10'a kadar günde 12 saatten fazla çalışıyoruz. Çok çalışıyoruz ama yine de yardıma ihtiyacımız var. Bana en çok neye ihtiyacımız var diye soruyorsan bence iş bulabilmek en önemlisi. İş bulamazsak Türkiye'de de elbette bir geleceğimiz, hayatımız olamaz.

On the question of hope, Ghassan Hage (2003:16) argues that "... the key to a decent society is this capacity to distribute opportunities for self-realization, which are what we might call as societal hope". Hage's point on the distribution of hope shows the significance of cultural assets such as dignity and respect and their significance to material circumstances. In such an understanding of hope, it is obvious that liminal positions of Syrian refugees take away the opportunity to have safe and secure in their future. Sara (41, Female), another respondent, describes her experiences of shrinking hope in this way:

We thought that we could be safe by coming here, but I do not feel safe. I feel like I do not belong here. I mean they accepted us here, but we actually are just guests. We are temporary. We have rights, but they do not apply. It is always hard to find a job, go to a hospital or a school. For example, I took my child to a hospital recently; they told me there was someone who knew Arabic. However, they did not help at all; I was neither able to be understood nor understand. They get mad. Why do they get mad? They want us to go but where could we go? I really don't know, you can't go to your country, and you can't stay where you are.<sup>30</sup>

The situation "feeling stuck" was mentioned by many of the Syrian refugees to describe their living conditions. According to Hage," it is only when we 'feel stuck' symbolically that we start dreaming of moving physically." This brings hope into question, for what is hope, if not a projection of our dreams of upward symbolic mobility. Sahara (28, Female); who wants to move on from Turkey to Germany, said that when they arrived in Turkey, they did not have a plan to go to Europe, but because of the lack of refugee status they could get, they started saving up money for their trip to Europe:

I will go away not for me but my children. My husband's friends got accepted to Germany as refugees. I applied too. Hopefully we will go there as well for the sake of our children.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Buraya gelerek güvende oluruz sandık ama burda da güvende hissetmiyorum kendimi. Buraya ait olmadığımı hissediyorum. Yani bizi buraya kabul ettiler ama misafiriz aslında. Gelip geçici gibiyiz. Haklarımız var aslında ama uygulama da yok. İş bulmak, hastaneye gitmek, okula gitmek hep zor. Mesela geçen çocuğumu götürdüm hastaneye, dil bilen biri var demişlerdi. Ama hiç yardımcı olmadılar, ne derdimi anlatabildim ne onlar ne diyor anlayabildim. Kızıyorlar da bence, ama neden kızıyorlar? Sanki gidelim istiyorlar ama nereye gideceğiz? Hiç bilmiyorum, o yüzden de umutlu değilim o kadar, biraz köşeye sıkışmak gibi bizim halimiz, ne gidebilirsin memleketine ne kalabilirsin gittiğin yerde gibi.

<sup>31</sup>Kendim için değil inan ama çocuklarım için gideceğim buralardan. Eşimin arkadaşları Almanya'ya mülteci olarak kabul edildiler. Ben de başvurduğum, hayırlısıyla biz de gideceğiz çocuklarımızın geleceği için.

While insecurity and low wage employment lead to uncertainty in the life of people, they are also unable to predict their own destiny and remove them from gaining control over their own life. (ibid) Precariousness characteristics such as insecurity and flexibility placed workes in constant risk of losing their employment. Amal (27, Female):

We decided to go from Turkey to Germany because of the precarious working conditions we have, right now my husband is trying to save up money but again because of the precarious situation we have, we are having difficulty with that. Having a stable job and earn a decent amount of money, get it on time all of them are rare things in refugees' lives. The money we earn only correspond to our daily needs.

In addition to the anxiety of precarious life conditions, Syrian women are also more vulnerable to physical and verbal harassments, including sexual harassment, and at outside they also fear from kidnap, robbery, and attacks. On the other hand, many of them also suffer when they choose to stay at home because they do not have anyone to speak to about their concerns. Leyla (30, Female) who is a housewife claims that she likes walking in the neighborhood but, because of the threat of violence, assault, exploitation, and sexual harassment, she is not feeling safe enough to wander around in Ankara.

We do not feel the same at all. Recently they tried kidnapping a woman, in broad daylight. She went to a mosque and started shouting. If not, they would already have put her in the car and taken her away. This sort of incidents scares us. If we were to file a complaint, against which one? Also, many are afraid of going to a police station. They do not know what to do there. I mostly go out with my sisters in law. When my hairdressing training ends, I will start working. I want to do beautiful things. What we went through were not easy, and I still can't say that we are more comfortable now. I also want to work to clear my mind. I will be working from home. They think Syrian women are left unattended. So, I am always careful about how I dress and behave.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>We don't feel safe at all. "Geçen bir kadını kaçırmaya kalktılar. Gündüz hem de. Kadın camiye girmiş bağırmağa başlamış. Yoksa arabaya atıp götürceklermiş. Bu gibi olaylar işte bizi korkutuyor. Şikayet edelim desek, hangi birini edeceksin. Bir de çoğu kadın korkuyor emniyete gitmeye. Öyle bir bilgisi yok. Ben dışarıya genelde eltilerimle çıkıyorum. Ama kuaförlük eğitimim bittiğinde çalışacağım da. Güzel şeyler yapmak istiyorum. Yaşadıklarımız kolay değildi hala da rahata erdik diyemem. Kafamdakileri atmak için de çalışmak istiyorum. Evden çalışacağım ama. Suriyeli kadınları başı boş diye görüyorlar. O yüzden hep dikkat ediyorum, giyimime, davranışma (Leyla, housewife).

Leyla's story affirms the Amnesty Turkey's<sup>33</sup> findings (2016) that from the moment they start their journey, Syrian women refugees are again subjected to violence and exploitation, with no assistance or protection which deepens their feeling of anxiety.

After all, it seems that being in exile is a never-ending the search for safety and predictability, which is not just associated with material deprivation but also with not being able to hope for your future. "Feeling stuck" was frequently repeated by Syrian refugees during the fieldwork. Thinking along this line, it needs to be further examined whether the ambiguous legal status directly affects refugees feeling of shame about themselves and constrains them to be passive agents of their own life or are they performing ideal "guest" for gaining public acceptance and avoiding xenophobic attitudes towards them. This part will be examined in the next chapter.

## **2.4 Accommodation In Transit**

Contrary to the popular image, according to the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), the majority of Syrians (% 93 Syrian refugees live in urban areas in Turkey) do not want to stay in camp areas rather prefer to search for the safety and self sustainability outside camps. That is why they move to urban areas, taking the risk of suffering the inhuman accommodation conditions. As a result, they usually face financial difficulties and high levels of xenophobia in order to gain some kind of shelter in urban areas.

Unlike the refugee camps in Turkey, where refugees live in tents, in the city refugees have to rent places from Turkish citizens. Many refugees tend to reside in less wealthy regions because of prearranged networks, often restricted in choosing where to live either. They mainly cluster in places where other refugees who came before them. These regions arrange some sort of community base for newcomers, but are also characterized by poverty and an elevated incidence of social issues.

The first remarkable issue in housing is the inequity in the way that rents are arranged between landlords and tenants in Önder district. According to the neighborhood's real estate agents, before the Syrian refugee flow into Önder, there were lots of empty

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<sup>33</sup><https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/01/female-refugees-face-physical-assault-exploitation-and-sexual-harassment-ontheir-journey-through-europe/>

slums which were in poor conditions. With Syrian refugee flow, these slums increased in value. In addition to these increased rents, Syrian refugees pay much higher rents than Turkish citizens for slums that are in poor conditions. For instance, a local's monthly rent would not exceed 150 TL. However, based on the figures provided by the respondents of the study in Önder District, if a Syrian rents the same slum, at least 350TL is required. In this way, refugees have become a very lucrative source of income for landlords.

Hamid (32/ Male) works in a textile mill:

My brother in law came here first, about five years ago. We came two years ago. When he came here, rents were like 100 TL, but they rose very fast. We were able to find a house for 275 TL. Moreover, now the landlord increased it 50 TL, so it is 325 TL now. They asked for 400 TL from my neighbor across. It is clear that we do not make much money. Big works too, we pay the rent with his salary.

Furthermore, the refugee tenants do not only pay to landlords. The system has created middlemen because of lack of language, lack of information, and the main lack of security regulations in the asylum regime. Moreover, increasingly, landlords accept tenants through known middlemen. On many occasions, potential refugee tenant who wanted to rent directly from landlords got a negative answer to their demands. I asked a couple of landlords the reason why they would not rent apartments directly to tenants. One of them responded that they wanted to know who would be a good or bad tenant who pays their rents on time, does not cause trouble. On the other hand, refugees asserted that middlemen were exploiting them. Some had charged 2000 TL before they allowed the potential tenants to see the owner of the apartment. This fee includes basic furniture's which are provided by the charity associations.

Herewith, Syrian refugees find accommodation relatively in a more expensive way for rent in Önder district. Therefore, many landlords have been using the presence of Syrians to create an opportunity to satisfy their urgent financial needs by renting out apartments to them and subsequently evicting them.

Ziad (28/ Male):

Because I did not have ID do not have the right of residence, and also, I was not able to speak the language, I have to take service from middlemen for finding accommodation. There was a marketplace. Syrian refugees often came there and asked if there were apartments for rent. One of the men from there helped me to find one and took 200 TL extra fee. Now,



this fee is so much higher. As a matter of fact, in these days early comers Syrians took this position. They charge late comers for finding apartments.<sup>34</sup>

In the light of these findings, it turned out that in Önder' accommodation case, refugees do not apply to authorities regarding their unjust experiences during the accommodation process.

Although they are forced to tolerate further violence and exploitation in order to gain some kind of shelter; even in some cases, some refugee women face sexual harassments by landlords (Freedman, Kivilcim, & Baklacioğlu, 2017) they still could not apply to authorities because of their “temporary” status. Therefore, it could be said that accommodating the Syrian refugees as “guests” by state minimizes the costs and risks of engaging, supporting and servicing Syrian population, although they have granted with temporary protection status which includes almost all of the social and civil rights that refugees might have in legal refugee status<sup>35</sup>, avoidance functions as a key strategy implemented by the state.

Another obstacle, much to our surprise, which is discovered in the field that many of the early comers Syrians, regarding their date of arrival, benefit from this middlemen position to satisfy their financial needs. This reminds the Oğuz Işık and Melih Pınarcıoğlu's study “Taking Turns in Poverty” (Işık & Pınarcıoğlu, 2001), similarly, in Önder there is the difference between early comers and latecomers. Late comer Syrians occupy the lowest ranks in the pyramid of Önder neighborhood.

Furthermore, early comers more benefited from the charity aids such as domestic appliance which is commonly provided by the local neighbors. Unfortunately, with the increased uneasiness between locals and Syrian refugees, these aids are decreased.

Amal (27, Female):

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<sup>34</sup>Kimlik sahibi olmadığım için ikamet hakkım yoktu ve aynı zamanda dili konuşamadım, konaklama bulmak için aracıardan hizmet almak zorunda kaldım. Bir pazar yeri vardı. Suriyeli mülteciler sık sık buraya geldi ve kiralık daire olup olmadığını sordular. Oradaki adamlardan biri bir tane bulmamda bana yardımcı oldu ve 200 TL ek ücret aldı. Şimdi, bu ücret çok daha yüksek. Nitekim bu günlerde erken gelen Suriyeliler bu pozisyonu aldılar. Daireleri bulmak için geç kalanları alıyorlar

<sup>35</sup>To see the text of the Geneva Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees see <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>

The ones who came before us received help. All the white appliances in our neighbors' home were provided by the Önder Foundation. They are trying to sell us those goods. Both Syrian and Turkish people. Look, there are a lot of second-hand stores for white appliances here. All of the goods there were donated as a help to people, and they sold what they received for free.<sup>36</sup>

These narratives reveal that many Syrian refugees are not only exposed to the strategies of the powerful groups of host society but are also exposed to the competition among the other subordinate individuals and groups, including early comer Syrian refugees. It is clear that life is becoming increasingly difficult for urban Syrian refugees when the state's avoidance is added to this picture.

However, at the end of the day, Syrian refugees prefer to experience challenging conditions of urban living rather than endure dependency in the camps, although states' "avoidance" strategy takes the form of the uncontrolled ghetto, where they live with no legal support. Because of the lack of financial resources, they have to tolerate discriminatory behaviors in order to sustain their lives and gain some kind of shelter in urban place. Nevertheless, for many Syrian refugees, urban spaces are perceived as safer than living on the streets or being deported to camps. All of the respondents said that they do not want to live in camps no matter how challenging urban space can become. They want safety and self- sustainability through employment outside the camps (TBMM, 2012). That is why they look for accommodation in urban places where possibilities of finding a job are higher.

## **2.5 Experiencing Cultural Violence**

As Galtung (1990) states, cultural violence which is embedded in social relations- regarding economic, political, legal, religious or cultural- and reproduced by institutions, practices, and discourses works for legitimating direct and structural violence. In refugees' experiences, structural and cultural violence usually go hand in hand and become the rule of, rather than an exception. Sometimes these tensions show themselves in the dynamics of everyday life and sometimes are even more intensified and turn into physical violence. Some of the people interviewed stated that they were

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<sup>36</sup>Bizden önce gelenler bir sürü yardım almışlar. Komşumuzun evindeki bütün beyaz eşyalar Önder Vakfı tarafından temin edilmiş. Bize bu eşyaları satmaya çalışıyorlar. Hem Suriyeliler hem de Türkler. Bak burda bir sürü beyaz eşya ikinci el mağaza var. Bunların hepsi verilen yardım eşyaları. Bedavaya aldıklarını bize satıyorlar.

occasionally discriminating about renting, finding a job, education, shelter, and healthcare. All of the difficulties have been experiencing under “structural violence. However, the thing that makes the social discrimination critical from the point of view of the Syrian refugees interviewed is not only increasing and intensifying material inequality and poverty, but also cultural violence which is extremely discouraging for many. In other words, poor refugees are not only confronted with problems of accommodation, health, education, and nutrition; but also, they are facing cultural violence as a threat towards their honor and self-confidence. From this point of view, the poverty endured by poor refugees can be seen not only a problem of material reproduction but also a discursive, emotional, symbolic reproduction problems for their chances of living a fulfilling life. In that sense, while conducting field research, it is tried to focus Syrian refugees’ subjective aspects taking place in the realm of everyday life regarding humiliating, dishonoring, and hurtful lifestyle. In the interviews made with refugees, many of the respondents mentioned that their emotional injuries which lead to the break of self-respect caused by cultural violence; which also opens the door to the where refugees are dominated, exploited and controlled in the host society.

Cultural violence, of course, varies in Önder, in all areas of social life, but one of the most mentioned subjects regarding emotional injuries based on poverty, however, it should be noted that poverty is not only defined as a material insufficiency by Syrians. It also serves as a legitimizing factor for both cultural and structural violence against Syrian refugees. For example, Halil, who was a handkerchief, told about his thoughts in this way (13, Male):

People seem to me like they are staring, looking at me and looking angry. However, if I have the money, this would not happen in this way I know. They do not like my outfit; they think I am not proper for their streets. However, what can I do? As a result, they are not my customers who are staring me in this way... however, in Önder I do not feel in this way.<sup>37</sup>

As it is seen by Halil’s statements, he does not want to be seen and feel humiliated because of the glances of the locals. The look towards refugees may be non-monolithic, but in Halil’s case, apart from cultural difference, he thought that he did

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<sup>37</sup>İnsanlar bana bakıyorlar, bana bakıyorlar ve öfkeli bakıyorlarmış gibi geliyorlar. Ancak, eğer param varsa, bu şekilde olacağımı sanmıyorum. Kıyafetimi beğenmiyorlar; sokakları için uygun olmadığını düşünüyorlar. Ancak ne yapabilirim? Sonuç olarak, bana böyle bakanlar benim müşterilerim değil... ancak Önder'de bu şekilde hissetmiyorum.

not fit into the street because of his economic position. This kind of class-based nature of cultural violence can be derived from neoliberal ideology, which embeds the inevitability and righteousness of violence into the subjected refugees' worldviews. In these cases, social hierarchy is materialized by being subject of stare action and also being the object of it. Within that context, it can be argued that refugees experience hierarchical social relations, which has an ocularcentric character. Moreover, this ocularcentric relation between the object and the subject of the "look" has significant implications on the symbolic universe of the poor refugees. "This ocularcentric character of social relations connotes to a kind of hierarchical relationship which opens the door for space which comes up in an asymmetrical, vertical, and hierarchical way." (Erdoğan, 2007, s. 52) Similarly, Leyla mentioned that she feels indebted to other people because of the look she gets from the host society.

Leyla (30, Female):

The most important thing is to be human. All goods in the home are given by a neighbor. We got coal relief, for instance; sometimes we get food relief once in three months. Now my husband opened a stall at this neighborhood. Sometimes, I am working with him too. However, in the beginning, I did not want to leave home. You feel passive. It is like someone will get angry with you or will say something bad to your child. This lowers your self-esteem; your child gets sad and you cannot say a thing. I take Turkish, and hairdressing lessons but my Turkish is not still well. In the beginning, even if someone says something to us, I wouldn't understand, but now I know. You can also understand from the eyes. For example, my friend said that they were saying that we pollute the neighborhood, we throw the rubbish around. Is it only us to throw those? Why are we always guilty? Mercy cannot be found within the one who did not suffer. We suffered so we know to mercy.<sup>38 39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>En önemlisi insan olmak. Evdeki bütün eşyaları konu komşu verdi. Kömür yardımı aldık mesela üç ayda bir yiyecek yardımı da alıyoruz bazen. Şimdi kocam bir büfe açtı bu mahallede, onun yanında çalışıyorum ben de. Ama ilk zamanlar evden hiç çıkmak istememiştim. İnsan pasif hissediyor. Gelip her an biri sana kızacakmış, çocuğuna kötü birşey söyleyecekmiş gibi. Bu gururunu kırıyor, çocuğun üzülüyor sen bir şey diyemiyorsun. Türkçe dersi alıyorum ama türkçem hala iyi değil. Biri bize laf atsa da anlamıyordum başta ama şimdi biliyorum, bakışlardan da anlıyor insan. Mesela mahalleyi kirletiyorsunuz yere çöp atıyorsunuz diyorlarmış, arkadaşım söyledi. Bir biz mi atıyoruz, neden biz hep suçluyuz. Merhamet sıkıntı çekmeyen de olmuyor. Biz çektiklerimizden dolayı merhamet duymayı biliyoruz.

<sup>39</sup>As a response to inevitable discourses of violence, Leyla used their inner beauty rhetoric. It seems parallel to Erdoğan's point about the fact that ocularcentric relation between different classes constituted by means of the look drive the poor to display something to be proud of, but if you do not have something material worthy to display then you have to stress, what cannot be measured by material criteria and what cannot be gained by increasing one's social status. (Erdoğan; 2002: 48). But these

Another refugee, Hasan mentioned about the heaviness of being “guests” rather than legal refugee:

The most important thing is living in dignity. We lost that opportunity. When you live as a guest, then you cannot complain about anything. Believe me, living in this way is like dying slowly. We escaped from Syria, living in exile, not living in dignity. When your boss did not give your salary, you have to seek your right, but I could not have done this. I felt discriminated against, but I am not sure whose fault it is.<sup>40</sup>

Also, the perception that refugees exacerbate economic competition lead to xenophobic attitudes towards refugees by their co-workers as well (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001).

Locals are not often well informed about refugees, so political elites’ and international organization’s attitudes play a decisive role in framing locals opinion about refugees. One of the local respondents, who moved from the Önder neighborhood after Syrians’ flow, explained his thoughts about the new residents of the Önder:

This is unfair. Our kids are working on exams, we pay taxes, but we cannot even get a job. Here, for example, charcoal and food aid are being provided. But we can take this aid; they are for Syrians. As if our economic situation is so better than them.<sup>41</sup>

On the one hand, administrative statuses such as subsidiary protection and temporary status have narrowed structural conditions of refugees, on the other hand, political elites’ attitudes towards refugees as an act of tolerance and benevolence rather than a humanitarian responsibility cause particular resentment among local people (Kaya, 2016). Therefore, it is no wonder that several lynching attempts, stereotypes, prejudices, xenophobic discourses and other types of harassment against Syrians have

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responses is next chapters subject.

<sup>40</sup> En önemli şey onurlu yaşamak. Bu fırsatı kaybettik biz. Misafir olarak yaşadığımızda hiçbir şey hakkında şikayet edemezsin. Gerçekten, bu şekilde aidiyetsiz yaşamak yavaş yavaş ölmek gibi. Suriye’de savaştan kaçtık, burada sürgündeyiz bir nevi. Pek onurlu bir yaşama şekli değil. İnsan işinin parasını alamadığında hakkını arayabilmeli ama ben bunu yapamadım mesela. Ayrımcılığa uğruyor gibi hissediyorum ama kimin suçu bu bilmiyorum.

<sup>41</sup> Asıl bize haksızlık yapılıyor. Bizim çocuklar sınavlara çalışıyor, biz vergi veriyoruz, ama iş bile bulamıyoruz. Burda kömür, erzak yardımı yapılıyor mesela. Türkiyeliler alamıyor ama Suriyeliler için. Sanki bizim durumumuz onlardan çok iyi.

been carried out (Gökay, 2015). For instance, the main oppositional parties before the 07 June 2015 General Elections were also employed a xenophobic discourse<sup>42</sup> which instrumentalized Syrian refugees to express their critics against the AKP during their electoral campaigns whereas AKP used a kind of populist rhetoric to legitimize its acts on the resolution of the Syrian refugee crisis. (Kaya, 2016) As a consequence, it is obvious that either anti-refugee stance or populist stance towards refugees, both of them have been unsuccessful in creating a non-conflict environment.

Patriarchy and sexism are also embodied in cultural violence and normalized as a strategy by administrative techniques governing temporary protection and masculine cultural arguments. Women with temporary protection status are becoming more and more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence because they cannot depend on protection from local authorities. For instance, many Syrian women are marrying older men from their refugee community or the host society. The reasons for this forced marriage incidence are complicated. According to some families, marriage is the only option for their daughters to be safe from sexual harrassment and assault from other men and for some parent, marriage is an economical source concerning bridewealth. However, as refugees in Turkey do not have refugee status, their weddings are not legally recorded, leaving Syrian females with no legal security in the incidents of seperation or death (Letsch, 2014). Furthermore, this situation has an answer in the host society' perception of Syrian women. In the eyes of the host society, Syrian women were largely portrayed as “the ones who steal their husbands.” This perspective doubles the effect of sexual harassment on the part of Syrian women. The fear of sexual exploitation and blaming for it make them isolated from the local population and at the same time, make them become dependent on men.

Most of the Syrian girl prefer to marry just to prevent themselves from sexual violence and assaults from the host society. Yasemin (33, Female) explained this situation as such:

Neighbor women say mean thing to us too. They see us differently as well as if we were stealing their husbands. Hilarious. We, Syrian women, are

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<sup>42</sup>To see the statements of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and Devlet Bahçeli see Milliyet (26 April 2016), <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/chpliderikilicdaroglu-ndan-sert-siyaset/detay/2234227/default.htm>, Haber Türk (12 March 2016), <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1208609-kemal-kilicdaroglu-suriyeliler-butun-duzenimizi-bozacak>, and <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/bahceli-suriyelilere-vatandaslik-hakki-tanimak-hazmedilecek-bir-durum-degil-40130374> ( 4 July 2016)

very bigoted. Why do they judge us like that, it is nonsense? We have a fear that men will look at us. There are even some people who get married just so that there would be no trouble. Girls do not want to be a burden to their families. Both financially and emotionally. If you are not married, or you are a widow, you get a lot more attention.<sup>43</sup>

It is very difficult to obtain accurate data on levels of sexual violence towards Syrian women since they do not report because of the fear of stigma and marginalization and even they want to report the legal support they could get is severely limited. Despite the rights granted under the Temporary Protection Directive, in practice, they could not benefit fully from these rights because of the strategy normalized by the structural violence of temporary protection and the masculine cultural arguments. At the end of the day, all refugees are overwhelming and demoralizing under the structural and cultural violence against them.

## 2.6 Conclusion

For understanding defenses against wounds of Syrian refugees which will be explained in the next chapter, one has to, firstly, understand the causes of refugee's wounds that define the refugee experience after resettlement in the host country. Therefore, this chapter aimed to point out the national order of things where exactly "refugee experiences" are set.

This chapter demonstrated that globalized society is marked with global integration but also marked with uncertainty, unpredictability, and disintegration as prominent situations in everyday life. On the one side, integration is increasing in economics, technology, communication, information, and tourism; on the other side, with increasing ferocity particular identities of nationality, ethnicity, religion, race and language are being affirmed (Benhabib, 1999). Refugee experience is not segregated from this image, in the the sovereign myth and its political body that conceives the state as a container, a 'body endangered by migrants' who 'penetrate' its borders, it defines asylum seeker as an "outsider inside." (Bigo 2002, p. 68-69) In this respect, by focusing on multifaceted quality of structural violence Syrian refugees face which

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<sup>43</sup>Komşu kadınlar da laf atıyor yani. Onlar da bizi farklı görüyor. Sanki biz onların kocasını alacakmışız gibi. Çok komik. Suriyeli kadınlar oldukça mutasıptır aslında. Neden bizi böyle yargılıyorlar, çok saçma. Biz korkuyoruz bir erkek bize bakacak diye, sokağa çıkmak istemiyoruz. Ha evlenenler var evet ama ne yapacaklar, onlar da başka sıkıntı çıkmasın, diye evleniyorlar. Kızlar ailelerine yük olmak istemiyor. Hem maddi hem manen. Evlenmesen daha çok dikkat çekiyorsun, eğer dulsan veya bekarsan

drag them to more vulnerable position to exploitation in host country, it is aimed to understand Syrian refugees' wound that are caused by temporary protection status and other problems resulting from absence of education, a lack of economic resources, ethnicity, and their precarious guest status in Turkey.

This chapter asserted that indirect consequences of displacement from conflict and violence, such as changes in economic dynamics and social pressure, have a compelling influence on Syrian refugees' world of meaning. Regarding this, this chapter looked at refugees "fundamental needs," which include their material well-being, their dignity, security, social connectedness, and identity as well (Stenström, 2003). Through these aspects, it was aimed to understand the category belongs to the Syrian refugee's realm of ideas, meaning making which something actively created by them rather than pre-given. By doing this, it is intended to trace migrant trajectories and to prepare the ground for the following question; how do the Syrian refugees deal with the structural violence they face, how do they salvage their selves?



### **CHAPTER 3**

## **SYRIAN REFUGEES SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO DIFFICULT RESIDENTIAL AND WORK CONDITIONS IN ANKARA**

The main objective of this chapter is to investigate some Syrian refugees' tactics which are adopted by them in dealing with strategies imposed by the state and capital to constrain them in a limbo situation which is mentioned above. Reminding Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these tactics, mostly unconsciously, based on "saving the day" that include adoption of income-generating activities in the informal economy such as "street vending, selling handicrafts or disguising your identity in public, and establishing ways of behaving and speaking through rumor, gossip, disguise, metaphor, euphemism, sarcasm, and humor." (Scott 1985, p. 137)

Although cities are the new frontier zones for racialized social inequality, these tactics may exert a powerful influence on the shaping of the city and determine the nature of power relations in different contexts by subverting established orders to refugees own advantage. However, it has to be rementioned that this thesis has not asserted that these resistance tactics take a stand against whole exploitative system and leave them. Instead, it asserts that, even in the conditions of temporality and its attendant uncertainties, refugees might create their own responses to political and social injustices and might provide a space in which they imagine certain kind of futures. Because of this reason, this chapter aimed to investigate Syrian refugees own responses against the obstacles they face as a Syrian refugee in Turkey.

Since 2011 more than 3 million of Syrians have been part of a long and steady migration from Syria's towns, small villages, some of them to Turkey's refugee camps, some of them its cities, some are seeking to improve their lives, some simply trying to survive.

After five years in which Turkey has maintained an 'open-door' policy for those seeking protection, only 'temporary protection' status is still provided to the Syrians

in Turkey, limiting their access to labor force, education, health care, and other support services. Although Syrian refugees were members of different backgrounds and classes prior to migration to Önder, assessments show that poverty is prevalent among Syrian refugees living in Turkey (UNICEF, 2018 ; IOM, 2017) and their presence in Turkey as dispossessed “undesirable other”<sup>44</sup> has placed them in-betweenness, a position which is dominated, exploited and controlled by the uncertainty of temporality.

Önder’s population, mainly, have been composed of Syrians, Kurds, Roman and for a little time Somalians. This hybrid structure laid the ground for the possibility of subverting established orders to the refugees own advantage, especially for Syrians coming from Aleppo, along with Afghans, Iraqis, and Somalis. The dissolved ethnic belongings and identities, as a result of the internal and external displacement, have been reconstructed in this new space. In a nutshell, situated within the invisible boundaries that divide the neighborhood from the remaining parts of the city, Önder has become a home for Syrian refugees. They have attempted to establish a landscape similar to their hometowns and where they can attach to, and a sense of community in this new environment. Overall, migration from Syria to Ankara and following indefinite waiting do not create total exclusion cycle for Syrian refugees in Önder, and contrary in-betweenness have fostered active stance and refugees manifested their belonging to the Önder.

### **3.1 Attachment to Önder**

The Altındağ district where Önder Mahallesi is located is one of the oldest squatters in Ankara. As the mukhtar said, before the Sitelers Industrial Region was set up in 1959, Önder had a reputation of being the place of gypsies in 1955 (Şenyapılı, 2004).

With the increasing rural-to-urban migrants as the cheap labor force, this uninhabited land had started to be transformed into the low-income neighborhood (Üstün, 2016). The first migrants to the area were from the villages of those cities close to Ankara such as Bolu, Düzce, Çankırı, and Yozgat as well as from Ankara’s districts such as

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<sup>44</sup>It should be not forgotten that this thesis scope is limited to worker class Syrian refugees. Of course, there are Syrian refugees in Ankara who are in positions of economic power and exercise strategy, rather than tactic.

Kızılcahamam and Çamlidere (Beyhan, 2011). Today, as the muhtar told, those migrants from the provinces of Central Anatolia such as Çorum, Yozgat, Sivas, and Tokat along with those from Gerede-Bolu up the majority of the local population. If we consider the provision of municipality situation it could be said that the proximity of the area to Siteler played a significant role in the provision of municipal services to the area that's why early-comers could get electricity and running water very quickly.

Over the years, early comers of the neighborhood had improved their socio-economic conditions and moved out, rented their houses to families who came to the city after them and had lower economic income. This produced kind of rotation among rural migrants. Finally, the neighborhood became the place of the poorest of society. First, the poorest among internal migrants had resettled, and then international migrants such as Syrians, Iraqis, and Somalis adopted this place as their new home. Right now, it is a quarter where about 40.000 Syrians, Iraqi, Afghans, and Turks live together. On the main street of the quarter, which is called Selcuk Street, you can see all kinds of shops like markets, barbers, kebabs, butchers with their signs in Arabic script.

There is no coeducation in Altındağ district. The neighborhoods' elementary school, Nene Hatun İlkokulu offers education in Turkish and in Arabic for the Syrian kids. Most of the Turkish children that had gone to this school passed to the school in the next neighborhood, which is called Battal Gazi İlkokulu. The children at Nene Hatun İlkokulu are using schoolbags from Saudi Arabia, and most of them are speaking very well Turkish, even if their parents do not speak this language. However, still there are many Syrian kids that do not go to school because of the lack of schools and classes for them, so they must wait for their turn.

According to the information gathered from the mukhtar of the neighborhood, 90% of the neighborhood consists of Syrian refugees. Most of the Turks left the neighborhood and rented their homes to the Syrians. As mukhtar mentioned, before Syrians came, the rents were around 250TL, but after Syrians flow in the neighborhood the rents had been changed to 450TL, yet it was still possible to find jerry-built houses for 300TL.

If one considers the diversity of ethnic groups in the neighborhood, it could be argued that Önder is a convenient environment for the migrant communities who attempt to establish themselves in the city and deal with the harsh living conditions, especially

because of the closeness of a working area which is called Siteler. As a consequence, most Syrian refugees in Önder were working class or petty entrepreneurial, and most of them referred to the relieving influence of the Syrian community in Önder regarding economic and social terms. To avoid and bypass dealing with landlords, unaffordable rents, they have preferred to use their connections. According to their responses, mostly they moved into the house of one of their relatives when they had first arrived in Ankara, or that their relatives helped them to find a place to settle down. In addition to these economic dimensions, relations within the neighborhood also help the refugees to get used to Ankara in social terms. The existence of relatives or friends that they can speak with in Arabic or talking about their similar problems brings relief as well.

All these factors set the ground for refugees to constitute marginal pluralities and subvert established space to refugees own advantage. Within this light following chapter will investigate how the agency and those small resistance acts; sometimes subconscious and uncontrollable, have been constituted to manage with the difficulties Syrian refugees come across in everyday life.

### **3.2 Is There a Passive Network in Önder?**

Just as Asaf Bayat has called passive network (2006, 2008) mechanism, “instantaneous communications between atomized individuals, which are established by tacit recognition of their commonalities directly in public spaces,” ( Bayat, 1997, p.16) there is a common point of view among Syrian people who use the public space of Önder, a view that has stemmed from the feeling that “we are on the same boat”. Either they know each other or not, and they communicate easily due to this common point. At first, refugees who came to Ankara via their kinship relations met with their Syrian refugee neighbors and faced similar obstacles, and they developed various tactics to improve their quality of life through their passive network. Although Önder ’s refugees do not have any influential or charismatic leader, they have gained the opportunity as a group to lighten migration difficulties and costs slightly, using their network of established relationships with relatives, neighbors or friends who settled host country before them. So how is this network established among fragmented and atomized refugees in the first place? The 27 year-old, mother of two, Amal (27, Female) explained her first days when she moved in Önder:

When we came here, my brother-in-law had already helped me. We could not find a suitable home for my budget when we arrived. The neighbors told us that rents started to rise suddenly. We stayed with them for the first year. They have three kids, and we have two. Moreover, their house was a-2-bedroom flat. We were quite crowded for that house. After a while, we found a suitable house. It has been a tough year, but we had gotten a lot of support.<sup>45</sup>

Of course, as mentioned above, it is not uncommon for the refugees to interact with various social networks or establish these networks and acquire new experiences, knowledge and cultural capital in the framework of those networks. It could be said that Önder district' salient element is its convenient environment for both economic and cultural accessibility, which makes Syrian refugees achieve safety net and a chance to earn their lives. At the end of the day, with the help of their passive network, they are not hopeless poor people who just depend on the aids from state or international organizations, although they are working for low wages in the hard conditions.

For instance, when you first enter the neighborhood, from the Selçuk Street, which is the main street of the neighborhood, Arabic nameplates are standing out everywhere from the grocery store to kebab shops and butcher shops. There are no cash registers or tax signboards in Syrian refugees' shops. Thus, it could be said that, in the middle of the capital there is a commercial life as a 'tax-free oasis.' This avoidance has become a paradoxical policy which ejects the responsibilities of both authority and refugees. On the one hand, this abandonment has served as a containment and control strategy of the state which isolates refugee community from other parts of the country by differentiating the two of them, but on the other hand, this authority free area has opened a door for the possibility of refugees' tactics to increase. In other words, by avoiding responsibility, Turkish state minimizes the costs and risks of giving permanent rights but at the same time opens a door for refugees to create a space where they can evade control and social hostility.

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<sup>45</sup>Buraya gelmemizde zaten kayınbiraderime yardımcı olmuştu. Geldiğimizde bütçemize uygun ev bulamadık. Kiraların bir anda arttığını söylüyor komşular. İlk bir sene onlarla kaldık. Onlarda var üç çocuk, biz de iki çocuk. Ev de iki göz bir evdi. Biraz kalabalıktık yani. Bir süre sonra bize uygun bir ev bulduk mahallelinin yardımıyla da eşyaları bulup buraya taşındık. Zor bir yıldır ama sağ olsun yardım edenimiz çok oldu.

Refugees have taken this situation and turned it to the cheaper products and services than the other parts of Ankara. For instance, hair cut price is 5 Turkish Lira, beard shaving is 3 Turkish Lira in the neighborhood, and grocery products are sold cheaper than the comparable products. However, one of the most noticeable elements in the neighborhood is the crowded parks and streets. The store fronts, as well as the stores, are the heart of commerce like street vendors, people waiting for daily work, and children who skip school was sitting there with their friends. In other words, a cursory look at the Önder's streets reveals that it is a quite lively space rather than a hopeless zone.

Syrian refugees living in Önder neighborhood were spending a great deal of their daily life on these streets. For example, Ahmet, a 32-year-old construction worker who sit with a group of men in the park early in the morning:

We came here because we have relatives. We went to Hatay first, but it is hard to find a job without the help of acquaintances. I have uncles living there. They are elderly people so they could not help us. Then my friend Huseyin told me to come here to find a job. I came with here with his one word. Huseyin was right, and he found me a job. I had been working in a shop in Siteler for four months or so; then I got fired. The only option was to look for another job. I could not find a regular job. Now, I am working in construction works on a daily basis. We come to this park in the morning, the foremen are picking us from here.<sup>46</sup>

As mentioned before, Önder and Hacılar Mahallesi had been declared as the urban transformation project area, and in 2015, approximately 1000 houses were demolished, and their debris was left. The park Ahmet mentioned is among this debris which looks like a deserted place, but Syrian refugees turned this situation as a spatial tactic to make this abandoned place as their own habitus. With creating new employment opportunities in this place, such as searching for daily jobs, street vending, and probably some illegal exchanges, Syrian refugees avoid dependence on the market strategies.

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<sup>46</sup>Buraya geldik çünkü akrabalarımız var. Önce Hatay'a gittik, ancak tanıdıkların yardımı olmadan iş bulmak zor. Orada yaşayan amcam var. Onlar yaşlı insanlar, bu yüzden bize yardım edemediler. Sonra arkadaşım Hüseyin bir iş bulmaya Ankara'ya gelmemi söyledi. Buraya tek kelimesiyle geldim. Hüseyin haklıydı ve bana bir iş buldu. 4 aydır Siteler'de bir dükkanda çalışıyordum, sonra kovuldum. Tek seçenek başka bir iş aramaktı. Düzenli bir iş bulamadım. Şimdi her gün inşaat işlerinde çalışıyorum. Sabah bu parka geliyoruz, ustalar bizi buradan alıyor.

The second most expressed feature of the passive network in Önder is the social support they provide for each other. That is why Syrian refugees have preferred to move to the places in Turkey, where people with similar ethnic, religious or sectarian identities reside in Turkey (Orhan, 2014). In the case of Önder, a big number of residents of Önder sympathized with Sunni Arabs and Turkmens in the first place, while most of the Arab Alevis and Kurd were not that welcomed. Nevertheless, with the state's and charity's dispersive attitude towards residents and Syrian refugees, the supporting bond has not been continued. However, then, the bond between Syrian refugees themselves have gained more importance. When refugees were asked about how safe they feel in Ankara, the majority of women respondents indicated that they feel more insecure compared to Syrian men, because of the possibility of sexual harassment which was mentioned before. That is why social support in Önder is more meaningful for women refugees. Amal, 27 years old, housewife, emphasized her sense of belonging in Önder with the following words:

Sure, I get out. Both my sisters in law live in this building. We go to the park and the Önder Foundation together. I do not like going out alone. More precisely, no one in the house wants me to go outside alone. My husband is complaining too much, where are you going, when will you come. Of course, being a foreigner, not being able to speak the language is hard, but we help each other with my sister in law. Because it is true that there is a great danger for Syrian women in the street. They think that no one will search for us if something happens to us. They suppose like that. For instance, a few days ago, some men tried to kidnap a woman who is coming to our Turkish course, so it's best to be crowded.<sup>47</sup>

According to her narratives, Amal's sister in law gave her support for social interactions and helped her to explore the charity institutions such as Önder Vakfı (Önder İlim, Kültür ve Sosyal Hizmet Vakfı- The Foundation of Science, Culture and Social Assistance) where they received food and coal aid. Amal told me that with the support of her sister in law, she had started the Turkish and hairdresser course in Önder Foundation.

I attended a Turkish course and hairdressing course at the Önder Foundation. When you do not know the language, and can't ask anyone

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<sup>47</sup>Sokağa çıkıyorum tabi. İki elimde bu binada yaşıyor. Parka gidiyoruz, Önder Vakfı' na gidiyoruz beraber. Yalnız gezmeyi pek sevmiyorum. Daha doğrusu yalnız gezmeme evdeki kimse sevmiyor. Eşim de çok söyleniyor, neredesin, kaçta geleceksin diye. Tabi yabancı olmak, dil konuşamamak zor ama birbirimize yardımcı oluyoruz elimle. Çünkü gerçekten Suriyeli kadınlar için tehlike var burada. Bize bunları kimse arayıp sormaz gibi bakıyorlar. Başımıza bir şey gelse kocamız bile emniyete gidip işin peşini kovalayamaz sanki... Öyle sanıyorlar. Mesela, geçen gün, gündüz vakti bir kadını kaçırmaya kalktılar, bizim kursa gelen kadınlardan birini, kalabalık olmak en iyisi bu yüzden.

anything, it feels pointless to go out. My sister in law had Turkmen Syrian friends in the neighborhood. She heard it from them. I made many friends there. Now, we establish a WhatsApp group to tell each other about jobs and help each other. I did not have many friends in Syria. Women generally wait for the children, finish the housework. Honestly, I would not go out on the street in the day, but now we have to learn skills and work for our family.<sup>48</sup>

As it is seen Amal' statement, such networks have the potential to transform market distortions, and it is detrimental effects in social life into opportunities. In this regard, they use their social network as a structural resource to transcend the institutional constraints of the market and the masculine hegemonic relations in their surroundings. At this point, it is important to understand how did these networks get stronger among refugees. Leyla (30, Female) underlined the issue by giving reference to her increased public life:

At first, I was only meeting with my relatives, but now the situation is different. The course I had was very influential, and I had the chance to meet many immigrants... And my life is harder here. Our living conditions in Syria were better. Now, if you're going to get aid for supplies, you're getting into the queue, trying to get to know the grocery store for getting the house's supplies on credit. There are a lot of things that need to be solved outside, which means you can meet new people.<sup>49</sup>

The expressions of Amal in terms of the changing daily routines of her indicates that their struggles as refugees is associated with a kind of new communication area; an area established by recognition of their commonalities directly in the public spaces. (Bayat, 2013)

Another thing about their passive network is it works better among Syrian refugee women because they talk more about their experiences with each other. In these

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<sup>48</sup>Önder Vakfı'nda Türkçe kursuna ve kuaförlük kursuna katıldım. Dil bilmeyince birilerine bir şey soramayınca sokağa çıkmak anlamsız geliyor. Eltimin Türkmen Suriyeli tanıdıkları vardı mahallede. O da onlardan duymuş. Orada bir sürü arkadaşım oldu. Birbirimize iş haberlerini veriyoruz, yardımcı oluyoruz. Suriye'de çok fazla arkadaşım yoktu. Genelde çocuklara bakıp, ev işlerini yapıyorduk. Yani açıkçası, çok dışarı çıkan biri değilim ama burada ailemizin geçimi için kendimizi geliştirmeli ve çalışmalıyız.

<sup>49</sup>Başta sadece akrabalarımınla görüşüyordum ama şimdi durum farklı. Gittiğim kursun da çok etkisi oldu, birçok göçmenle tanışma şansım oldu. Bir de burda hayatım daha zor tabi. Suriye'de yaşam şartlarımız daha iyiydi. Şimdi erzak yardımı alacaksın kuyruğa giriyorsun, bakkalı tanıyıp evin erzağını denkleştirmeye çalışıyorsun... Dışarıda çözülmesi gereken daha çok iş var, bu da yeni insanlarla tanışmana vesile oluyor tabi.



conversations, they are not just talking about their injuries, also naming the cause of their injuries and talking about how to challenge these injuries. Yasemin (33, Female):

Marriage is a salvation for us, but we hear another story every day, Old men are marrying young girls. What can we do? Syrian women were accepting these because of the helplessness. But still, Syrian women remain guilty. This labeling is very boring to me. Are all Syrian women making eyes to Turkish men, do we want that much to marry our daughters that early? Turkish women also blame us. They see us like people who are greedy, self-seeker. I'm sorry, I'm not ashamed of being a Syrian, yes, we are in a difficult situation, yes, such events happen, but I think the people who push us into such a corner are committing sin, it is unseemly for our religious fellowship. I think like this.<sup>50</sup>

Host society' negative perception is criticized by Syrian women in their gatherings, which can be seen as an attack towards to dominant rhetoric of both Turkish state and host society' "such as "Turkish hospitality" and "Muslim fraternity". Yasemin used the hegemonic rhetoric of "guest hood tradition to our religious fellow" and subverted it as their own weapon. It can be viewed as a protection against their injuries. In this context, "the moral dimension of social life must be recognized as a source of opposition to the current order, not only in itself and as the basis of social order." (Sayer, 2005, p. 96) Although many women respondents state that they are afraid of sexual violence in the streets, they also think that Önder's neighborhoods are kind of comfort zone for them, that's why many of them do not go out of Önder unless they need to run paperwork chores in the provincial directorate of migration management or Altındağ municipality. This is exemplified by Amal's narratives, a 27 years old female, explained how a compatriot from Halep helped when first tried to cross the border of Önder:

The first time we got out of our neighborhood to get our ID's it was very hard. We never got on the bus before, neither my father nor me. We gave money, but the driver did not accept it and said something. We stare at him; people stare at us. Then someone else from the neighborhood gave us his card, a Syrian-Turkmen man. He explained to us how to get on the

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<sup>50</sup>Evlilik bizim için bir kurtuluş tabi ama her gün başka bir hikaye duyuyoruz, Yaşlı yaşlı adamlar gencecik kızlarla evleniyor. Napacaksın, çaresizlik, kadınlar Kabul etmek durumunda kalıyor ama gene de suçlu Suriyeli kadınlar oluyor. Bu yaftalanma hali benim canımı çok sıkıyor. Bütün Suriyeli kadınlar mı göz süzüyor, biz çok mu istiyoruz evlendirelim kızlarımızı erkenden. Türkiyeli kadınlar da bizi suçluyor. Bizi sadece kendi çıkarını düşünen insanlar gibi anlatıyorlar. Hiç kusura bakmasınlar ben Suriyeli olmaktan hiç utanmıyorum, evet zordayız, evet böyle olaylar oluyor ama bence asıl bizi böyle köşeye sıkıştıranlar çok büyük gühane giriyor. Din kardeşliğimize yakışmıyor. Ben böyle düşünüyorum

bus and where we should get off (Foreigner Offices). If not for him, we would have kept staring at the driver.<sup>51</sup>

Amal described this memory as an embarrassing remembrance, but it seemed as though she wanted to mention about the solidarity among them. Besides, in the continuation of her speech, she mentioned about how Syrian women are deployed to each other's house to exchange information about where to buy cheap foods, which teacher to send their children, which course to take for finding a job. When I asked how she has met so many people, she said that:

Nobody wanted to be friends with anyone at first. However, I think the circumstances brought us together. I think women who go to courses meet more people. Of course, we meet in the bazaar in the line for bread aid...<sup>52</sup>

As structural barriers grow, Önder's unfamiliar streets have become the place which makes informal networking possible. As Bayat's concept of "passive network" atomized Syrian refugees start to establish "instantaneous communication channels by tacit recognition of their commonalities in public places". (Bayat, 1997, p. 16-17)

Furthermore, relatives, or generally Syrian refugees have contributed to each other in purchasing food, clothing too. For instance, they do the grocery shopping from Syrian markets, especially in order to have the privilege of buying something on hire purchasing. Inas who has got a grocery market, 38 years old, told that in tougher times they provided support-based sharing similar obstacles:

Most of the people here came from Aleppo. Aleppo was a very big city, so most of us didn't know each other there. There are Turkmen-Syrians who do not speak Arabic, Kurds, and Arabians here, but a connection formed between us. For example, %90 of the shops in this neighborhood are owned by people from Aleppo. There are only a few Turkish stores. Of course, we did not tell them to leave when we came, but they left on their own because %90 of this neighborhood is Syrian. We shop from each other's stores, we know our habits, and we frankly show sympathy towards one another. For example, if a Syrian fellow citizen of mine comes here, I

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<sup>51</sup>Kimliğimizi almak için ilk defa mahalleden çıktığımız gün zorlandık gerçekten. Otobüse hiç binmemiştik ne ben ne babam. Para uzattık olmadı. Şöför birşeyler dedi. Biz bakıyoruz, insanlar bakıyor. Sonra mahalleden başka biri kartını verdi bize. Suriyeli bir Türkmen adam. O açıkladı bize otobüse nasıl biniliyor. Nerede inmemiz lazım. (Yabancı Şube Komiserliği) Yoksa söföre bakmaya devam edecektik.

<sup>52</sup>Aslında kimse kimseyle hemen arkadaş olmak istemiyordu başta. Ama şartlar bence bizi yanyana getirdi. Kursu giden kadınlar daha çok insanla tanışıyor bence. Tabi çarşı, pazarda da karşılaşıyoruz, ekmeğin sırasında...

never let them go empty-handed. We are going through similar difficulties; we know how it is like.<sup>53</sup>

Economically speaking, Syrians have lost the bargaining power to find a legal work or to find a decent wage because of the temporary protection regime' ambiguous character, especially with regard to the practice, but they also use this ambiguousness as their chance to make holes within structural barriers they face in their daily lives. By means of the state's abandonment, Syrian shops get the advantage of being unregistered and do not pay taxes. As a consequence, through this tax-free zone privilege, there is a room for Syrians to buy things on account or bargain to lower the prices. It is clear that, their space is not big enough to organize a systematic resistance against their economic structural barriers, but as De Certeau states "what distinguishes tactic and strategy concerns the types of operations and the role of spaces: the strategies can produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces." (De Certeau, 1988, p. 30) In this context, Inas has used the state's under-spending and avoidance policy and have turned it to him and his ethnic community benefit. Thus, refugees have the chance to invest in their own communities on account of state' avoidance strategy.

Moreover, there were individuals who live at Syrian's workings places not according to whether they work there or not. Such patterns do not exist in poor Turkish citizen's survival tactics in this neighborhood. The Syrian support networks are much more immediate and open, stemming from a type of culture in which relatives and friends are hosted for many months or even years without being asked to leave. Tarık, 25 years old, construction worker, states that:

We came here, but there are no jobs. We could not find somewhere to stay at as well; I lived at the restaurant of a fellow Syrian. The sense of helping each other was strong in Aleppo. There are big houses downtown if you couldn't get home and have to spend the night outside staying at these

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<sup>53</sup>Buradakilerin çoğu Halep'ten buraya geldi. Tabiki Halep çok büyük şehirdi, çoğumuz birbirimizi oradan tanımıyoruz, aramızda Arapça bilmeyen Suriyeli Türkmen de var Kürt de var Arap da, ama burada aramızda bir bağ oluştu. Mesela bu mahalledeki dükkanların yüzde 90ını Halep'lilerin. Çok az Türkiyeli dükkân görürsün. Aslında biz tabiki sonradan gelip onlara gidin demedik ama onlar gitti çünkü burada mahallelinin de yüzde 90'ından fazlası Suriyeli. Birbirimizden alışveriş yapıyoruz tabi hem alışkanlıklarımızı biliyoruz hem de birbirimizin halinden anlıyoruz açıkcası. Mesela dardaki bir Suriyeli hemşehrim gelse asla onu buradan boş göndermiyorum. Benzer zorluklar yaşıyoruz, halden anlarız.

houses is a possibility. Those are empty places belonging to people. So, we can say that welcoming who stayed out is kind of our tradition.<sup>54</sup>

These networks are partly based on having similar experiences, hairstyles, hang-out places, food, fashions, and pursuit of a better life, which resulted with the decline of the distrust and skepticism between Syrian people from different backgrounds. Another significant factor that allows Syrian refugees to act together is the prevalent danger; the danger of facing structural violence based on securitization, victimization, marginalization, and minimal access to fundamental human rights.

Certainly, most parts of this passive network in Önder consist of a set of ties based on kinship, friendship, or a shared community of origin that connects them. Another cause of increasing ties between the Syrian refugees is social media, which plays an important role in the exchange of information. Meryem's (23, Female) narrative, who experienced the first step of migration through İzmir; Buca, exemplified this effect of social media:

We heard that there are many Syrian in İzmir. First, my uncle settled in İzmir then us. However, we were only a couple of houses of Syrians in the neighborhood. We could not find jobs or somewhere to live. I couldn't really go out because of the language problem. My husband tried to look for a job. Thankfully my uncle was there, and he took care of us, but we could not bond with anyone else. In that period, my brother made connections with Syrian lives in Önder from the internet. He told us that the rents were cheaper, helping nets were stronger. Moreover, so, we came here, and I am glad we did. We look out for each other and greet each other here.<sup>55</sup>

Another passive network hint can be seen in the accommodation process. Because of the prejudiced attitude of the homeowners to the Syrian refugees, they are forced to rely on "intermediaries" who equip houses with furniture donated by charities with the prices varying between 2,500 - 4,500 TL. As the refugees do not have any legal

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<sup>54</sup> Buraya geldik iş yok tabi. Kalacak yer de bulamadık önce, 2 ay bir Suriyeli kardeşimin restaurantında kaldım. Halep'te yardımlaşma güçlüydü. Şehir merkezinde büyük evler vardır. Eğer evine dönemediyse, gece dışarda kaldıysan bu evlere gidip kalabilirsin. Özel şahıslara ait boş yerlerdir bunlar. O yüzden dışarda kalamı buyur etmek bizim adetlerimizden geliyor diyebiliriz.

<sup>55</sup> İzmir'de çok Suriyeli varmış diye duyduk, ilk önce amcamlar oraya gitti, sonra biz. Ama bir iki evdik biz Suriye'den gelen. Ne iş bulabildik ne de ev. Zaten dil sorunundan dolayı ben pek bir yere çıkamadım. Kocam iş aramayı denedi. Babamın arkadaşı vardı orada sağolsun ilgilendi bizimle ama kimseyle bağ kuramadık. Daha sonra kardeşim internette forumda birileriyle arkadaş olmuş, onlar Önder'de yaşıyorlarmış. İlk önce o geldi Önder'e. Sonra çağırdı bizi. Ev kiraları daha ucuz, yardımlaşma ağları kuvvetli diye anlattı bize. Biz de kalktık geldik. İyi de yapmışız bence. Burada bir birbirini kollamak var, bi selamı esirgememek var.

guarantees, they are forced to work with these people. In order to avoid intermediaries, refugees, who already settled in, have preferred to communicate among themselves. Refugees who are about to move out, inform others if they want to come to their place.

Amal (27, Female) told us about this network:

They are pushing newcomers. They know that people cannot stay on the street. We did not come here with our savings. We brought here our two pennies. The ones who have no money are literally on the street anyway. You see them sleeping in parks or main bus stations. Ok, we have two pennies, but they want to take it too. They ask for 3000 TL from the newcomers. Alternatively, we cannot find a home. Turkish landlords do not want Syrian tenants anyway. The rent is now 400 TL, which was 150TL before we came here. You can see how much more we have to pay, besides there are this intermediary now... Therefore, we are informing our friends at Turkish lesson course (given by Önder Foundation) if we heard someone is leaving their home. It may help people so that they do not have to pay 3,000 TL<sup>56</sup>

This is a great example of how Syrian refugees in Önder develop certain kinds of tactics to manipulate unregulated areas. However, it appeared later in the interview that many Syrian refugees also have chosen to be an "intermediary" themselves. This double-crossing situation draws out the experiential, fragmentary and partial character of the consciousness of Syrian refugees. In this context, it is not a surprise that the answers received were not based on explicitly class interest rather based on instantaneous solidarity between atomized Syrian refugees. Another example of this fragmented consciousness is the emphasis respondents made about the difference between them and the Syrians who beg in the city center. Inas (38, Male):

They think we are all beggars, but you can not find any beggar in here. The beggars are the ones who are gypsies. They had been begging in Syria, too.<sup>57</sup>

Despite Syrian refugees' fragmentary and partial character of their conscious, their "passive network" in Önder still have a significant transformative impact on the

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<sup>56</sup>Yeni gelenleri zorluyorlar. İnsanların sokakta kalamayacağını biliyorlar. Buraya tasarruflarımızla gelmedik. Buraya iki kuruş parayla geldik. Parası olmayanlar, kelimenin tam anlamıyla sokakta zaten. Onları parklarda veya otobüs duraklarında uyurken görüyorsunuz. Tamam, iki kuruşumuz var ama onu da almak istiyorlar. Yeni gelenlerden 3000 lira istiyorlar. Alternatif olarak, bir ev bulamıyoruz. Ev sahipleri zaten Suriyeli kiracı istemiyor. Kira şimdi 400 TL, buraya gelmeden önce 150 TL imiş. Kiralara ne kadar daha fazla ödediğimiz ortada, şimdi bir de araçlar ortaya çıktı. Bu nedenle, birisinin evden ayrıldığını duyduğumuzda, Türkçe dersindeki arkadaşlarımızı bilgilendiriyoruz. İnsanlara 3,000 TL ödemek zorunda kalmamalarına yardımcı olabilir.

<sup>57</sup> Bizi dileniyor sanıyorlar ama bak burada Kızılaya gidip dilenen insan göremezsin. O dilenenler çingeneler.

neighborhood and refugees own life. Ultimately, Önder's refugees, located in an inner-city region, benefit from the possibility of mutual recognition, a factor that separates them from those fragmented communities that live in distributed metropolitan areas and lack the space to promote the development of solidarity unless they come together in the same workplaces, detention centers or housing compounds. More importantly, the passive network gives the chance of active communication to the Syrian refugees. While they are all atomized people formed directly in government areas by tacit acceptance of their commonalities right now, their passive network brings with it the prospect of conversion that can evolve into contentious politics when the chance for structured, sustained and institutional activism becomes accessible. That is why non-movements' transformative impact should not be judged simply by their eventual elevation into structured social movements. Without continuing to function in society, no movements alone can have a major transformative effect.

### **3.3 Creating Employment Opportunities**

As mentioned earlier, refugee experience is not a single, essential condition which establishes inherently, what makes refugees experiences is a set of institutional features, specific to the contexts, that affect their economic and social conditions. In the case of Syrians in Turkey, as the Turkish government has assumed that the work permit is mainly a responsibility of the employers, it does not provide an authorized body and a legal platform for Syrian workers, who are unable to get their salaries in time, or claim and fight for their working rights.

As might be expected, all of the employment areas of Syrian people in Önder district are in informal sectors. Therefore, they have to work in informal, irregular, and temporary jobs with low wages and lack of social security. This is why it is not a surprise that according to most respondents, they could not receive their salaries and overtime payments, get fired without warning and are injured due to the uncontrolled work environment and not get help from the legal sources. All in all, there is still no legal body for these people who are forced to work as unregistered and unauthorized cheap labor.

As mentioned earlier, except for a small elite who manage to come with significant resources, urban refugees face the economic precarity like the urban poor face. For

example, a local construction worker with a citizenship status is also facing hard living and working conditions, still, he/she is legally protected as a citizen, unlike the refugees. There are more additional challenges for refugees that have to be not overlooked.

Authorities restrict refugees' right to work, grant little or no public assistance and make lots of documentation obligatory for basic rights. In addition, local people and law enforcement agencies often respond with xenophobia to refugees, ranging from ignorance and resentment to harassment and violence. Similarly, to these expressions, Syrian refugees' arrival in Ankara, mainly, coincided with serious unemployment problems at first. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Önder does not totally present a novel form of the jobless urban area. Its location proximity to Sıteler Industrial Zone has made it a ground for the informal economic sector. That is the probably most important reason why refugees move to Önder in the first place where possibilities of finding a job, although informal one, are higher. In this context, Önder, indeed, seems to be beyond being a total exclusionary space for Syrian refugees. Thus, Önder not only accommodates the impoverished urban refugee, but also offers a kind of informal social "security," an alternative form of jobs that the town in the formal sector could not give. However, for Syrian refugees, this mechanism seems to be working by network relations, which are mentioned as a "passive network" in the previous part. Although informal employment rate is high, refugees are mostly unwanted by the local workers, and this situation has an answer in the employers' side.<sup>58</sup> Even employers prefer to hire a refugee worker because of their low bargaining capacity; they prefer to hire them temporarily. In response to this situation, Syrian refugees have created new areas of work in Önder. Some of them, who has enough capital, have established small informal businesses which also have employed Syrian refugees on low salaries and the other ones who do not have enough capital have been trying to find their own way. They have been continuously seeking opportunities under the regulations and strategies implemented by policymakers and market.

During the interviews, it is discovered that a considerable number of the respondents had a craftsman background in Syria while in Ankara they are working in factories,

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<sup>58</sup>During the talks, it was emphasized several times that the local employers have tended to fire Syrian workers after the incident on 16 July.

restaurants, cafes (as waitresses and stewards) and as street workers (as selling handkerchiefs and cigarettes, shoe polishers, solid waste workers while the self-employed ones mostly run small shops such as restaurants, grocery stores, second-hand shops, etc.) Although I did not have the opportunity to interview anyone who works informal jobs, it could be said that the neighborhood is quite a colorful place regarding informal work. In comparison to other Syrian's clusters in Ankara, the diversity of refugees' economic activities were much higher. Along the street, you are able to see many shops with Arabic nameplates selling Syrian products, but the product sales do not take place only in the shops. Many stores also attained a dominant position on the street by exhibiting their products in stalls they placed on the street. The sellers, who want to attract customers into the shops, have turned the street into a lively market place, which was supposed to be a transit zone that only provides access to the shops. Of course, this transformation is not only due to the sellers who could afford the rents. One of the colorful faces of the neighborhood is street vendors. They are also the ones who are referred to as actors who use and transform the street actively.

Many refugees, who are pushed from formal employment opportunities, have considered street vending as one of their remaining livelihood options. Thus, being a street vendor was frequently mentioned as an important source of income among Syrians in Önder. In the street, they are selling cigarettes, handkerchiefs, imported tea, Syrian bread, vegetables and fruits, and are polishing shoes. Among these products, cigarettes and imported tea were brought from Syria through intermediaries. Within that context, It is possible to evaluate the street selling practice of Syrians, as a tactic of surviving in the city, where the structural violence of neoliberal policies and temporary protection's arbitrary regime are dominant. What is significant in terms of creating new employment areas is that they succeed to be plural in being creative within the realm of the unregulated market and legal protection of their temporary status (De Certeau, 1988).

In Önder, there is a strong potential to be a street vendor to create a pace of maneuver against the government's arbitrary regime against them and to take part in the cracks of political power. Basing on the assumption that street vendors create new secondary economies in the heart of everyday life rhythm, it could be stated that they also have the information about when and where the government is cracking (Çetken &



Gökbulut, 2010). This maneuverability and day-to-day information, available on the street and provides an important boost for street vendors to settle in the empty spaces of the strategy. The expressions of Abdul, whom we encountered during our neighborhood visit, selling products from Syria such as cigarettes and tea on the sidewalk, summed up this situation quite nicely. When it is asked to Abdul who prefer buying cigarettes, lighters, and rosaries from him, Abdul responded with all the information he has from the cracks of the street:

Mostly, Syrians are buying of course but because my products are cheaper this situation starts to change. There is a cigarette, there is lighter and rosary, but I also have hairpins, necklaces, and earrings too. My wife is making them. Generally, we are selling them in the Syrian Bazaar. Women are not much here in the morning, but daily workers, who usually look for a job, are sitting and waiting in this park in the morning.<sup>59</sup>

In one sense, Abdul is organizing his spatial routines to be able to access his customers, but he is also holding the power of maneuverability just in case he encounters with state officials. If one considers the fact that government authorities aim to ensure to have the power of city management regulations, it could be assumed that the hawkers and government are generally on a collision course. However, in Önder's case, their relation is a little bit different:

Thankfully we do not have much trouble with the city police. However, a new procedure would start eventually. Then we will change our condition according to the new regulations. I do not feel the need to do that yet.<sup>60</sup>

The weak presence of state authorities has brought out a sense of insecurity but also created a convenient place for refugees' maneuverability in the neighborhood. Syrian refugees have organized Önder's streets as their "weapon", to maintain their livelihood, hid from state's authorities and created the wider avenues that they could benefit from. In this context, street vendors have provided an ideal tactical opportunity to create an alternative to the city's shopping centers and consumption areas. Murad (29 / Male) similarly claimed that there is a demand for basic products such as electronic devices in Önder. His narrative indicated that their customer group involves

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<sup>59</sup>Çoğunlukla Suriyeliler satın alıyorlar ama ürünler ucuz olduğu için bu durum değişmeye başlıyor bence. Suriye sigarası var, tespah var ama aynı zamanda saç tokası, kolye ve küpe de satıyorum. Karım yapıyor onları. Saç tokasını falan Suriye pazarında satıyorum, burada değil. Çünkü kadınlar sabahları buraya gelmez, genellikle iş arayan günlük işçiler bu parkra oturuyor sabahları.

<sup>60</sup>Zabıtayla çok sıkıntımız yok çok şükür. Ama tabi bir uygulama başlayacaktır er ya da geç. Gelen kurallara göre şartlarımızı değiştiririz o zaman. Şimdilik buna ihtiyaç duymuyorum.

most of the time Syrian refugees, but low-income locals also welcome cheap good supplied by them although they still direct xenophobic attitudes towards Syrians. Concordantly, Murad anticipates that by means of his cheap consumption products, which have helped a lot in reducing living costs might establish a bridge between locals and Syrian and transform the patterns of racism towards them.

Thank goodness we earn a living. I speak the language, too. However, there are many people who do not speak Turkish. There are many Syrians who do not want to leave the neighborhood. I mean, we are cheaper than the shops. Here, there are people who have never been in the outside the Önder yet. The products we bring are important for these people...However, at the same time, our prices are cheaper for locals too. I have some local customers and this relation opens a dialogue between us. Probably, in the following days, we would understand each other more clearly. <sup>61</sup>

It is possible to find such street vendors in many places of Önder District. These stuffs are hand carried on the pavements and mobile stalls, and the sellers, who stroll around on foot, open slits where they can breathe through the legal voids within the city, where the strategy of Turkish state and xenophobic attitudes and behavior of the host community has been fixed and infiltrated the roads of everyday life. Their operations have shown that the practices of state and other powerful agents are not in a rough ground that is fixed and not maneuverable.

Thus, it could be asserted that Syrians move within these slits in the realm of dominant and transform Önder as their new home. A local artisan, Osman, from Önder explained this transformation in this way:

The neighborhood changed a lot since the Syrians came. You probably noticed the whole street is full of Syrian food, grocer, and tobacco shops. They do not pay taxes like us; they found a mediator and rented the stores. There aren't many Turkish tradesmen left, just a few here and there, and myself. If there were no stores, the pavements are full; people sell whatever they can. They also sell the aid they get. This was a dead place; it is a lot more energetic now. <sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Tanrıya şükür, biz para kazanıyoruz. Ben de dili konuşuyorum. Ancak, Türkçe bilmeyen birçok insan var. Mahalleden ayrılmak istemeyen birçok Suriyeli var. Yani biz dükkanlardan daha ucuzuz. Burada, henüz Önder'in dışında hiç bulunmamış insanlar var. Getirdiğimiz ürünler bu insanlar için önemli... Ancak aynı zamanda yerel halk için de fiyatlar daha ucuz. Bazı yerel müşterilerim var ve bu ilişki aramızda bir diyalog açıyor. Muhtemelen, sonraki günlerde birbirimizi daha net anlayacağız

<sup>62</sup>Suriyeliler geldiğinden beri mahalle çok değişti. Fark ettin heralde bütün cadde Suriyeli yemekleri, bakkalı, tütüncüsü doldu. Vergi vermiyorlar ya bizim gibi, bir aracı bulup dükkanları kiraladılar. Pek türk esnaf kalmadı, tek tük, bir ben işte. Zaten dükkan olmasa kaldırımlar doldu taşı, ne bulurlarsa

How do we explain this appropriation of public space for private again? As academics have already pointed out, this has a lot to do with poor people's "low politics," urban poor people's life requirements are working in developing countries (Bayat, 2013).

Abdul (44/ Male) depicts his experience being a hawker as follows:

No, I couldn't find a job in Siterler, but I am selling these. Some of them are from Syria, some of them from Ulus. (There were various things on the bench from shoes to coffee, etc.) I sell in Selcuk Street generally. There are many Syrian who do not prefer shopping from outside the neighborhood because of the lack of Turkish they have.<sup>63</sup>

Findings illustrate that as city users, refugees have challenged the notions of order and have sought opportunities under the "unregulated regulations" and strategies implemented by policymakers. However, as De Certeau suggests, they do not act directly; rather, they make use of tactics on the space of others. In this way, they are pretending that the conditions dominated by the dominant are sufficient for them. Abdul again: "I have no more request from the government, thank goodness we find a place to live." Their place of tactics belongs to the public space of the other, and tactics insinuate themselves fragmentarily into the location of the other, without taking over it in its entirety, without being prepared to maintain it away (De Certeau, 1984).

On the other hand, it should be mentioned that economic life in Önder has still subjected to distinguishing features which create sets of opportunities but also constraints at the same time. In this context, refugees own community plays a significant role to overcome the constraints of unregulation and informality. It is important to have a social network to survive in the informal business (Berry,1997).

Inas, male, 38 years old:

I did not have enough money to open up this place. (He makes falafels and sells some Syrian grocer products) I did not come here with much money. Before we came to Ankara we had some acquaintances and relatives; they helped me. Most of the stores here were opened with loan money, as is

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satıyorlar. Kendilerine verilen yardımları da satıyorlar. Yalnız doğrusunu diyeyim mi, burası çok ölü bir yerd, şimdi baya bir hareketlendi o da gerçek.

<sup>63</sup>Yok bu Siterler'de iş bulamadım ama bunları satıyorum, Bazıları memleketten bazıları Ulus... (Tezgâhın üzerinde çakmaktan, ayakkabıya, kahveye çeşitli eşyalar vardı.) Selçuk Caddesi'nde satıyorum. Mahalle dışından alışveriş yapmayı tercih etmeyen baya Suriyeli var tabi. Dil bilmeyen çok olduğu için mahalle dışından alışveriş yapmıyorlar.

mine. I had help from my relatives too, but I hear many who found loans through mediators.

-So, how did you rent the store?

-A mediator helped with that too. As I said, most of the stores on this street are like this.<sup>64</sup>

Consequently, the function of the social network has affected the flexibility of local financial operations that serve as a continuation of local livelihoods. With all the restricted resources, local living depends heavily on the strength of their social relationships, which allows them to support each other. However, as we mentioned earlier, as a two-sided blade, it has also been operating as an important handicap. The Syrians in Önder do not exist as a cohesive community without the notion of competition. Inas, who mentioned the blessing parts of the passive network among Syrians, also adds that:

The Syrians who came early are brokers for the newcomers to find homes and jobs. I hear they ask for much money. This is unbelievable. I fear as time passes, our bonds will weaken like this.<sup>65</sup>

In this context, one should not neglect these handicaps while talking about the importance of passive networks among refugees. To the extent that, in Önder, there are varying degrees of tension, which also include a competition among Syrians themselves, Syrian refugees have created tactics also to these challenges of intra-Syrian relationships. As mentioned in the previous part, some Syrians created a WhatsApp group to inform each other about the houses for rent. In this way, they have aimed to eliminate both local and Syrian intermediaries.

Gender-differentiated experiences in the labor market are also central to tactical maneuvers in everyday life, but because of its narrow scope, they are still overlooked in the first gaze. On the other hand, although, on the surface, the breadwinners were the males in respondents' houses, there has been a small but growing proportion of

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<sup>64</sup>Burayı (hem falafel yapıyor hem de bazı Suriye'den gelen market ürünlerini satıyor) açmak için param yeterli değildi. Öyle paralı gelmedim. Ama Ankara'ya bizden önce gelen tanıdıklarımız, akrabalarımız vardı, onlar bana yardımcı oldu. Buradaki dükkanların çoğu borç parayla açıldı, benimki de öyle... Ben akrabalarından da yardım aldım ama bu şekilde tanıdık aracılığıyla borç bulan da çok oldu, duydum.”  
-Peki, dükkanı nasıl kiraladınız?“Onda da bir aracı yardımcı oldu. Dediğim gibi bu caddedeki dükkanların çoğu böyle.”

<sup>65</sup>Şöyle birşey oldu, bizim gibi erken gelen Suriyeliler, ev bulmak için, iş bulmak için aracılık yapıyor yeni gelenlere. Duyduğuma göre çok para istiyorlarmış. Bu olacak iş değil. Zaman geçtikçe bağlarımız böyle olacak diye korkuyorum da.

femaleowned shops in Önder. So, basing on the assumption that beyond refugees vaguely given legal status which has been faced by all of them, women refugees' experiences seem much more effected both on their economic and social conditions under the precarious conditions of exile and as well as on masculine cultural constraints, it is significantly important to investigate that how do their gendered differences shape their responses against these strategies of state and the other powerful mechanisms?

Before the turn of the twenty-first century, the literature on refugee women was mainly focused on their vulnerability rather than on their strength (Moussa, 1991, p. 12). Since the 2000s, however, the literature has changed towards expressing the important role of refugee women, their courage and determination and the resilience opportunity for them in the life of exile (Ross-Sheriff, 2006). In this regard, this thesis also suggests that it would be misapprehension to illustrate Syrian refugee women in Önder as just victims without their own tactics for a response to structural violence. Additionally, the interviews with Syrian women carried out in the framework of this chapter indicated that the experience of exile may not be only a period of significant risks for women refugees but also be an emancipatory period. Malva (39, Female) said that:

I like the fact that we have to work as well. Yes, our conditions are very difficult, but I think that women who can take Turkish lessons like me, and who get vocational training are lucky. In Syria, I had never gone to course or had done something for improving myself. However, here, with the help of charities implementation, we gain the opportunity to learn something.<sup>66</sup>

She continued expressing her changing life routine in that way:

Now that we're guests, it's really hard. Some Turkish men who say I am marrying Syrian women because of help are committing sin. They marry unofficially with young Syrian women as a second or third wife and then leave them, bully them. That's why we should educate our self, go out and learn how to live. But generally, our men do not want us to go out or work. I think that's going to change. Now mine husband doesn't want me to work. For example, when I first started going a Turkish course, he did not want it either, asked me what would you do with that course. I said, we have to learn the language if we are going to live in this country, but in fact, I want to work. I'm not saying that for now. I have learned that you should not live depending on someone else. I have to do something for my family. What is significant in Malva's narratives that their administrative statuses

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<sup>66</sup>Bizim de çalışmamız gerektiği gerçeğini seviyorum. Evet, şartlarımız çok zor, ama bence benim gibi Türkçe dersi alabilen ve mesleki eğitim alan kadınlar çok şanslı. Suriye'de kendimi geliştirmek için hiç kursa gitmedim ya da bir şey yapmadım. Burada, hayır kurumlarının aktiviteleri sayesinde, birşeyler öğrenme fırsatı elde ediyoruz.

such as “tolerated stay”, “temporary protection” have reproduced their vulnerability and narrowed tremendously the living spaces of Syrian women in the transit. In that sense, it can be argued that their administrative temporary status symbolizes the strategy of the government in terms of asylum policies. In this way, administrative statuses of Syrian women refugees provide the basis for the reconstruction and reproduction of gendered relations, and unparticular for the construction and reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. But this situation has still two sides. On the one hand, Syrian women are still position themselves under the male figures in their family or in the host society, on the other hand, they use their ‘guest who needs support’ position to empower themselves against the male actors in their lives.<sup>67</sup>

Another respondent stated that they are waiting for a chance to do something for their family with an undertone of desperation echoed in their voices, but this does not mean that they are not working at all. Some of them created her on paying job at home. Meryem, 23 years old, a housewife who had never had a paying job at Syria, stated that:

We have to work in order to get by, it is necessary. I took a Turkish course and a sewing course at Önder Foundation. I sew these at home and sell them (As she shows the booties, scarfs, sweaters)

-How do you sell them?

-Teachers from the foundation helped, but we want to form a network, we talk about it with the girls over WhatsApp these days.<sup>68</sup>

In this regard, women’ network has its own uniqueness. This women solidarity is a result of both the sharpness of gender differentiation in the labor market and the norms of patriarchy, in which many women are eventually enforced to face distinct exploitation in the labor market and to deal with patriarchal hierarchies and disciplinary practices in their extended families. That’s why most of the women respondents in Önder have preferred supporting and helping one another for their

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<sup>67</sup>Şimdi biz misafir sayılırız ya bu durum gerçekten zor aslında. Din kardeşiyiz diyen, yardım için evleniyorum diyen, Türkiyeli erkeklerin bazıları çok günaha giriyor. Resmi olmayan evlilikler yapıp, ikinci, üçüncü evliliklerini yapıyorlar ama sonra o kızları ortada bırakıp hiç İslamiyet’e yakışmayacak zorbalıklar yapıyorlar. Ben o yüzden çalışmamız, dışarı çıkıp iş güç öğrenmemiz gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Ama işte bizim erkekler genelde çalışan kadın istemiyorlar. Bence bu değişecek. Şimdi benimki de istemiyor aslında. İlk ben kursa gitmeye başladığımda istemedi mesela, ne yapacaksın ki diye sordu. Artık bu ülkedeyiz elbet dil öğrenmemiz lazım dedim ama aslında ben de çalışmak istiyorum. Şimdilik bunu dillendirmiyorum. Başkasının yardımına iyiliğine muhtaç yaşanmaz ben bu süreçte bunu öğrendim.

<sup>68</sup>Geçinebilmemiz için bizim de çalışmamız gerekiyor, şart yani. Önder Vakfı’nda Türkçe eğitimi aldım, bir de dikiş. Bunları evde yapıp satıyorum. (Patik, atkı, kazakları vs gösteriyor)” -Nasıl satıyorsun peki?“Vakıf’tan hocalar yardımcı oldu ama bir ağ kurmak istiyoruz, kurstaki kızlarla whatsuptan konuşuyoruz bunu bu ara.”

economic activities, for example, they have established a network of communication for finding jobs; they inform each other when job opportunity occurs or look at each other's children when the other women are at job and also exchanging information which is helpful to improve their livelihood.

With the power of this solidarity among Syrian women, there is a small but growing number of women entrepreneurs in the Önder. Some of them have used public spaces; some of them have used their private spaces for creating new employment opportunities. However, it is important to note that, generally, Syrian women in Önder have preferred working with their husband if they are going to work in the public place or work from home due to the risk of sexual abuse and harassment at the workplace and disciplinary practices which restrict them in domestic places. This situation did not prevent them from looking for other options for creating employment opportunities. They have turned their fixed, limited, residential places into commercial spaces (Hallows, 2008). Thus, houses of residential life opposite to designated production places, have been turned into commercial places by Syrian women. 33-year-old Yasemin, for instance, among the refugees we interviewed, was using her house as a hairdresser in the mornings.

I am quite talented in this kind of hands-on work, but I was not working in Aleppo. We, as the whole family, have to work here to earn our living. The rents are high, as much as our expenses. In the beginning, I did not tell my husband and the family, but I got my vocational training in the place where we go to take Turkish lessons. We did not have enough money to open a shop, but there were some people working from home already, and I thought to give it a try. Then I told the family. They were not positive at first, but after a couple of customers came and, when they realized that I earn money, they let me continue to work. Recently, we are even talking about hanging a nameplate by the window.<sup>69</sup>

Yasemin did not rent a place for a hairdresser which normally requires bureaucratic procedures that state had made compulsory, and she also did not need any further processing such as registering a company or the taxation. Thus, the rules drawn by state strategies were removed from the framework, and the boundaries of private life

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<sup>69</sup>Bu tür el işi çalışmalarında a oldukça yetenekliyim ama Halep'te çalışmıyordum. Biz, bütün aile olarak, geçimimizi kazanmak için burada çalışmak zorundayız. Kiralarımız da harcamalarımız da yüksek. Başlangıçta kocama ve aileme söylemedim, ancak Türkçe dersleri alacağımız yerde mesleki eğitim aldım. Bir dükkân açmak için yeterli paramız yoktu, ama zaten evden kuaförlük yapan bazı insanlar vardı ben de öyle denemeyi düşündüm. Sonra aileye söyledim. İlk başta pozitif değillerdi, ancak birkaç müşteri geldikten ve para kazandığımı fark ettiklerinde çalışmaya devam etmeme izin verdiler. Son zamanlarda, pencerenin önüne bir isim levhası asmayı bile konuşuyoruz.

and public life were loosened by converting the home into a workplace instead of renting a place where rent and tax were paid.

This home-coiffeur place is not something scarce. Not just because of social struggles but also because of their inferior status in the family, they have preferred to work from home to avoid the challenge to get their husband's permission. However, circumstances are not better for migrant women operating in the informal sector since the patriarchal system-based division of labor in the informal sector.

Maybe they cannot transform their inferior position or display their ideas or feelings through their behavior both in public and private zone but they absolutely could make a hole in the system with negotiating and carrying out maneuvers to prevent discrimination (Secor, 2004, p. 359). In the case of Önder, I noticed a silence operation; hiding their real thoughts and feelings and shaping them as what is expected.

Yasemin is one of them too. She said that at the beginning, she had kept this situation from her husband. "At first I didn't tell the house. In fact, working from home is not a problem, but for some reason my husband was not very interested. When a customer came, I was saying that my friend came." Therefore, hiding serves as a coping mechanism implemented to dig a hole in gendered places. In line with hiding and avoidance, women also use negotiation with the dominant structures, to become visible and be seen as ordinary by obeying the hegemonic dress codes, which will be mentioned in the subsequent chapter.

### **3.4 Disguise**

It can be said that there is a tendency of refugees to manage their personal and social identities by performing what is expected from them in order to escape from social stigma and construct a social interaction tactic known as passing which is "a performance in which one presents himself as what one is not." (Rohy, 1996) Similar with this approach, Lefebvre (1974) sees everyday life as a "performance area" where people develop performances which help them acquire a sense of belonging to the city. In this regard, the concept of performance can be elaborated as another refugees daily tactic for urban appropriation.



Performance is described by Goffman as an action for the “gaze of the others”; it is done in order to present the self to other people. In other words, “it is self-regulation of actions in our everyday encounters to regulate the views of others.” (Goffman, 2009, p. 21) Goffman suggested that while it is undeniable that in order to feel complete, another one should see us, this requirement has a binary character which contains unrecognition and seeking recognition at the same time. Syrian refugee’ self-regulation for “others” gaze should be analyzed in this “double nature” of gaze. This two-faced gaze relation can turn the destiny of the subaltern to completely injury if they would not flex this hierarchical gaze out of shape. It is no coincidence then, Syrian refugees have avoided the risks that come with being a Syrian refugee by performing someone else, in that way they have created a defense mechanism to diminish the effect of their injuries which were stem from their administrative temporary statuses.

When it was talked with interviewers about their experiences in the city, nearly all of them talked about wandering more easily in the Önder neighborhood. When the reasons were asked, they usually mentioned about foreignness and timidity. Fatima (45, Female):

I feel more relaxed in Önder. It is a nuisance not knowing the neighborhood, but the real trouble is being named as a guest. I feel already like a guest. However, I know I cannot go back. So we are more comfortable with people like us. I am not the only guest here, in Önder. This is comforting.<sup>70</sup>

Especially in relatively rich neighborhoods, poor refugees are considered to be dirty, stinky, and dangerous, and this is reflected in their glance during the moment of encounter. Halil, who supported his family by selling napkins, expressed his feelings in this way:

We get insulted all the time. The way we dress, speak, our food and houses; there is an imputation for everything. Adding poverty into the mixture, it becomes unbearable. I feel more of an outsider out of my neighborhood. It is as if they are asking me why I came here. They stare at me like I don’t belong here. I do not know they understand, is it just the way I walk or the way I dress?<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Burada daha rahat hissediyorum. Etrafi bilmemek tabi bir sıkıntı ama asıl misafir olarak adlandırılıyor oluşumuz bence bizi geren. Ben de kendimi misafir gibi hissediyorum zaten. Ama geri dönemeyeceğimi de biliyorum. O yüzden biz de bizim gibilerin olduğu yerde rahat ediyoruz işte. Burda da misafiriz tabi ama tek misafir ben değilim sonuçta.

<sup>71</sup>Sürekli aşağılanıyoruz. Kılık kıyafetimiz, konuşmamız, yemeklerimiz, evimiz herşeye bir yakıştırma

As Halil mentioned, “The poor subordinate grotesque body causes loathing, which disturbed the identity, the order, and the system, jerk high symbology and is unrespectful to limits, locations and rules.” (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 65) For this reason, Syrian refugees are not desirous of being visible in the city, especially in the active parts of districts and during the active movement of people in the city.

The class-based nature of rejection about the outsiders has been escalating since the late 2000s, which are the years of rapid urban transformation in Turkey. In fact, in the 1980s, in addition to Turkey's material and cultural transformation, spatial changes were also in impact, and class distinctions in space as well as the use of public spaces became noticeable. As Gürbilek (1992) claims, in this era the locations that brought together individuals from various classes vanished. This division has, however, been escalated with the 2000s. First gated communities, which began to be constructed in old slum neighbourhoods behind high walls, were constructed in the outskirts of the big cities and then slum individuals were compelled to leave the main sections of the city. Such precautions, however, were not sufficient to prevent class encounters, so urban transformation was needed. The city's upperclass neighborhoods developed their own shopping malls, cafes, pubs and shops as a continuation of the public space laws that prevented the encounter of distinct groups that began in the 1980s, as Gürbilek said. “During the 2010s, the discontent of class encounters expressed in the articles moved from the public space to private spaces; from the people encountered in the streets to the house cleaners, nannies working in their houses”. (Erdoğan, 2000, p. 66)

As stated by Erdoğan (2000), one of the legitimate way to enter the walled, safe, luxurious construction complexes has been working as live in or as daily houseworkers for ' lesser ' classes since the 2010s. However, Syrian refugees are, presently, unconfident to leave their lower-class neighborhoods for seeking jobs in higher class places where public transportation is scarce, so the direct relation of gaze which is based on class is operated not by the upper class but by the middle class who share center streets with Syrian refugees. In the case of Önder, refugees have encountered with the middle class, mainly, in Kızılay and Ulus. This situation can be read from the

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yapılıyor. Yokluk da eklenince bunlara çekilmez çileye dönüşüyor. Mahalle dışında daha çok hissediyorum bu dışlanma hissini. Buraya neden geldin diyor gibi insanlar. Buraya ait değilsin der gibi bakıyorlar. Nerden anlıyorlar sadece yürüyüşümden mi, nerden kılık kıyafetten mi bilemiyorum.

local people responds such as “at every step, we see a homeless Syrians” or “they invaded our parks”. As it was mentioned before, another dimension which boosts the xenophobic discourses is the approach of mainstream media. The report of “Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration”, have suggested that main media in Turkey have approached the issue of Syrian refugees by describing them as “guest” who should be put in their place. While, much of the media effort, local or national, was focused on exposing the vulnerable conditions and poverty of the refugees or their involvement in the crime, some of them published news which tried to teach refuge’s place.

For instance, in news one of the local newspaper titled as Gun, gave a headline as “Syrians invaded Ankara!”

Syrians are provided with sheltering, food, healthcare at the camps. Some of the families predicted to have been panhandling prefer to escape from the camps and panhandle at Ankara. Syrian refugees spend the nights at the bus station and panhandle through the day at different neighborhoods, creating a shameful scene. The employees at the bus station say they are very uncomfortable with the fact that the Syrians sleeping at the banks upstairs of AŞTİ make their kids beg for money. Stating how uncomfortable the citizens and they feel, said that Syrians should be removed from the station urgently.<sup>72</sup>

These discourses in main media, indeed, do not pertain to reality. On the one side, refugees were portrayed as fragile, weak and poor individuals, and on the other as fugitives, criminals, thieves, assassins, rapists, prone to crime and a burden on the host country. Of course, this act of labeling lower classes is not something special for poor Syrian refugees. A little glimpse toward our domestic migrate history can be enough to see similar complaints. This feature was beautifully illustrated in Cantek’s study;

In the 1940s, rural people who migrated to cities were filling the boulevards and watching the glittering dynamism that they have never seen in their neighborhoods or cities they live. Attractive areas of the city were meeting with approval by ordinary people, and wide masses were strolling the avenues and streets all day long. It can be understood from

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<sup>72</sup>Suriyelilerin kamplarda barınma, gıda, sağlık başta olmak üzere her türlü ihtiyaçları karşılanıyor. Ancak Suriye’de de dilencilik yaptığı tahmin edilen bazı aileler, kamplardan kaçarak Ankara’da dilenmeyi tercih ediyor... Suriyeli mülteciler Otobüs terminali ni geçe konaklama olarak kullanırken gündüz saatlerinde Ankaranın çeşitli semtleri dağılarak çirkin görüntüler oluşturuyorlar...AŞTİ’nin üst katında bulunan banklarda kalan Suriyelilerin çocuklarını dilendirdiklerini söyleyen otobüs firması çalışanları artık bu durumdan dolayı rahatsız olduklarını söylediler. Hem kendilerinin hem de vatandaşları rahatsız olduklarını aktaran çalışanlar Suriyelilerin terminalden bir an önce çıkarılması gerektiğini belirtti.

their articles full of complaints that they were uncomfortable with these masses (Cantek, 2008, p. 23).

It is remarkable to note the similarities and differences with the newcomer Syrians of the present day in the reproaches about the newcomers of the 1940s. The comments above, “they are everywhere and do not care about their clothing, their hygiene, they approach women with an immoral attitude” have been used almost exactly for the Syrian newcomers today.

As described above, Syrian refugees represented in the media in a conflicted manner such as those who are poor, weak, miserable and problematic guests who burden to host the country. So how does this conflicted representation have an echo in society? According to studies undertaken in Istanbul and Ankara in 2009 and 2015, adverse views of Syrian refugees have risen. In Istanbul, when participants were questioned if they saw the existence of Syrian refugees in their town as beneficial, only 15 percent of participants said that in 2009, "totally not," but six years later, the amount of participants had increased to 34 percent. In Ankara, the proportion of respondents who responded "totally not" grew from 20% in 2009 to 35% in 2015.<sup>73</sup>

Another report called “Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration” by Hacettepe University; demonstrated that at the local level, Syrians had been commonly identified with theft, prostitution, seizure, property damage. Based on this study, it can be seen that the middle-class gaze is based primarily on pejorative refugee stereotypes to justify racism, sexism, poverty, and other types of oppression as a natural part of their daily lives.

Stereotypes are thus essential to the process of blaming poor refugees for their own oppression. This rejection process has found an answer in Syrians side as “disguising yourself”. Refugees develop a certain kind of tactic to manipulate the hegemonic identity that constraints them by means of getting around. This trick of Syrian refugees poach in the order established by the strong by “getting around the rules of the constraining space.” ( De Certeau, 1984, p. 18)

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<sup>73</sup>The survey was conducted by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV). “Göçmenlere Karşı Kötümserlik Artıyor Mu?” [“Is Pessimism Toward Migrants on the Rise?”], TEPAV, January 2017. Survey available at [www.tepav.org.tr](http://www.tepav.org.tr).

Due to the social stigma associated with refugeeness, ‘hiding certain aspects of themselves’ appears as a conscious tactic for Syrian refugees. Of course, refugees’ liminal position condemned them to remain invisible but refugees also use this invisibility in order to seek the layer of security in the cycle of displacement.

Meryem (23, Female):

The less attention I draw, the more comfortable I feel. I also told the women here; our chadors draw attention. I don’t wear a chador, I noticed women wear long topcoats, and I found one. I wear that. When you don’t draw attention, you don’t experience disturbing things.<sup>74</sup>

The juxtaposition between visible absence and physical presence highlights how a making-absent yourself can be a method of self-preservation in refugees daily confrontations with power. In this regard, invisibility can have different implications on the context of whether it is deployed tactically by a group member or imposed unwillingly upon a group member. Drawing on the respondent’s answers, it could be argued that in the face of the poor and inhumane conditions that refugees face, silence and invisibility are used, sometimes, as tactics that are used to open a space for themselves in Ankara.

Yasemin, part-time coiffeur:

Frankly, I do not like going out of the neighborhood. I do not unless I have to for work. We got used to living here, but I experienced some negativities in some places.<sup>75</sup>

She further added that:

Sure, I want to learn Turkish. Actually, we do not really want to speak in Arabic. For example, a while ago, we went to Kızılay together. I did not speak a word at the bus. If you ask why, I feel like I am being judged sometimes when I am out, even being watched. Nothing happened to me, but I hear a thing at my neighborhood. They find us odd. That is why I’m going to learn Turkish.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ne kadar az dikkat çekersem, o kadar rahat ediyorum aslında. Buradaki kadınlara da söyledim, mesela bizim çarşaflarımız dikkat çekiyor. Çarşaf giymiyorum ben, baktım buradaki kadınlar uzun pardesü giyiyor, bir tane buldum ben de. Onu giyiyorum. Dikkat çekmediğinde rahatsız olacağın şeyler de yaşamıyorsun...

<sup>75</sup>Açıkcası çok fazla mahalleden çıkmayı sevmiyorum. İş için gerekmedikçe çıkmıyorum. Buraya alıştık ama bazı yerlerde birkaç olumsuzluk yaşadım.

<sup>76</sup>Türkçeyi öğrenmek istiyorum tabi. Aslında dışarıda Arapça konuşmak istemiyoruz pek. Mesela geçen Kızılay’a indik beraber. Minibüste hiç konuşmadım. Niye dersin, bazen kendimi yadırganıyor gibi,

On the other hand, in Önder, they have preferred to pretend as an ideal poor Syrian because of their class's gaze<sup>77</sup> expectations either. In some cases, because of their 'bodily' spectacles which have been seen as contradictory to the ordinary state of representation of subordinate classes by local neighbors, they are blamed for their own injuries. For example, one of the respondents from local inhabitants stated that Syrians get more aid than they need by taking into consideration Syrian women' dress.

Ayşe, who is a Turkish citizen from Önder:

Even just by looking at their outfits, you can tell they are financially better than us. All charity associations help them. However, they dress cooler than us. Even the hijab they wear is colorful; it draws attention.<sup>78</sup>

It can be said that the reason for choosing to be invisible by Syrian women, is the Syrian displeasure in public areas, which sometimes makes them an easier target for verbal and physical harassment. The host society is not the only group to which Syrians use invisibility tactic. For instance, sometimes, they have preferred dressing practice with headscarves to escape from treasury inspection and not to be harassed. Latifa, who is working in a restaurant, said that she is wearing her headscarf like Turkish women although she is Syrian:

It creates displeasure being Syrian, both from the customer's point of view and the government's actor' point of view. We cannot get a work permit; it is very difficult. I prefer to wear a headscarf like Turkish people not to catch attention.<sup>79</sup>

As in the example of Latifa, Syrians always come face to face with the fact to be a guest "Syrian", not only by the community but also by the government bureaucracy as well. We are talking about hundred thousand of people who are not getting refugee

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izleniyor gibi hissediyorum dışarıda. Benim başıma bir şey gelmedi ama duyuyorum mahallede bak. Bizi biraz yadırgıyorlar sanki. O yüzden Türkçe öğreneceğim.

<sup>77</sup>Skegges describe class gaze as a concept that considers how people look at one another from their class positions (Skeggs, 2011).

<sup>78</sup>Kılık kıyafetlerine bile bakınca durumlarının bizden iyi olduğunu anlayabilirsin. Buradaki bütün yardım dernekleri onlara yardım ediyor. Ama onlar bizden daha havalı giyiniyor. Giydikleri çarşaf bile havalı, dikkat çekiyor.

<sup>79</sup>Suriyeli olmak, hem müşteri tarafından hem de devlet aktörleri tarafından hoş karşılanmıyor çalışırken. Çalışma izni almak bile zor. Bu yüzden çalışırken başörtüsü Türkler gibi takmayı tercih ediyorum. Böylece Suriyeli olduğum hemen anlaşılıyor.

status, are allowed to live in city centers, but who do not really know how to involve expenses of the life.

This “fitting the appearance of the dominant identity” tactic is not only used by Syrian women. Especially, the rate of wearing the local Arabian outfit “jellabiya” by Syrian men over middle age is decreasing to a large extent. We have not encountered craftsmen that wear jellabiya in the Önder neighborhood.

By preferring the dressing codes of the dominant identity and different mechanisms to connect the dominant culture-shaped spaces, this thesis asserts that, they exercise not an act of assimilation, but an act of resistance to their social oppression process stems from the structural violence they are facing. By avoiding wearing cultural symbols that reflect their identities, Syrians are using the field and rules of the dominant culture by turning it to their benefit, just as De De Certeau’s reference to “art of the weak.” (De Certeau, 2009).

Another tactic of Syrian craftsmen and restaurants in the Ankara to be able to hold and sell is to use Latin letters for writing the name of their shops and hanging the Turkish flag on the showcase. According to Osman; first, a local craftsman had begun to hang the Turkish flag on their showcase in order to give a message to their customer mass and to avoid a possible racist attack. After a while, the Syrians, who learned from their neighbors that the flag was a repulsive element and that it could be used as a functional solution tool against the nationalist lynching, they began to hang Turkish flags on their houses and workplaces. In the weeks when lynching incidents happened, this apply was used more. However, after these cases, many craftsmen did not haul down the flags from the windows. It is possible to interpret these camouflages of Syrian, as a tactic for Certeauyen. According to De Certeau, tactics are "affordable actions" and games that are set up in "another place that is imposed on them by the laws of a foreign power." (De Certeau, 1984, p. 31) It is a movement carried out within the space, controlled by the enemy. It uses a camouflage that can infiltrate the leaking and make it exists.

In this sense, by dressing convenient to the dominant identity, hanging the Turkish flag on houses and shops, or hiding the number plate of vehicles, behaving as if not being part of the Syrian community to which they actually belong, Syrians are using

camouflaging (Spradlin,1995) as a manipulating tool for the established norms of the host society. Thus, they managed with the stigmatization by being creative within the realm of the host society norms without crossing the borders imposed on them by means of a dominant culture where they live in (De Certeau, 1988).



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis attempted to understand the case of Syrian refugees in Önder neighborhood and its surroundings located in Ankara and challenges the argument that being “inbetween” as temporary protection holders and facing precarious conditions necessarily imply being passive. In accordance with this purpose, it explored how poor Syrian refugees navigate their lives concerning the structural violence of neoliberal economic policies and of temporary protection which set the stage for further exploitation, securitization, and precarization for refugees. Although the current structural violence certainly limits the field of possibilities of Syrian refugees can move in, this thesis argues that hegemonic processes and operations are not totally and systematically absorbed. Thus, Syrian refugees have found the cracks of the dominant order as active agents that develop tactics in the realm of everyday life to evade control and social hostility.

Within the framework of de Certeau’s and Bayat’s works, this thesis described how quiet, atomized Syrian refugee group without clear leadership have deployed and continues to deploy tactics. According to this thesis findings, they have established passive network for creating convenient base for developing tactics such as using visibility as well as invisibility, poaching the realm of employment by manipulating arbitrary asylum regulations, turning residential places into commercial spaces by means of the weak presence of state authorities, manipulating and benefiting from the state’s rhetoric of Muslim fraternity by using it as their weapon, using their traditional ties and hiding their injuries.

Basing on the assumption that neoliberal economic policies have created flexible, insecure and temporary working conditions and this political economy context is the place where exactly the international refugee regime and “refugee experiences” are set (Zolberg, 2001), this thesis does not position itself only in the literature on “refugee studies” but within the literature on “urban poverty” as well for tracing refugee’s responses against structural violence they face in their everyday confrontations with

power. Since urban poverty and migration studies have so much in common, merging this two-field contributed to each other's field. Of course, the term "refugee" does not constitute an identity or a class position, but it is, now, obvious that one cannot speak of class and informality in Turkey without taking the existence of Syrian refugees into consideration. Rather than being inherently different from poor urban citizens or migrants, what makes poor refugees distinct is a set of institutional features that add to refugees' everyday life experiences some distinct challenges such as discrimination and experiencing racism, restriction on the right to work, and limited access to fundamental rights. (Landau & Duponchel, 2011) On the one hand, the political economy context has led to increased mobility of capital, but on the other hand, it has produced limitations on movement, especially in situations of displacement and dislocation (Lubkemann, 2008). As a result of shrinking global asylum space and global inequities in responsibility sharing around refugees and other displaced populations (Gibney, 2004), many refugees are increasingly displaced for long periods of time in urban and forced to experience temporality as a continuation of a long history of vulnerability to poverty, racism, crime, and violence.

At first glance, their ethnicity and national origin may appear to be the vital aspects of their daily confrontations with power in urban environments, but if one only focuses on the cultural aspects of their experiences, she / he neglects the political and economic conditions in which refugees live in the structuring process of inequality. Refugees are directly linked to class segmentation in many areas of the world, with distinct ethnic groups without citizenship dominating some local economy niches. Refugees and class are not cohesive concepts, of course, but it should not be forgotten that this thesis is contextualized in a slum of Ankara where dispossessed Syrian refugees congregate. Overall, by taking into consideration that "the refugee experience is not a single, essential, trans-historical condition" (Malkki, 1995, p. 511) this thesis tried to portray Syrian refugee's everyday experiences in the margins of the urban and traces their responses to the experiences they have in the margins of the urban.

In accordance with that aim, this thesis also argues that such experiences have much influence on the refugees' world of meaning rather than their economic situation alone. Thus, in order to comprehend the complexity of refugees' experiences, the thesis traced also the clues of urban poor Syrian refugees' new "hidden injuries" (Sennet & Cobb,

1977) which are established by the hardship conditions that Syrian refugees experience inside the cities. In order to see these complex "wounds" of Syrian refugees clearly, this thesis considered the social relations of Syrian refugees in regarding class, gender and ethnicity and their political manifestations concerning the experience of poverty. In other words, this thesis approached refugees' experiences with an understanding of context and intersections.

Önder neighborhood as a field of study has not been taken as a pre-given condition but as an alterable area which can be transformed by society but also an area can transform the society as well. This relational approach of space gives us the opportunity to question the power relations and consequences of these relations both on Önder and on the Syrians' practices in everyday life and to open the doors for recognizing social innovations and transformations in Önder for the disadvantaged Syrians.

In doing so, theoretical framework of this study was conducted on the theoretical distinction that De Certeau made in his "Practice of Everyday Life" (1984) between the strategies of the powerful and the tactics of the subordinate. Basing on the assumption that cities are critical nodes for the extended reproduction of racialized social inequality, the distinction of "the tactics of the powerful" and "the strategies of the subaltern" is used to reveal Syrian refugees' everyday life, which is rooted in inequality and their response to these circumstances by participating in urban life with diverting and manipulating given order by their tactics.

In the first chapter, an evaluation of the contemporary "everyday resistance" literature was given to express some similarities and differences between the understandings of everyday resistance studies with different perspectives, regarding the consciousness, outcome and context (whether it is a universal strategy or heterogenic and contingent due to changing contexts) of everyday resistance conceptualizations. In the light of these conceptualizations, the thesis adopts "everyday resistance" conceptualization as a matter of less visible and small actions by subalterns which have lack of consciousness, intention, or a class motive. That's why the thesis adopts De Certeau's conceptualization "art of making do with" to put in the center of thesis theoretical framework. To the extent that 'art of making do with' is not only limited with direct-indirect relations with the power or confrontation moments, it is also related with

protecting oneself from hidden injuries of the feeling stuck in terms of refugees' in-between position (Erdoğan, 2007). In Önder' case, it is also related to the protection of refugees from hidden injuries such as how they feel, what they expect and especially how they respond when they confront with structural violence, which is also affected by the extension of structural violence.

While capturing the aspects of the micro-level subjectivity of Syrian refugees in the framework of macro-level strategies that drive their experience of structural violence and their responses to these bare life conditions they have in the margins of the urban space, this thesis specifically gave importance to not neglect the correlation between the political economy of displacements in Turkey and its relation with global politics of asylum in the 21st century. However, because the scope of the thesis is limited, this thesis initially could provide a general picture of the daily experiences of Syrian refugees in Turkey and also share fieldwork observations in Önder district.

When searching answers to these questions, first, it has been explored how refugees face downward mobility (as a result of forced migration) and the patterns of their new experiences interacting with the city and the hidden injuries they carry in these experiences. Second, it discussed their responses regarding their injuries and then traced their tactics of creative expression and everyday resistance against their injuries.

In the case of Önder neighborhood, based on the finding of the thesis, it could be stated that while state presents no clear plan for Syrian refugees, this ambiguous policy creates more complex and vaguer environment particularly for refugees and provides a basis for hostile social and political environment. In this context, this thesis does not claim that all Syrian refugees experience the same hidden injuries, but it suggests that despite their diverse experiences and cultures, they have found themselves in a similar predicament of an unstable position that possesses a significant weight on the local informal economy. In the thesis, most of the interviewees have unsecured jobs, but it should be mentioned that this is mostly due to the proximity of Önder to Sıtel, which is known for furniture manufacture. Small- and medium-sized enterprises in Sıtel had attracted Syrian refugees in the first place. That is why most of the interviewees are not entirely destitute. Thus, the peripheral poverty of Önder is significantly different from the inner-city poverty of other areas such as Dikmen or Mamak.

Another reason why Önder is not a jobless environment is its capacity to provide a basis for Syrian refugees' tactics for creating their working opportunities by themselves. Our neoliberal cities are mainly produced by the strategies of the dominant groups, but with clustering in the same space and establishing a passive network in this district, Syrians have gained an opportunity to create their own habitus and reproduced Önder under the strategies of policymakers. In a nutshell, every society produces its own space, but it should not be forgotten that they do it in accordance with power geometry. Struggles over space take hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forms. According to this thesis findings, Syrian refugee's acts are not taking counter-hegemonic form right now, they are acting for acquiring the basic necessities, which emerge from pragmatic concerns, of their lives but it is obvious that Önder' streets have made it possible for Syrian refugees to cluster in the same space and to create their own habitus.

While precarity is often seen as a disabling phenomenon in the lives of subalterns, in Önder' case, refugees subverted the constraints of refugee temporality by their tactics. However, it should also be mentioned that Syrians' tactics do not only relate with the economic dominant group' and institutional state actor's strategies, they are also related with the host society xenophobic relations with refugees and masculine hegemonic relations.

For exploring these complex intersectional relations between refugees and the dominant groups, where power exercised in both directions, Önder has provided an apt laboratory for uncovering these relations.

Finally, these thesis findings are not claiming that Syrian refugees are a counter force or a collective force, but they can be, without intending to be so. As Bayat (2000) argues, everyday social dynamics are altering societies in ways that are usually unacknowledged by onlookers. In that sense, the thesis attached importance to look to the non-movements practicing the art of presence and aimed to reveal Syrian refugees' collective will to discover new spaces within which to Syrians make themselves heard, seen and realized (Bayat, 2009).

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## APPENDICES

### A. INTERVIEWEE LIST

(All names are changed for privacy reasons.)

1. **Yasemin:** She is 33 years old and married. She has been living with her husband and 3 children in Ankara since 2013. She has two boys and a girl. All are coming from Aleppo. She didn't have a job in Syria. After has been settled in Turkey, she had started working at home. She had been trained on hairdressing in Önder Foundation located in the neighborhood. She gives hairdressing services to his fellow guests in her house.
2. **Sahara:** She is 28 years old and married. She doesn't have any child. She has been living in Ankara since 2014. Her origin is from Aleppo where he had been working as a history teacher. As for Ankara, her husband opened a falafel shop in the Önder neighborhood. She's working with her husband in this store. She does not believe in having a chance for refugee status in Turkey, that's why she is planning to try to go to Europe.
3. **Leyla:** Leyla is 30 years old. She is married and has two children. She has been living in Ankara since 2013. She had been unemployed in Aleppo. She has been taking a course for being hairdresser. If she succeeds to convince his family, she wants to work. Since she has the anxiety of security a lot, she wants to be able to work at home.
4. **Amal:** She is 27 years old. She is married and has two children. She has been living in Ankara since 2014. They had accommodated in a house belonging her relatives between 2012 and 2014 in Gaziantep. Then their relatives moved to Ankara and her family followed them. When they first came to Ankara, they lived with their relatives for a while and then rented their own house in the same apartment. She was a primary school teacher in Aleppo in the past and she is unemployed now. She participates in the workshop of hairdressing and Turkish classes. She was looking for working opportunity. After interview, they had applied to UNHCR for family acceptance as refugees in Germany.

5. **Meryem:** She is 23 years old. She is married and has a child. In 2012, her family had moved firstly to a neighborhood in Izmir where her uncle has been living. Because they couldn't find a job, her family decided to move to Ankara. They had been impressed by the positive sayings of her brother's friend about Ankara through the internet. She was not working in Syria. She continues to go to the sewing course. She wants to sell the stuff she did.
6. **Malva:** She is 39 years old, married, has 3 children. They had arrived in Ankara 2013. She was not working in Syria. She is not working in Ankara.
7. **Sara:** She is 41 years old and married. She has 2 children. They had migrated to Ankara in 2012. She didn't have been working in Syria. She is not working in Ankara.
8. **Fatima:** She is 45 years old and married. She has 4 children. 2 of them are working. The youngest one is studying. The one who is 12 years old left the school. Fatima is not working.
9. **Hosein:** He is 28 years old and single. He had migrated to Ankara with his family. He had been working as an engineer in Aleppo. Because of his thought about working as an engineer in Turkey is difficult for him then he has preferred being a waiter.
10. **Hammoudi:** He is 39 years old and married. He has three children; one boy, two girls. He has been living in Ankara since 2013. He is working for a shoe store. Since he does not have a regular work, his oldest kid helps family by working. Other children are waiting to be accepted for a school.
11. **Cahid:** He is 23 years old and single. He has been living in Ankara since 2013. He migrated to Turkey in 2012. Because of economic situations, he moved from Izmir to Ankara. He is a Syrian Turkmen and he can speak Turkish. This has helped him to find a job. He is working as a waitress.
12. **Jihan:** He is 34 years old and married. He has three children; oldest son was dead in the war. He has been living in Ankara since 2014. They've been working on temporary jobs with their two sons since they arrived. He worked in furniture production while in Aleppo, so it was easy for him to get a job at Siteler where there are many furniture manufacturers. However, it is not that easy finding a regular job and long term employment. He's had to change his jobs 3 times since he arrived.



13. **Ahmet:** He is 32 years old and married. He has four children. In 2013, his first stop is in Hatay where his uncle lives. After getting a chance of finding a job in Ankara, he had moved to Ankara. He had been shopkeeper when he was in Aleppo. Now, he works as a construction worker.
14. **Ziad:** He is 28 years old and married. His family is in Gaziantep however he has to live in Ankara to work. He wants to live together with his family in Ankara. He was a shoe manufacturer in Aleppo. He works for a shoe manufacturer in Turkey.
15. **Tarik:** He is 25 years old and single. He had been migrated from Aleppo. When he arrived to Ankara, he had no money to rent a place then he had lived in the restaurant belonging his Syrian friend in Onder neighborhood. He is construction worker in Ankara.
16. **Halil:** He is 13 years old. He had been immigrated in 2014 from Aleppo to Ankara. His father has serious health problem and he is not able to work. There are 4 children in his family. He and his oldest brothers help to their family by selling handkerchief.
17. **Inas:** He is 38 years old and married. His family had migrated in 2013 from Aleppo to Ankara. He has 2 children. He had been shopkeeper when he was in Aleppo. He has small market where stuff coming from Syria is being sold. He sells also falafel.
18. **Abdul:** He is 44 years old and married. His family had migrated in 2013 from Aleppo to Ankara. He has four children. He was a shoemaker in Aleppo. He works as peddler selling buckles and jewelry made by his wife and cheap products both from Syria and from Ulus region.
19. **Murad:** He is 29 years old and married. He has 3 children. His wife and children live in Gaziantep. They settled in Gaziantep in 2013. In 2015, they moved to Önder neighborhood to find a job. He was a shopkeeper in Aleppo. He works as a peddler in Ankara. He wants their family move to Ankara.
20. **Hasan:** He is 38 years old and married. He has four children. In 2013, he had migrated from Aleppo to Ankara. He has been working as shopkeeper in Aleppo. He is a worker in furniture production in Sitaler.

21. **Hamid:** He is 32 years old and married. He has three children. He had moved from Aleppo to Ankara in 2013. He is worker in textile. One of the important factor in his arrival in Ankara was his brother-in-law, who had already settled in Ankara.

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Ankara'da bulunan Önder mahallesi ve çevresindeki Suriyeli mültecilerin yerinden edilme ve mültecilik deneyimini anlamak için, Suriyeli mültecilerin yaşadıkları yapısal şiddetin zeminini oluşturan neoliberal ekonomik politikaların ve geçici koruma statüsünün, Suriyeli mültecilerin gündelik hayat pratiklerini nasıl etkilediğini analiz etmeyi hedeflemektedir. Mültecilere dair yapılan çalışmaların sayısı her geçen gün artsa da bu çalışmaların bir çoğunda mülteciler edilgen aktörler olarak konumlandırılmaktadır, bu tez 'edilgen mülteci' yaklaşımının umutsuzluk, kadercilik, bağımlılık gibi karşılıkları olduğu noktasından hareket ederek Suriyeli mültecileri yalnızca geçici koruma rejimi ve neoliberal politikaların pasif nesnelere olarak ele almamış, aynı zamanda toplumun aktif özneleri de oldukları yaklaşımından hareket etmiştir. Bu bağlamda da tez boyunca ilk önce Suriyeli mültecilerin yaşadıkları yapısal şiddetin boyutları ele alınmış, ardından bu şiddetin temelini oluşturan devlet kontrolünden, yabancı düşmanlığından ve geçici yasal statünün etkisinden kaçmak için nasıl kendi taktiklerini ürettikleri analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Tez boyunca incelenen gündelik direniş pratikleri planlı kollektif eylemlilikler değildir, daha çok Suriyeli mültecilerin yaşadıkları yapısal şiddete karşı geliştirdikleri hayatta kalma mücadelesini ya da yaşadıkları hayatın mevcut konumunu iyileştirmeye yönelik taktikleri içermektedir. Bu tez bu taktiklerin bilinçli bir şekilde toplumsal bir değişimi hedeflediklerini ileri sürmemektedir ancak Suriyeli mültecilerin taktikleri var olan güç ilişkileri dengesinin mülteciler tarafından tamamen kabullenilmediğinin de bir göstergesidir. Bu nedenle, Suriyeli mültecilerin gündelik hayat direniş pratiklerinin, mevcut güç ilişkilerini etkileme olasılığının incelenmesinin önemli olduğu iddia edilmektedir.

Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliğinden (BMMYK Kamu Basını, 2019) alınan verilere göre, 2011 yılının Mart ayından bu yana Suriye'deki şiddetin, çeyrek milyon insanın ölümüne, 6,6 milyon insanın ülke içinde yerinden edilmesine ve 5 milyondan fazla insanın da sınırdan Mısır, Irak, Ürdün, Lübnan ve Türkiye'ye zorunlu göç etmesine yol açtığı görülmektedir.(Cenevre BMMYK, 2019). 7 milyondan fazla insan, zulümden korktukları için evlerinden uzakta güvenlik

arayışında bir mücadele yürütüyorlar. Bu dönemde, Avrupa Ülkeleri mülteci sorumluluğunu dışsallaştıran bir pozisyon almış Türkiye ise Avrupa ve Ortadoğu arasında göç özelinde bir tampon bölge olarak konumlandırılmıştır. Türkiye İçişleri Bakanlığı Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü'nden (DGMM) alınan verilere göre, 2019 itibariyle, Türkiye'de geçici koruma statüsüne sahip 3.614.108 Suriyeli mülteci bulunmaktadır ve bunların sadece %8'i resmi mülteci kamplarında yaşamaktadır.

Mülteci sayısındaki büyük artışla birlikte, Türkiye'nin kent yoksulluğunun da yeni bir seviyeye ulaştığı ve Türkiye devletinin göç ve iltica rejiminin, bu yalnızca politik değil, aynı zamanda sosyal yeni gerçekliği yönetmek için mücadele ettiği görülmektedir. Bu noktada göz ardı edilmemesi gereken önemli noktalardan biri Türkiye'nin 'açık kapı' politikasını uluslararası bir hak bağlamında değil de 'Türk misafirperverliği' ve 'Müslüman kardeşliği' gibi kendine özgü geleneklere dayandırarak sürdürmüş olmasıdır (Erdemir, 2016). Bu yaklaşım, Türkiye'nin iltica politikasını geçiciliğe dayandırıyor olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Türkiye, 1951 tarihli Birleşmiş Milletler Mültecilerin Statüsüne İlişkin Cenevre Sözleşmesi'ne taraftır. Ancak bu sözleşmeye hukuki çekince ile taraf olduğu için hukuken sözleşmenin getirdiği yükümlülükleri sadece Avrupa ülkelerinden gelen sığınmacılara uygulamakla sorumludur. Avrupa dışından gelen iltica hareketlerini sözleşmeye bağlı kalmadan "geçicilik" esası üzerinden yönetmekte, Avrupa dışından gelen sığınmacılara mülteci statüsü vermeden, geçici olarak Türkiye'de ikamet etmelerini sağlayan şartlı mülteci statüsünü sağlamaktadır.

Sığınmacıların yaşadığı bir diğer zorluk ise Türkiye'de yürürlükte olan iltica prosedürünün birden fazla yasal sisteme tabi olması ve iki farklı hukuki zeminde yürütülmesidir. Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği, Avrupalı olmayan sığınmacılara, onları ülkelerine kabul etmeye istekli üçüncü bir ülkeye yeniden yerleşim hakkını sağlayacak şekilde, mülteci statüsü verme yetkisine sahiptir (Kirişçi 1991, İçduygu & Yüksek 2010). Fakat, BMMYK tarafından mülteci statüsü verildikten sonra bile, üçüncü bir ülkeye yasal yollarla yerleşebilmelerinin tek yolu Türk Cumhuriyeti tarafından çıkış izni verilmiş olmasıdır. Bir başka deyişle Türkiye'de geçici olarak konumlandırılan sığınmacıların bu durumu sonlandırabilmelerinin yolu BMMYK'nin başvurusu bir 'mülteci' olarak ve DGMM'nin de 'şartlı mülteci' olarak tanınmasıdır. (Sarı & Dinçer, 2017). 2014'te

uygulamaya giren Yabancılar Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu (YUKK) olarak adlandırılan yeni yasa ile iltica alanındaki mevzuatsızlık kısmen çözüme kavuşturulmuş olsa da sığınmacıların geçiciliğinde herhangi bir değişiklik olmamıştır. Daha önce hukuk sistemine dahil edilmemiş olan mülteciler bu yasaya göre yasal sisteme dahil edildiler fakat Türkiye’de kalamayacakları çekincesi ortadan kaldırılmamıştır. Ayrıca, ikili başvuru süreci iptal edilmemiş ve Avrupalı olmayan mültecilere sığınma hakkı uzatılmamıştır, ancak sağlık, eğitim, istihdam vb. temel hizmetlere erişim hakkı veren bir koruma sağlanmıştır.

Hali hazırda, Türkiye'nin iltica koruma sistemine göre üç adet yerinden olmuş kişi kategorisi bulunmaktadır. Birinci grup, Türkiye'nin tam sorumluluğunu üstlendiği mülteciler (Avrupa Konseyi üyesi olan ülkelerden gelenler), ikinci grup, koşullu mülteciler (üçüncü bir ülkeye yerleştirilene kadar Türkiye’de geçici olarak kalanlar) ve son grup da geçici koruma alan sığınmacılardır. Şu anda Türkiye’de yaşayan yaklaşık 3 milyon Suriyeli mülteci bu son kategoriye girmektedir. Geçici koruma niteliği itibariyle bir uluslararası koruma türü olmayıp, kitleler halinde sınıra gelen kişilere acil koruma sağlamak ve bu kişileri bir an evvel güvenli bir ortama yerleştirmek amacıyla geliştirilmiş, bu kişilerin ancak uluslararası koruma ile sağlanabilecek olan ihtiyaçlarını, bireysel olarak değil fakat grup olarak ele alan bir koruma türüdür. Geçici koruma niteliği itibariyle bir uluslararası koruma türü olmadığı ve kısa süreli bir çözüm olduğu için Türkiye’de uygulandığı gibi ne zaman sonlanacağı belli olmadığına sığınmacıların hayatlarını daraltan baskıcı bir strateji haline gelebilmektedir. Bu nedenle, Türkiye bağlamında, Suriyeli mültecilerin temel haklarında hala belirsizlik olması şaşırtıcı bir durum değildir çünkü geçici koruma statüsü, güvenli bir ortam arayan ve Suriye’den gelen mültecilere güvenli ve uzun vadeli bir çözüm vaat etme konusunda yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, Türkiye hükümeti 2014 yılında yabancılar, mülteciler ve uluslararası korumaya ihtiyaç duyan bireyler için süreçleri belirleyen Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Yasasını (LFIP) kabul etmişken, Suriyeli mülteciler hala belirsizlik içerisinde, eşikte durarak yaşamlarını sürdürmektedirler ve bu eşiklik hali mültecilerin deneyimlediği yapısal şiddetin dozunu arttırarak mültecileri sessiz ve temsilsiz bir hayata sıkıştırılmaktadır. Fakat yukarıda da değinildiği gibi Suriyeli mültecilerin bu eşiklik ve sıkıştırılmışlık hali iktidar mekanizmalarına topyekun bir itaat ile sonuçlanmamıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamında Suriyeli mültecilerin bu deneyimi, “başkaldırmayan ama aynı zamanda

da yaşadıkları yapısal şiddete topyekun boyun eğmeyen, hem iktidarın kodlarına uyan ama bunu yaparken de bu kodları eğip büken bir hal, bir eşiklik hali” olarak ele alınmaktadır.

İtaat etme ve isyan etme arasında konumlanan bu direniş pratikleri mevcut iktidar ilişkilerini dönüştürmeyi hedeflemiyor olmakla birlikte, iktidar ilişkilerinin dayattığı tahakküm biçimine tamamen boyun eğilmediğini de gözler önüne sermektedir. Dolayısıyla yöneticilerin ideolojik tahakkümünün dışına çıkan gündelik pratiklere bakarak Türkiye’deki Suriyeli mültecileri deneyimine dair bazı ip uçları yakalanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Yönetenler ve tabi olanlar arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanan yazarlardan biri olan J. Scott, tahakküm ilişkilerinin “kamusal söylem” olarak tanımlanan bir sahne gösterisinde ifade bulduğunu söyler. Bu analize göre hem hakim hem de tabi grup kamusal alanda birbirlerine karşı bir oyunun gereklerini yerine getirirler. Bu görünürlüğün dışında kendi kesimleri dahilindeki “güvenli alanlarda” ise başka türlü davranış ve düşünüş biçimleri sergilerler. Scott argümanını tanımlamak için ise iki kavram kullanmaktadır: Kamusal senaryo ve gizli senaryo. Scott’a göre hakim kesim için kamusal senaryo, emir, hüküm, ceza gibi yollarla üstünlüklerini görünür halde ispat edip sürdürmeye dayanan sembolik hareketlerdir. Gündelik hayatta iktidarın etkisi de en çok hürmet, tabiyet ve yağcılık hareketlerinde gözlemlenebilir.(Scott,1990, p. 56) Hürmet etmek, baş eğmek, saygıda kusur etmemek, yerini bilip hoş görünmeye çalışmak gibi yükümlülükleriyle ifade edilen tabi grupların kamusal senaryosu, bir nevi üstünlüğü kabul ettiklerinin ifadesidir. Öte yandan kamusal söylem içerisinde belirlenen rollerin tabi gruplar açısından getirdiği zorunlu ve kalıp davranışlar bütünüünün gerisinde de tabi kesimler kendi gizli senaryolarını devreye sokmaktadırlar.(Scott,1990, p. 41) Gizli senaryoyu yaratan şey tahakkümdür. Tahakküm ağırlaştıkça buna tekabül eden gizli senaryo da zenginleşir.( Scott, 1990, p. 55)

Gizli senaryoyu geliştirip besleyen şey, genel kanının aksine yalnızca ekonomik eşitsizlik temelinde bir mülkiyet vurgusu değildir. Elbette ki tahakküm ilişkisi esas olarak her iki taraf açısından da bu bağlamda şekillenir fakat hizmet etmek, hürmet göstermek, cezalandırılmak, küçümsenmek kişisel gururun, onurun saldırıya uğraması kişisel bir tepkinin doğmasına neden olmaktadır.( Scott, 1990, p. 161) Bu sebepledir

ki gizli senaryo daha çok şahsi aşağılama ve hakaretler üzerinden yükselen, hegemonik olmayan, karşıt, muhalif, yıkıcı söylemin ayrıcalıklı mekanıdır. ( Scott, 1995, p. 52)

Scott, yoksul Malaya köylüleri arasında yaptığı çalışmada, köylülerin açıktan isyan etmek veya kamusal protestolarda bulunmak yerine, söylenti, dedikodu, maskeler, dilsel hileler, metaforlar, örtmeceler veya halk masalları aracılığıyla kılık değiştirerek tabi kesimlerin sesinin kamusal senaryoya sızdığını belirtir. Bunun yanı sıra belirleyici olan bir diğer gizli senaryo pratikleri olarak da anonim saldırıları, yasak avlanmayı vs. örnek olarak vermektedir. Bu karşı manipülasyon örneklerinde yöneticilerin hegemonyasının, yoksulların kendi öz çalışma ve yaşam biçimlerini savunmalarını engelleyemediğini ve yoksulların kendi öz tatminlerini ve kendi ritüellerini oluşturmaya devam ettiklerinin ip uçlarını görmek mümkündür. Ancak burada dikkat edilmesi gereken nokta bu karşı manipülasyon pratiklerinin özsel, bölünmemiş madun bilince sahip öznenin pratikleri olmadığıdır. ( Erdoğan, 2000, p. 14) Scott, gizli senaryo ve kamusal senaryo kavramlarıyla, yönetenler ve madunlar arasındaki ilişkide öznenin bölünmemiş, bilinçli bir bilince sahip olduğunu varsaymaktadır. Bu bakış açısı gündelik direniş pratiklerini “görünür itaat ve gizli itaatsizlik” ikiliğine sıkıştırmaktadır. Oysa kültürel hegemonya mümkün olanın sınırlarını tanımlarken ve alternatif ufukların ve beklentilerin gelişmesini sınırlandırırken, bu süreçte otomatik ya da belirlenmiş olan hiçbir şey yoktur. ( Thompson, 2006, p. 110) Yöneticilerin hegemonyasını sürdürebilmesi için sürekli yeni tavizler vermesi veya yeni baskı yöntemleri geliştirmesi gerekir. Böyle bir hegemonya, başarılı olarak kabul edildiğinde bile, her alanı kucaklayan bir hayat görüşü empoze etmez.( Thompson, 2006:109-110) Aynı şekilde Scott’un gizli senaryo olarak tanımladığı gündelik direniş pratikleri de bütüncül, bilinçli bir karşı koyma pratiği değildir. Madunların böylesi bütünlüklü ve çelişki taşımayan bilincinden bahsetmek mümkün değildir. Tabi olanların pratiklerini bilinçli ama güvenlik gerekçesiyle gizlenmiş pratikler olarak değil, bir “eşiklik, arada kalmışlık” hali olarak düşünmek daha doğru olacaktır. Bu arada olma durumu ve eşiklik, “Gramsci’nin bahsettiği dağınık, çelişkili ve sistematik olmayan madun bilincinden, Spivak’ın deyişiyle de negatif bir bilinç olmasından kaynaklıdır.”( Erdoğan, 2000, p. 11) Scott’un gizli senaryo, kamusal senaryo kavramsallaştırmasının madun özneyi iktidardan ve hegemonik pratiklerden bağımsızmış gibi ele alıyor oluşu bu yüzden sorunludur.

Eşikte kalan madun öznenin parçalı, dağınık bir bilinçle gerçekleştirdiği gündelik direniş halinin analizi De Certeau'nun metis kavramı ile daha kapsamlı ve tutarlı şekilde yapılabilmektedir. De Certeau'ya göre metis kavramı bir "arada olma", "arada yaşama" sanatıdır, asgari güçten azami sayıda etki sağlama" ekonomisine dayanır, taktik yaratıcılık, kurnazlık, hile, düzenbazlık, gizlenme, kılık değiştirme, numara yapma, simülasyon, dissimülasyon, savuşturma, kaytarma, tetiktelik, kinizm biçimlerini anlatır. ( De Certau'dan, 1984, aktaran Erdoğan, 2008, p. 9) Bu bağlamda tez içerisinde Suriyeli mültecilerin gündelik hayat deneyimleri ve taktikleri De Certeau'nun idare etme sanatı aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir.

Saha çalışmasının yapıldığı Önder Mahallesi Ankara'daki Suriyeli mülteci nüfusunun en yoğun olduğu Altındağ ilçesine bağlıdır. Bu bölgedeki yoğunluğun temel nedenini mülteciler var olan iş imkanları olan açıklamışlardır. Bölgede yer alan Siteler Organize Sanayi Bölgesi, kaybettiği rekabet gücünü kentin yeni sakinleri olan Suriyeli mültecileri ucuz iş gücü olarak istihdam ederek kapatmaya çalışmaktadır. Suriyeli mülteciler Önder mahallesini tercih etmelerindeki bir diğer neden ise ucuz konutlar olarak belirtmişlerdir. Planlanan kentsel dönüşüm projesi nedeniyle kısmen boşaltılmış, kısmen yıkılmış evler proje geçici olarak durdurulduğu için görece uygun fiyatlara Suriyelilere kiralanmıştır. Saha çalışmasının bulgularına göre mahalledeki kira fiyatları 150TL ile 400 TL arasında değişmektedir. Önder mahallesinin tercih edilmesinde önemli olan bir diğer neden ise bölgenin temel sosyal hizmetlere ve yardım kuruluşlarına olan yakınlığıdır. Suriyelilere yönelik çalışmalar yapan mahalledeki sivil toplum kuruluşları hem kıyafet, ilaç, kömür gibi yardımları mültecilere sağlamışlar hem de açtıkları meslek kurslarıyla mültecilerin sosyalleşebilecekleri mekanlar olarak işlev görmüşlerdir. Diğer yandan Suriyeli mülteciler ve onlarla aynı ekonomik sınıfı paylaşan yerel halk aralarındaki ayrışmayı derinleştirdikleri yapılan mülakatlarda sıkça dile getirilmiştir.

Önder Mahallesi'nde yapılan saha çalışması Türkiye iltica sisteminin geçiciliği mültecilere dayatarak mülteciler tarafında deneyimlenen yapısal şiddetin dozunu arttırdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Görüşmelerde en çok dile getirilen yapısal şiddet durumlarından biri iş yerinde maruz kaldıkları ayrımcı uygulamalardır. Türkiye devleti 2014 yılında yürürlüğe giren Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu'nun 91. Maddesi çerçevesinde tanımlanan geçici koruma maddesine dayanarak



Suriyelilere çalışma hakkı tanıyan Geçici Koruma Sağlanan Yabancıların Çalışma İzinlerine Dair Yönetmelik ile Suriyelilerin çalışma izni ve istihdam kotasını düzenlemiş olmasına rağmen çalışma izinli Suriyeli mülteci işçilerin oranı çok düşük seviyede kalmıştır. Ancak şunu belirtmek gerekir ki görüşülen Suriyelilerin büyük bir kısmı işsiz olmadığını ifade etmiştir. Bu durumun önemli nedenlerin biri yaşadıkları Önder Mahallesi'ne çok yakın olan Siteler Organize Sanayi Bölgesi'dir. Küçük ve orta ölçekli mobilya imalatçıların toplandığı Siteler bölgesinin sunduğu iş imkanları, Suriyeli mültecilerin de Önder'e gelme nedenlerinin başında yer almaktadır. Suriye'de esnaf veya çiftçi olduğunu belirten görüşmecilerin hepsi ev, araba, dükkan gibi ekonomik sermayelerini kaybettiklerini ve işçileştiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Önder mahallesi bu noktada işsizliğin yoğun olduğu bir gecekondü mahallesi olmaktan çok enformel piyasaya eklenmeye fırsat sağlayan bir yerleşim yeri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu bağlamda günümüzde kayıtdışı ekonominin en alt kademelerini dolduran Suriyeli mültecilerin iş hayatlarına dair önemli ip uçlarını sağlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma kapsamında görüşme yapılan tüm mülteci işçiler çalışma iznine sahip olmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Açıktır ki var olan iltica politikası bu güvencesizliğe zemin oluşturmaktadır. İşverenler Suriyeli mültecilerin düşük pazarlık gücünden yararlanarak yerli işçilerden daha düşük ücretlere ve sigortasız olarak mülteci işçileri çalıştırmaktadırlar. Her türlü sosyal korunmadan mahrum olarak çalıştırılan mültecilerin aldıkları ücret haftalık yaşlarına, deneyimlerine göre 200TL'den 500TL'ye kadar değişebilmektedir. Yerli işçilerden daha düşük ücretlere çalıştırılıyor oluşları aynı zamanda işyerinde yerli işçiler tarafında da suçlanmalarına yol açmıştır. İşverenlerin Suriyeli mültecileri yedek rezerv olarak yerli işçilere sunuyor oluşları Suriyeli mülteci işçilerin kendi sosyal sınıfındaki işçilerle bir dayanışma içerisinde olabilmesinin önüne geçmektedir.

Bu güvencesiz yaşamın önemli sonuçlarından birinin mültecilerin deneyimledikleri sıkışmışlık hissi olduğu görülmektedir. Bir çok görüşmeci savaşın getirdiği travmalar kadar göç ettikleri yerlerde kendilerini nasıl bir gelecek beklediğini tahayyül edememenin sıkıntısını çektiklerini, kendilerini sıkışmış hissettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Geleceğe dair sorulara verdikleri cevaplar genelde engellenme, endişe, üzüntü gibi duygu durumlarını içermektedir ama maruz kaldıkları yapısal şiddete dair direk bir öfke belirten ifadeler kullanmaktan özellikle imtina ettikleri de ayrıca

gözlemlenmiştir. Birçok mülteci yaşadıkları olumsuzlukları dillendirdikten sonra ‘gene de bu halimize şükür’ diyerek cümlesini tamamlamıştır. Örneğin Suriyeli mülteci çocukların okullarda yerel aileler tarafından istenilmediğini ifade eden bir görüşmeci, önce bu durumu anlamlandıramadığını ifade etmiş olsa da cümlesini “sonuçta biz burada misafiriz çok da yakınmamalıyız ama insan bazen üzüntüsünü saklayamıyor” diyerek tamamlamıştır ama daha sonra da misafir olduğunu kendine hatırlatarak duygularını saklamasının bir gereklilik olduğunu bildiğini ifade etmeyi uygun bulmuştur. Bu durum mültecilere yasal olarak dayatılan ‘geçicilik’ stratejisiyle direk bağlantılıdır. Mültecilere dayatılan yasal geçicilik konumu aynı zamanda yerel halkın da mültecileri haklar ekseninde değerlendirmesinin önünü kapatmış, giderek artan aşağılayıcı ve suçlayıcı bir ‘misafir Suriyeli’ söyleminin mültecilere yöneltilmesine neden olmuştur. Bu söylem gündelik hayatı, kendinden aşağı gördüğü, aykırı olandan temizlemek isteyen bir mikro faşizmi körüklemektedir. Yerel halkla yapılan görüşmelerde de bu söylemin izlerine rastlanmıştır. Görüşmelerde Suriyeli mülteciler hem yük ve tehdit olarak konumlandırılmıştır hem de kültürel yönden daha aşağı bir konumda tutularak hijyen ve toplumsal ahlak yönünden eleştiriye tabi tutulmuşlardır.

Çalışmanın son bölümde De Certeau’nun ve Bayat’ın kavramsallaştırmaları çerçevesinde, yukarıda bahsedilen yapısal şiddete maruz kalan sessiz, net bir lidere sahip olmayan, atomize olmuş Suriyeli mültecilerin hayatta kalmak ve daha iyi koşullara sahip olmak için nasıl bir sessiz direniş yürüttükleri kavranmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bu bağlamda Önder mahallesinde yapılan saha çalışmasının önemli bulgularından biri Suriyeli mültecilerin istedikleri durumlarda görünür istedikleri durumlarda görünmez olma, kendi çalışma alanlarını yaratma, kılık değiştirme, hakim söylemleri eğip bükme, yasadan kaçma ve savuşturma gibi gündelik direniş mekanizmaları geliştirmiş olmalarıdır. Suriyeli mültecilerin kollektif olarak deneyimledikleri geçicilik hali Önder mahallesinde atomize olarak yaşayan mülteciler arasında ‘pasif bir ağ’ın oluşmasına yol açmıştır. Bayat’ın tanımıyla bu ağ formel bir örgütlenme biçimi değildir. İnsanlar birbirini doğrudan ve kişisel olarak değil, sembollerle tanır. Bir nevi bireylerin sahip oldukları ortak tehditi fark etmeleriyle oluşturulmuş bu ağ, iktidar karşısında zayıf olan kesimlerin birbirini tanmasına ve bir tehdit anında bir araya

gelerek aktif eylem içine girebilmelerine imkân vermektedir. Açıktır ki bütün göçlerde; mülteciler hedef ülkedeki yaşama eklemlenmek için akraba, komşu ya da arkadaşlarıyla kurdukları ilişki ağlarını kullanmaktadır ama genellikle bu ağlar zaten varolan tanıdıklar üzerinden şekillenirken Önder’de bu ağlar benzer sorunları paylaşan mülteciler arasında gittikçe derinleşmektedir. Önder’in sokaklarında; kömür kuyruğunda, pazarda, hastanede tanışarak birbirlerine destek çıkan çok fazla mülteci deneyimi araştırma boyunca karşımıza çıkmıştır. Önder’de yaşayan Suriyeli mülteciler WhatsApp üzerinden haberleşerek bir diğer mültecinin iş bulmasına vesile olmakta bazen uygun kirali ev bulunmasını sağlamakta, bazen de kömür yardımı için birbirine referans olmaktadır. Örneğin, görüşmelerde konut piyasasında yeni ortaya çıkmış bir aracı aktörden bahsedilmiştir. Aracılar ev sahipleri ve mülteciler arasında köprü görevi görerek, mültecilerin ev bulmalarına yardım etmektedirler. İlk başlarda gerçekten de mültecilerin yardımına olan bu durum zamanla bir sömürü ilişkisine dönüşerek, mültecilerin bu aracılara para vermeden ev bulmakta zorlandıkları bir durumun oluşmasına neden olmuştur. Bu sömürü ilişkisini ekarte etmek isteyen Suriyeli mülteciler WhatsApp üzerinden birbirlerine boşalacak evleri haber verdikleri bir sosyal ağ kurmuşlardır. Bu ağ üzerinden haberleşen Suriyeli kiracılar ev sahiplerine haber vermeden evlerini değiştirebilmektedir. Böylece aracılardan ve ev sahiplerinin arkasından dolanarak barınma sorunlarına bir çözüm üretmişlerdir.

Benzer yapısal şiddeti gündelik hayatlarında deneyimleyen Suriyeli mülteciler, Önder’de oluşturdukları bu pasif ağ ile hakim güçlerin alanını kendi yararlarına kullabilecekleri çeşitli fırsatlar yaratabilmektedirler. Örneğin, mülteciler daralan iş olanaklarına karşı kendi iş olanaklarını yaratmışlardır. Yasadan çok yasanın yokluğu üzerinden yönetilen Suriyeli mülteciler, bu gözardı edilme halini eğip bükerek kendilerine vergisiz çalışma alanları oluşturmuşlardır. Mahallenin ana caddesi olan Selçuk Caddesi dönerciden, kasap dükkanına, bakkala birçok Suriyeli esnafı barındırmaktadır. Yasal boşluklardan faydalanan Suriyeli esnaf hem Suriye’den ucuz ürünler getirip satabilmek de hem de bu ürünleri sokağa taşan stantlarda sergileyerek Önder sokaklarını ekonomik hareketliliğin yoğun olduğu bir mekana çevirmektedir.

Kira verecek durumu olmayanlar ise işportacılık yaparak bu renkli iş piyasasına dahil olabilmektedirler. Suriyeli mültecilerin özellikle dükkân kirası vermemek için işportacılığı tercih ederek aracılardan vasıtasıyla Suriye’den getirdikleri sigara, kaçak çay,

tespih, çakmak gibi ürünleri satmalarını kapitalist stratejinin hakim olduğu kent uzamında çatlaklara sızarak madun gruplar için çalışma alanları oluşturmak olarak değerlendirmek mümkündür. Zira Önder’de yaratılan bu yeni tüketim alanları şehrin hakim alışveriş merkezlerine alternatif oluşturarak yerel halkında ilgisini çekmiştir.

Suriyeli sığınmacıların “egemenin mekânında” geliştirdikleri taktiklerden bir diğeri ise görünmez olmaktır. Mesela Suriyeli kadınlar Türkiyeli kadınlar gibi pardesü giyerek Suriye’de giydikleri hijabı kullanmayı bırakmışlardır. Kendilerine yönelik sözlü ve fiziksel tacizden kaçınmak amacıyla bu şekilde giyindiklerini ifade etmektedirler. Aynı şekilde mahalledeki Suriyeli erkekler de kamusal alanda Suriye’de giydikleri jellabiye adı verilen kıyafeti giymeti bıraktıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Daha az fark edilerek, kendilerine yöneltilen sözlü ve fiziksel şiddetten kaçınmak için uyguladıkları bir diğer dikkat çeken taktik ise Suriyeli dükkanların kendi kapılarına astıkları Türkiye bayraklarıdır. Bu bayrakların varlığı Suriyeli esnafı olası linç girişimlerinden korumaktadır.

Kısacası Suriyeli mültecilerin gündelik hayat deneyimleri kendilerine dayatılan yapısal şiddet unsurlarından dolayı oldukça zor geçmektedir. Ama bu zorluk mültecilerin kendi oyunlarını da bu mekanlara beraberinde getirdiği gerçeğini de değiştirmemektedir. Onların göç sonucu yerleştikleri bir mekânda “öteki” olarak yaftalanmaları, yoksullukla baş etmeleri ve sosyal dışlanmaya maruz kalmaları kendilerine ait bir mekan yaratabilme potansiyellerini kısıtlasa da kesinlikle yok edememiştir.

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