***Fragments of Everyday Life in a Pandemic: Autoethnographic Reflections of Young Women from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey***

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*This article consists of autoethnographic texts written by six young women from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey who studied at the department of Sociology, at Harran University and has been edited and supervised by Dr. F. Güzin Ağca-Varoğlu. The contributions reflect on the lived spaces of these women after March 16, 2020. The students became involved in their communities as social scientists and, at the same time, experienced the liminal status of being members of their family homes during the pandemic. This ambiguous position tactically strengthened them in their everyday lives and enabled them to analyse their layered, intertwined, and multidimensional social environment. In this article, these young women expressed experiences of the deep-rooted power relations, spatial interactions, and traditions which their identities switched between the self and society as "boundary crossers".*

*Keywords: autoethnography, critical reflexivity, everyday life, power relations, voice*

***Pandemide Gündelik Hayat Fragmanları: Doğu ve Güneydoğu'dan Genç Kadınların Otoetnografik Dışavurumları***
*Bu makale, Harran Üniversitesi'nde Sosyoloji Bölümü'nde okumuş, Türkiye'nin Doğu ve Güneydoğu bölgelerinden altı genç kadın tarafından yazılan, Dr. F. Güzin Ağca-Varoğlu'nun editörlüğünü ve danışmanlığını yaptığı otoetnografik metinlerden oluşmaktadır. Katkılar, 16 Mart 2020'den sonra yaşanan mekânlarından yansıttıklarıdır. Öğrenciler, toplumlarına sosyal bilimciler olarak katılmış ve aynı zamanda pandemide aile evinin birer üyesi olmalarının getirdiği liminal konumunu deneyimlemişlerdir. Bu muğlak konum, onları günlük yaşamlarında taktiksel olarak güçlendirmiş ve katmanlı, iç içe ve çok boyutlu sosyal çevrelerini analiz etmelerini sağlamıştır. Makalede, bu genç kadınlar, köklü iktidar ilişkileri, mekânsal etkileşimleri, benlik ve toplum arasında birer "sınır aşıcılar" olarak geçiş yaptıkları gelenekleri ve deneyimleri dile getirerek 'ses' verdiler.*

*Anahtar Kelimeler: otoetnografî, eleştirel düşünümsellik, gündelik hayat, güç ilişkileri, ses*

**Introduction (F. Güzin Ağca-Varoğlu)**

The intense and challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the subject of many studies from different perspectives. It has affected all of society. Nonetheless, the experiences of individuals differ a lot, partly depending on the setting. Being away from campus life during the pandemic led to drastic transformations, notably in my female students' everyday lives. They returned to their hometowns. They left behind their dormitories, friends, and opportunities for self-realisation afforded by campus life. The campus is

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where differences of gender, class, and ethnicity fade away in the face of being students. It allows them to be together with all of their differences and to develop themselves in many ways. It also allows the acquisition of knowledge outside of the domestic sphere. This context empowers students to escape from traditional gender roles in everyday life at their family home.

At the beginning of the pandemic, on March 16, when the university announced its suspension of in-person education for three weeks, I had to revise the ethnographic research assignment for my undergraduate students in the Sociology of Space and Anthropology classes, due to the risk of being infected with the virus.[1] The initial assignment was to write an ethnographic article on places in Şanlıurfa, a vibrant city with a diverse ethnic structure. As a result, I decided that they should write an autoethnographic text, in which they discussed the effects of Covid-19 on their everyday life interactions and spatial practices. When I handed the assignments over, I recognised that radical transformations occurred in everyday life experiences, particularly in my female students' lives.

Most of my students were raised in a region where traditional family relations, social networks, patriarchal values, and gender inequality are deeply rooted. Regional factors significantly influence and reinforce patriarchal values; this can be observed more strongly in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey than in the West (Özdemir-Sarıgil& Sarıgil, 2021). The studies focusing on gender-based perceptions and experiences in cities such as Batman, Mardin, Şanlıurfa also show the disadvantaged status of women, the privileged position of men and the difficulties of girls in accessing equal educational opportunities (Kara&Gürhan, 2013; Şenol& Çalar, 2018; Yıldız, 2019). The negative effect from the problematic conception of 'honour', which functions as a control mechanism on the female body in the public sphere and as a tool for legitimation of 'masculine domination' (Bourdieu as cited in Sancar, 2020), is one of the most mentioned dimensions of patriarchal rule in the region. This article shows the embedded power relations in various aspects of their everyday lives, and it underlines the significance of critical reflexivity in these circumstances.

For some of the online lectures, the students connected to the session through their phones from agricultural fields during the pistachio harvest or with a sibling in their arms. They were pushing the limits to continue their distance education despite the difficulties caused by unstable internet connections. Their daily responsibilities included livestock breeding, farming in the village, welcoming guests, taking care of the siblings or the elderly, knitting, baking bread, making pepper paste, and more. These were just some of the burdens and manifestations of the invisible labour of women. However, their domestic practices nourished and strengthened them when they returned to their off-campus lives. These traditional responsibilities also had a feature that gave skills to these young women and empowered their position in intergroup relations with their family members, neighbours, and other actors in their everyday lives. They questioned these patterns academically and recognised their 'liminoid' (Turner, 1974) position in this process, during which they experienced their home lives in the pandemic as a rite of passage. This liminoid position results in a tactical in-betweenness while empowering their opportunities for self-realisation. By going back to their family homes, these young women gained new skills regarding interpersonal relations. They were strategically maintaining their in-between positions with their ambiguous place within the gender roles defined by the traditionally drawn boundaries of everyday life and the emphasis on transience. They would return to campus once the pandemic was over. This position offered them a transitional, dynamic, and hybrid experience area. Accordingly, both the home and the village became an alternative education space. They took on a feature wherein reality came up for discussion and displayed latent partnerships. In this way I noticed my students' agency, which was transformative in a lifeworld where a micro-resistance mechanism was built among these enormous responsibilities.

In a region where the woman is located at the center of domestic space, the expectation is to show excellent performance. In the narratives, the primary respondents at home are the mothers, who play an essential role in transmitting and reproducing traditional gender roles in a paternalistic family structure. They aim to transfer the traditional teachings from their mothers to their daughters and, use the opportunity of their daughter's presence at home. I consider this situation as a "patriarchal bargain" conceptualised by Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) to explain the struggles and strategies of women in order to eliminate their oppressed status under traditional- gender norm-based patriarchy. I also noticed mothers' pleasure with their daughters' presence at home because they regarded them as supporters in meeting patriarchal expectations. Although this situation was mainly the reason for the conflicts with the new generation, it was also the basis for women's solidarity—the consensus between these two generations achieved at the end of negotiations. Consequently, micro-resistance of young women occurred in the domestic space.

According to Michel De Certeau (1984), tactics are the art of the weak. The weak have an ambiguous spatial position and are in a place where the strategy comes into action and is questioned simultaneously. Leyla Bektaş-Ata (2020) also suggests that the first-generation women in her research field operate the transmission of tradition as a control mechanism. Therefore, younger generations develop several tactics to cope with gender-based pressure in the neighbourhood and family. These practices, rooted in traditional power relations that impaired but did not radically change the plane of expectations, were also the dominant tools of the ambiguity that was reproduced in everyday life at home. However, after the reflexive autoethnographic narratives of my students, I recognised that their agency would make the mutual transformation through their social interactions in their everyday lives possible. This awareness resulted in the idea of writing a collaborative autoethnographic article with some of my students.

The study includes six young sociology students from different cities and villages in Turkey. The study consists of three main frameworks based on power relations: Encountering and coping with gender roles, spatial struggles, and the transformation of traditional and religious rituals. Melek (Batman), Zeynep (Gaziantep), and Berrin (Diyarbakır) discuss the pandemic's effects on domestic life and how space turned into an education centre within their critical perspective on gender roles within the family. The tactics and collaborations they developed in their struggles formed their texts. In their articles on spatial experiences, Nazime and Gülbahar share their observations in Şanlıurfa. Nazime evaluates the rhythm of children's everyday lives through her window (Lefebvre, 2004) in Şanlıurfa's Eyübiyye district, known for its ethnic diversity and poverty. She explains the challenges of children who were the street's leading actors and their struggle not to lose their playgrounds. Gülbahar questions how the roles of masculinity and femininity are encountered in domestic space. Sümeyya (Mardin) recounts her Syriac neighbours' transformation in participating in religious rituals, by linking it with her autobiography from their household, which also makes the only Muslim family in a border Syriac village.

## Speaking for Oneself: Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a qualitative method in which researchers produce knowledge by putting themselves into the centre of the study. It is the association of ethnography (society) and autobiography (self) where the boundaries between the personal and the cultural are blurred (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 1997). The primary purpose of this study is to link internal and external views, in other words, the public and private, through autoethnography (Tedlock, 2005). The autoethnographer is a "boundary-crosser" between the self and the society (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Given that my young female students' "critical reflexivity" (Warren, 2011) also revealed their everyday lives, power relations, and spatial experiences, they were directly involved in the process that transformed with the pandemic. At this point, autoethnography allowed them to observe their cultural performances as a "critical praxis" (Alexander, 1999). Accordingly, as autoethnographers, my students had the opportunity to analyse their everyday lives at home.

Critical reflexivity serves the interrelatedness of self and others (Door, 2014). The young women evaluated the cultural location and praxis to analyse their lived experiences in the lifeworld. The reflexive narratives enable us to determine how dominant discourses influence our lives and positionings within the culture. In this regard, these young women could be "experts in their own lives", and their lived experiences and values could become more eventual for analysing the dominant discourse critically (Norton& Sliep, 2018). These young women are also responding to an essential critique that autoethnographers "focus on people on the wrong side" (Delamont, 2009). Thus, they do not represent the voice of the disadvantaged subalterns. The reason is that autoethnographers, who are generally white-collar researchers, have a descriptive vocabulary, have easy access to resources to express themselves, and are also financially supported. According to criticism, autoethnographers are included in a particular social milieu with their socio-cultural and economic capital (Ploder & Stadlbauer, 2013). Yet, it would not be accurate for my female students to claim they had this privileged status. On the contrary, they lost their advantages due to interruptions in campus lives. The boundary-crossing methodologically assumed a self-society unity, and this feature allows this group to question power relations and gendered time-space in their everyday lives. Thus, we developed a common perspective on the "voice" issue, which is one of the critical debates in anthropological literature. Rather than writing on my students, I saw their writing on themselves as a part of anthropology education and a critical-reflexive opportunity to overcome my privileged position as a researcher. In the dominant academic perspective, where women in the region are often regarded as passive and obedient, my students transform everyday life as agents,

observing, analysing, and designing their everyday spatiality as a space of being and positioning in power relations. This situation fostered the idea of using collaborative autoethnography (Chang, 2013) that undermined "speaking instead." In this context, we have written this collaborative text as a multivocal work in which everyone could reflect on what they saw from their window.

**We Are Mutating, Not the Viruses! (Melek Bingöl)**
"Hello Melek, the flights have been cancelled." With this message, I learned that my Erasmus dreams were ruined. It was vital to me to continue my education in a different country. When I moved from Batman to Şanlıurfa to study at Harran University, I would have never thought that I could get so close to my dream of "being abroad." I was very shocked when I missed this opportunity. However, I soon faced another struggle, and I had to leave my dorm room on campus and turn back to Batman, to my family's house.

I am the only girl in the house with two brothers. In our region, patriarchal gender roles are acute. After returning home, I found myself in a complicated role division. The measures taken during the pandemic changed our everyday life. With the spread of the coronavirus, many "guest practices" entered our lives (Ağca-Varoğlu, 2021). We started to develop habits such as wearing masks and washing packaged foods, and we tried to adapt them to the rhythm of everyday life (Figure 1). My brothers' and my father's expectations, who stayed at home during the pandemic, meant that my mother's and my workload increased. The person who sets the table also clears it, and it has always been me who sets the table in our house! My brothers played video games while I was cooking or baking bread in the kitchen. While I could spend less time on my online courses and academic development due to my domestic burdens, their entire time belonged only to them. During the day, our request to get help from my father and brothers was mainly refused because they were convinced it was not their responsibility to do these jobs.



**Figure 1. Family masks.**

My mother, a housewife, was previously used to staying at home, but the main problem was that the men were now at home. In this period, I had the opportunity to spend more time with my mother. We knitted together in our spare time, and the emotional bond became stronger than before. I was in campus life only months ago, and now in my family's house, in a space where my freedom was limited. When I returned home, I was no longer the previous Melek. As Schütz (1972) puts it, a person who returns home will no longer be the

same as before. Although this period with my mother brought me some tiring responsibilities, it also enabled me to express what I have gained through university education far from her. The bond of solidarity between us was shaped by our womanhood and gendered expectations at home space. We were the invisible heroes of this process.

**The Daughter of The House (Zeynep Karakurt)**

I am the oldest of my siblings and the only girl in the house. In our society, domestic work is considered the responsibility of women. If you are the family's only daughter, you have to take as much responsibility as the mother. After the government announced regulations regarding self-quarantine, our lives underwent many changes. Previously, my mother and brothers used to do the shopping. However, the age restrictions during the lockdown meant that I had to assume this responsibility.

Thanks to my presence at home, my mother declared the pandemic a holiday herself. She often said she wanted to have some rest. After a few years on campus, where I only took responsibility for myself, my re-inclusion in the family life caused me to experience sudden emotional outbursts. I was bothered by the fact that the perception regarding my brothers was like, "they cannot do it, they do not understand," while l was doing all domestic work. It made me unhappy that my freedom to do whatever I wanted was replaced by activities such as cooking, cleaning, and washing dishes in our family house in Gaziantep. We mostly were in domestic solidarity with my mother. However, my feelings about being at home disrupted the harmony and sometimes caused conflicts and disagreements. This conflict did not last long. Because at such moments, my mother was ignoring the issue with her statements such as "You are the daughter of the house, let me take a vacation, let me feel that you are at home, and think of me, you are here just for a period, but am I?"

During the pandemic, the kitchen was the centre of my everyday life as a gendered space. It also turned into a training venue. I attended distance education courses and online programs there. In addition to these, the kitchen was where my mother taught me the tricks of cooking and cleaning. It was a space of testing where I tried to prove myself to my mother. In the WhatsApp group of our extended family, the women shared their recipes almost every day. This often triggered my mother to say, "Look how beautiful this is. I wished you were able to cook so, too". This led me to wander on YouTube food channels after each group talk. I worked so diligently in the kitchen that I felt like a cooking show host.

Serving the desserts, and asking my mother's score, was acceptance of my mother's authority in the kitchen. In the quarantine days, my dexterity improved, and my self-confidence increased. I started to experience more and more things in the kitchen. Furthermore, my newly gained skills empowered me to overcome the tension of the pandemic.

**Everybody Else's Daughters (Berrin Çoban)**

Attending online classes seemed absurd to me at first. I complained, thinking that I would not be efficient because I am a member of a large family of five siblings and living in a small place. During the pandemic, I met the digital world, which offered me improvement opportunities such as seminars, workshops, and summer schools. Knowledge is no longer collected in big centres like Istanbul and Ankara. However, I had to develop some tactics behind the scenes to be active in this new world. My digital activities restricted my sisters' and brothers' spatial practices at home. This situation caused a conflict from time to time between us. I found a solution to this problem by adopting a more accommodating, more empathetic attitude toward them. When my siblings had distance education, I tried to keep the home quiet. Thus, they showed the same attitude during my lectures. In short, our empathic attitudes turned into a kind of solidarity.

Another tactic to overcome the spatial constraints was withdrawing from my existing face-to-face socialisation spaces. Therefore, I was not going to visit our relatives with my family. I stayed at home to spend time in my new digital world in a quiet environment. With this tactic, my socialising areas had a remarkable transformation. In short, in the pre-pandemic period, the actors I was connected to regarding kinship and neighbourhood relations were replaced by new actors with whom I was connected with the bond of an interest in the digital world.

Silvan is a small town with a single high street, where kinship relations are strong. Men sitting on tiny chairs can be seen on the street's sidewalks. On the other hand, women meet their socialising needs through home visits or getting together in the *tandır* area (Figure 2). In this town, the people establish their first communication with several questions: "What is your last name? Who are you from? (not where are you from!)

Which village is your father from?" Thus, they form a kind of a social network with the status of being from the same village or the same tribe. Thus, social control is solid and present.



**Figure 2. My mother in the *tandır* area.**

A 'good woman' in Silvan does domestic work very well and can instil these abilities in their daughters. In the pandemic, I witnessed the efforts to make me the ideal girl of the house. I was always in contact with my mother and experienced an intense role conflict. My roles of being simultaneously a 'campus persona' and a daughter sometimes intersected at home. During this challenge in my everyday life, I often questioned my relationship with my mother. My mother spent most of her socialising time with our neighbours and relatives. Therefore, she encountered expressions of the ideal type of girl admired in our society. Those who could instil traditional values in their daughters are positioned in high status in this competition. For this reason, my mother wanted me to internalise these values. Thus, I realised that she was trying to make me an ideal daughter due to social control mechanisms, but sometimes I felt inadequate because of my mother's desire. I was getting angry at the role model discourse. I did not have free time to fulfil my mother's expectations. I could not internalise these roles completely.

The suspension of education activities at the university meant that my mother's social order in the domestic space also changed. My mother expected us to adapt to the norms and rules she had built before the pandemic. She argued that there were "rules of the house," and in this regard, she aimed to prevent the 'domestic anomie.' My mother complained that her orders were broken in conflict times, and my father supported her. A new alliance formed, and I was in the same group as my siblings. However, this conflict field was moderated on the principle of "respect for parents".

The mismatch of expectations and being far from the 'ideal daughter' often made my mother compare me to other people's daughters. Her arguments like "Nesli's daughters are both studying at the university and also cooking very well, Senem's daughter got married at your age and now manages a house" made me experience 'everybody else's daughters' syndrome.' When I realised that a conflict would occur, I changed the subject and discussed my mother's interest in not being exposed to this syndrome. However, when the conflict escalated, I needed a mediator. This person was my father. His words such as, "education is more important than everything else, everybody else's daughters and our daughter are not the same, let us manage it when she has lectures."

In my town, traditional codes also determine an ideal male type. The ideal man is the person who can say the last word in a home and who is at the top of the hierarchical line in the family. My father also accepted the roles defined in his everyday life. We gave our consent to his acceptance of these roles and to have this position in the power relations. Thus, the effectiveness of my father's conciliatory position was related to his

acknowledged hierarchical power. However, my father used this power to support our education ideal. I accepted his attitude tactically and instrumentalised his position in power relations in my self-realisation adventure.

**Who Calls the Shots at Home? (Gülbahar Kılıç)**

Before the pandemic, our house used to get active at five o'clock every morning. My mother was alone at home because the household went to university and work. She decided what to watch on TV, what the meal would be, and she had all the right to organise at home. During the quarantine period, the system was completely turned upside down. My sister continued to work from home. She settled on the table in the kitchen with her computer. She had transformed the domestic space where my mother had been the sole ruler for years into a workplace.

We shared responsibilities with my sister. She helped my mother with the cooking, and I took over the cleaning. I tried to persuade my father to go out from the living room, my brother from his room and my sister from the kitchen to clean the house. It took so long for them to get up that our conflict was inevitable. On the other hand, my mother was not satisfied with my cleaning. Her feelings about us seemed to have changed. It was as if we turned from her beloved children to those who threatened her existence in her eyes. She described herself as a housewife, and now she had lost her power at home. She was in a conflict with my father, who took over her television: "Open 'Müge Anlı' (like Oprah), you always want to watch the news!". My mother was angry with this situation at home and wanted to go to my aunt. She was planning to get my aunt's support. Her reaction to the loss of power was a kind of resistance mechanism. My mother, who had enjoyed being home, did not want to stay at home anymore. We calmed her down, and we were trying to fulfil her request until evening, making small concessions so that the harmony at home would not be broken.

Women were not the only ones who had to compromise on their spaces. My brother also had to share his spatial agency. In the traditional houses of Şanlıurfa, the places on the top floor surrounded by four sides and left open are called traditional roofs (*dam*) (Figures 3 & 4).



**Figure 3. Aviculture on the *dam*.**          **Figure 4. *İsot* making.**

The ruler of our roof is my brother, who is fond of birds. Aviculture is mainly on the roofs and is a big passion in this region. Some people buy birds from the bird bazaar at very high prices. The birder takes them out of the cages at certain times of the day and feeds them. After the birds fly in the sky for a while, they return to their cages. Taking good care of birds and having all kinds of birds provide a good status and income. Birders sometimes steal the birds on the opposite roof since there is no legal basis for aviculture. This act of stealing is avoided only with exclusion from society. Thus, a lock is attached to the entrance door of our roof to ensure the safety of the cage. Because the birds are likely to be stolen, only certain people have the keys to the roof. This place, which was not necessary before the pandemic, was now like the door to the street for us. Although my

brother's wife and I insisted intensely on opening the roof to women, we could not get out to the roof. My brother, who turned the two small rooms on the roof into a men's area, did not give us this permission.

At the end of the summer, the *'isot'* and red pepper paste making rush surrounded the neighbourhood's women. In this season, the most important place for women is the roof. We take the red peppers in big bags to the roof, shred them, dry them in the sun and finally grind them in machines. *Isot* and paste session was a legitimate justification for my brother to let us to the roof. He had to be persuaded to give us the key. During the quarantine period, we exceeded the boundaries set by masculinity through *isot* making, which contributed significantly to the domestic economy (Figures 5 & 6).



**Figure 5. Preparation for red pepper.**      **Figure 6. Woman making *isot*.**

### Children's Struggle (Nazime Kaplaner)

Our street resounds with children's voices at all hours of the day. Women and children are the dominant residents of the street. This situation was not changed during the pandemic days despite the curfews, social distance rules, and restrictions for those under 20. The little girl living in the opposite house was selling self-made meal on a tray, and her customers were again children - "*Cici bici palıza* (a traditional frozen pudding) too much, no less, come here more!" she was yelling. She offered it to her friends with a single iron plate and a spoon. The truck on the street attracted children's attention (Figure 7). It had been standing there abandoned for a few days made me think that the driver could not go to work. In the neighbourhood, where unemployment and poverty occurred an essential social inequality during the pandemic, many daily workers could not work. This situation brought me bad scenarios: livelihoods, hungry children, and domestic violence. I was unable to breathe as I thought.

**Figure 7. Children are playing on the truck.**

In my everyday life in the self-quarantine, the children from our neighbourhood attracted my attention most. The rhythm of the street was getting complicated with the children. When I observed these urban actors, who were disorganising and making the reality questioned, I could notice the 'polyrhythmia' of the street. Lefebvre (2004) mentions that the street and the neighbourhood can be listened to like a symphony. The cars and motorcycles were passing on the street, the second-hand dealers and peddlers were trying to make their voices heard to their customers, the water was flowing down from the drain like a waterfall when the balconies were washed, the garbage cart was emptying the trash Etc. I was constantly distracted by children's voices everywhere when I attended my distance education classes. While playing games, they were very engrossed in talking loudly and shouting at each other. "Viruses do not even infect these kids," said my father. Even though he sometimes warned the children, it did not help. When the water flowed from the balcony drains, the children stood at their bottom and wet their heads to cope with the hot summer days and had unlimited fun. Almost none of their clothes were clean, and they were running around the street barefoot. They constantly reshaped the space, developed micro-resistance mechanisms against the power.



**Figure 8. My father on the** *dam.*                    **Figure 9. My mother on the balcony.**

The police officers were on patrol because of control lockdown regulations. I witnessed an encounter between the police and the children while sitting on the balcony. A child was playing in front of his house, and with the police car's siren, he was terrified and started kicking the door of his house. As the sound came closer, he screamed more and cried. When his mother opened the door, the boy came in quickly and slammed the door shut. It was like a game of chase: the police chase, the child runs away. In this relationship, there was a situation independent of who was victorious in this power relation. Children were protecting their space in the city. They were building a new playground between the truck and the wall in the corners. They were creating tiny heterotopic spaces (Foucault, 1986) by not complying with the body politics practised by the government.

The night did not mean taking a break from all this chaos. Instead, cyclic rhythms collaborated with linear ones. The night did not interrupt the rhythms of the day but only slowed them down. We heard their voices from under the dim street lamp and played hide-and-seek at night, taking advantage of the darkness. When I woke up at five in the morning and looked at the street, I saw the garbage of junk food like chips. The real owners of the street were children. Who could stop the children in various struggles day and night, Covid-19?

**Melting Pot of Two Religions in Pandemic Deprivation (Sümeyya Zengin)**

We live in an Assyrian village of Mardin as the only Muslim family. When my family first came to this village, we did not communicate much with the villagers. The main reason was the language. I had no friends until I went to primary school. I only knew Arabic, but they were speaking Syriac. When I started school, all children were studying in a single classroom with co-education. I listened to children speaking Syriac carefully and learn the language. After learning enough Syriac and Turkish, I started socialising, and felt less excluded. Through our common languages we bonded more and became friends. Families of two religions got used to living together over time. We informed each other's religious practices, behaved accordingly, and celebrated our holidays. We did not serve animal products to our Syriac neighbours during their fasting days. They also paid attention to their eating and drinking near us in Ramadan.

Since there is no mosque in our village, we hear the call to prayer from the digital *adhan* clocks in our house, not from the *minaret*. In Ramadan, we go to the roof to hear the evening *adhan* to break our fast. However, the pandemic redesigned our neighbouring relationships and religious rituals due to social distancing. We used to go to the neighbouring Muslim village with my family to pray. The day that determined the calendar for us was Friday because my father goes to the mosque on Friday prayer. We were messing up the days of the week now. While the mosque is a ritual space where *adhan* is recited for prayers five times a day, it has changed its function as the place where warning announcements during the pandemic process.

On the other hand, our Assyrian neighbours became likewise destitute of their religious practices. Although there is a church in the village, they went to the Mor Evgin Monastery, located in another Syriac village. For Assyrians, this monastery on the slope of Bagok Mountain, is known as the second Jerusalem. The rituals held in the monastery were filled with Assyrians from the surrounding villages, just like the religious ceremonies held on special occasions in the mosque in the next village. Our neighbours would go to this monastery every Sunday. They used to bring the priest to our village and perform their rituals such as religious marriages, baptising the new-born child. However, the monastery closed its doors with the pandemic, just like our mosque.

This year, there was no excitement during Easter. Our neighbours also spent their Easter days with sorrow, just as we welcomed Ramadan. Some of them, who usually fast for 50 days during Easter and do not consume any animal products, could not even fast this year due to the fear of being weak against the disease. Before the pandemic, our neighbours, who fulfilled their religious rituals, and mingled with their communities in nearby Assyrian villages, could not leave their homes. There was not much preparation for Easter.

**Figure 10. Easter eggs of our neighbours (Photo by Shmuni)**

Many eggs are painted, and various doughnuts, pastries, cakes, and traditional feast dishes such as the "Assyrian *kuliçe*" are cooked every Easter (Figure 10). Our neighbours start painting the eggs two or three days before the feast. Generally, onion peels are used to colour the eggs. We collect the peels of the onions planted in our garden for them. They only coloured 30 eggs this year, not 500 as they had last year. When I asked my childhood friend, Shmuni, why they prepared so few eggs, she said, "Actually, we were not going to colour it either, but we did it both to fulfil religious rituals and not forget our traditions." These preparations were interrupted this year. Our neighbours could not perform this worship, which they deemed essential and sacred.

The pandemic brought the deprivation of Easter to our neighbours and the gloom of Ramadan Eid. Another sharing was added to our friendship, which we have strengthened our relationship by discovering many of them over the years.

**Conclusion (F. Güzin Ağca-Varoğlu)**

Everyday life offers researchers many riches as a field of interaction that reveals the most ordinary aspects of human practice. These narratives allow us to express how the intersectional power relations in everyday lives and spatial practices of six young women were transformed by the pandemic. They were surrounded through the experiences and observations and pushed the boundaries within the intertwined and layered performative field. In this context, autoethnography, as a way of giving their voices and questioning their experiences, traditional practices, and rituals, and at the same time developing their vocabulary of research techniques during distance education, is precisely, as per Reed-Danahay (1997), a "boundary-crossing".

The narratives of Nazime and Sümeyya are examples for this transition. The restrictions at the beginning of the pandemic caused some concerns in the society. Sümeyya as a member of the only Muslim family in the village, reflected the transition from her cultural location between self and society. She shared her common experience with her Syriac neighbours. Therefore, autoethnographer expresses the sameness in difference, which is possible only through boundary crossing. Likewise, Nazime observed the children playing on the street. The struggle of the children to regain their playground during the lockdown attracted her attention. She followed the voices of the street from her window and she found out the children's strategies against the state apparatuses through sensory autoethnography.

As a result of "liminalities" (Bhattacharya, 2018) between 'being a university student and the girl of the house' and the domestic distribution of gender roles, tactics are evolved in their everyday lives. Autoethnography as a critical pedagogical praxis empowered these young sociologists through writing on their social interactions and lived spaces in these unprecedented times. Thus, the transformation within the intersectional inequalities and patriarchy began through critical reflexivity, performance, and observations. At this point, the experiences of Melek, Berrin, and Zeynep are very meaningful. Because they turned the confusion

regarding their 'liminoid' position into an opportunity. Before pandemic regulations they had their own space on campus in Şanlıurfa, a city far from their family houses. After returning their family houses they encountered patriarchal expectations. In the patriarchal understanding, which defines home as a field of woman, their responsibilities have increased. It seems that their mothers had a mission to prepare them for this patriarchal order. Therefore, their relationship with their mothers was fragile. At this point, they developed several tactics, as De Certeau (1984) mentions, to negotiate with their mothers and siblings and to continue distance education, which was not a priority in their family houses.

In order to cope with 'everybody else's daughters' syndrome' in her town, Berrin bargained with patriarchy and had her father's support. She described her town as a place where kinship is very important and functions as a control mechanism, especially on women in public sphere. Leyla Bektaş-Ata (2020, 81) describes this social control, which encounters young female generations in her research field, as "familiazation of neighbouring". In Berrin's case, this social control shows itself in neighbourly relations with the relatives from the same tribe or village. Melek explained that she motivated herself to learn traditional techniques to create products from her mother in order to build a common area of experience. Therefore, she had opportunity to share her new features gained at the university. Zeynep realised that her mother has an authority and power in the kitchen. She tried to acknowledge that the power in the kitchen belongs to her mother and tried to be appreciated. During this struggle she became stronger and gained new skills. As Şengül İnce (2015) put it aptly, women use the kitchen as a resistance and empowering space in power relations with others at home. Yet, there is a conflict field between generations of women as well. Similarly, at this point, Gülbahar also narrated the kitchen and the house as a conflict field. Gülbahar's mother, a housewife, felt besieged in the lockdown. She wanted to move to her sister's place as a reaction against her loss of authority at home. In addition, there are the spatial reflections of Kandiyoti's patriarchal bargain concept in Gülbahar's autoethnographic narrative. The Şanlıurfa's traditional roofs (*dam*) were the stage of this bargain. These semi-public spaces (Ünlü, 2019) were reserved by the male members of the family and were opened to women only when they would contribute to the domestic economy.

According to Deniz Kandiyoti (2019), focusing on patriarchal bargains rather than making a general definition of patriarchy is more explanatory in terms of understanding the transformation processes. At this point, it is important that autoethnography enables observing micro resistance mechanisms in everyday life and lets the researcher analyse the society from her/his cultural location as the boundary-crosser. The fragments in this study offer a view from the inside point of view of the pandemic experience in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey and narrate subaltern performativity. This collaborative writing experience has added an essential dimension by criticising the claim that we are all humanly alike in the pandemic. We also confront the fact that there are deep-rooted differences in the level of experience in altering society's intersectional layers. Though the world has been confronted with a common invisible enemy, what we see at home, on the street, and at every point of our everyday lives is that the transformation of everyday life is not the same for everyone in these unprecedented pandemic days.

[1]There are many studies on the new research strategies, methodological approaches, and research challenges that have emerged due to the impacts of pandemic. For some of them see (Lupton, 2020; Erciyes & Yıldırım & Erol, 2021; Sosyoloji Araştırmaları Dergisi Salgında Sosyolojik Araştırma Özel Sayısı, 2022).

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